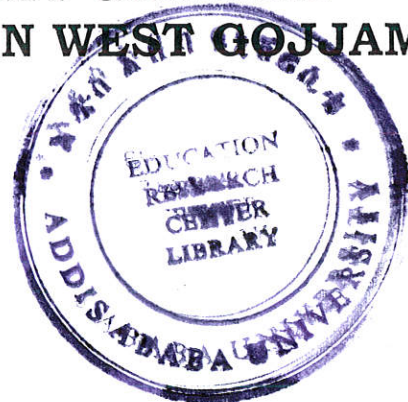


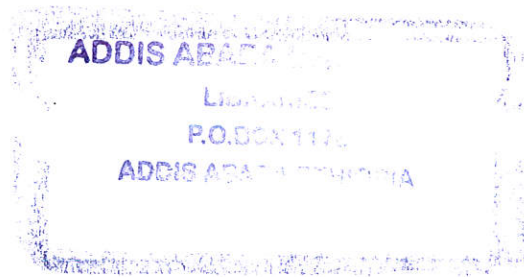
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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**FREEDOM OF STUDENTS TO LEARN: A CASE  
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SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WEST GOJJAM**



**BY:**

**LAKACHEW GEBEYEHU**

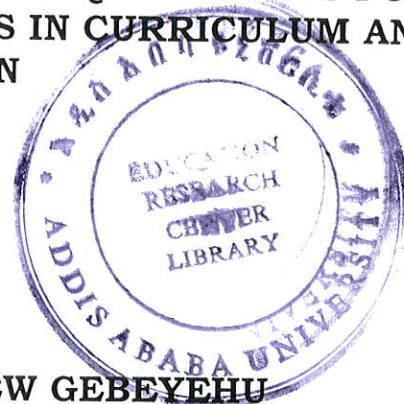


**JULY 2007**

**FREEDOM OF STUDENTS TO LEARN: A  
CASE STUDY AT FERES BET GENERAL  
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WEST GOJJAM**

A THESIS PRESENTED TO SCHOOL OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CURRICULUM AND  
INSTRUCTION



**BY:**

**LAKACHEW GEBEYEHU**

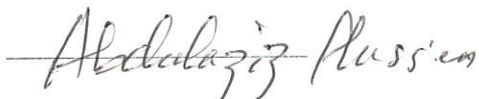
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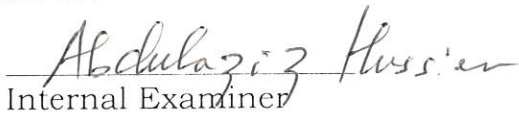
**DEPARTMENT OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study attempted to examine freedom of students to learn by taking the case of Feres Bet General Secondary School. The purposes of the study are to understand students' and teachers' perceptions toward freedom to learn and the factors that impede to implementation of freedom to learn.*

*A qualitative case study method was used to undertake the research and understand the phenomenon deeply. Primary data were collected from teachers and students of the school through in-depth interviews. To extract the data, which are not visible to participants, and to give meanings to what has been interviewed; participant observation had been employed for more than three months. The participants were chosen purposely based on the criteria of their concern, cooperativeness, willingness, responsibilities, and roles they played.*

*To get valuable data twenty-four participants were interviewed using semi-structured and unstructured questions. The data obtained through interview, observation and document analysis were presented in a narrative form on the bases of informants' perceptions and interpretation of the phenomenon supported by the researcher's reflective analysis.*

*The results of the research indicated that participants had high interest for learning to be freely and they viewed freedom as to be protected with laws, pedagogical rules and regulations and implemented with humanity and rationality. However, the practice of freedom to learn was inhibited because of the prevalence of human and non-human factors. Lack of willingness and initiation to promote learner freedom were the major problems of teachers obtained from the research. The research results indicate that lack of the necessary instructional materials and lack of qualified teachers were setbacks to freedom to learn. Therefore, the research suggested that instead of rushing to feed students simplified information it is better to leave learning to the personal manipulation of the learner and it is better to teachers to play the role of facilitating the situation for independent learning.*

# ABBREVIATIONS

CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
FBGSS	Feres Bet General Secondary School
PTA	Parent Teacher Association

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

In this, research attempts were made to understand the practice of freedom to learn by taking the case of Feres Bet general Secondary School. The study assessed participants' perception of freedom to learn and factors (mainly pedagogical) that limit freedom to learn. To introduce the problem examined in the study, this chapter has introduction, statement of the problem, significance and delimitation of the study.

### 1.1 Introduction

Students especially, teenagers often feel that, adults misunderstood them even worse; they do not attempt at all to understand them (Manen, 1993:83). Students are worried with their feelings of “why does no body know how I feel?” “Why does not my teacher understand what difficulties I have?” (Ibid). However, on the side of teachers and parents these feelings of students are not surprising because they are puzzled with behaviors of students (Ibid). This major problem needs pedagogical understanding of students so that they are encouraged to assume more self-responsibility for personal learning and growth.

For an effective learning to take place, intellectuals of the field urged that there must be an open and free communication between the teacher, student, and environment, conditioned by love and care. The teacher has to encourage learners to search, discover, and work for the pursuit of their better lives and knowledge. Students in their own part need to take the responsibility for their own learning; define learning strategies that suit them best; and set their own objectives and goals of learning. Student-teacher relations should be established on a more radical pedagogy that confirms students' maximum participation different from

the traditional "master-servant" type relationship. This, in turn, needs teachers' willingness and ability to help their students and students' readiness, courage and motivation to involve in a self directed independent learning hence, freedom to learn is realized. That is, in any educational activity both teachers and students are responsible and have the authority to implement it.

The talk of authority and responsibility in pedagogy focuses on moral concepts that underline students not to be abused, neglected, and exploited (Manen, 1993:69). Manen proposed that parents and teachers assume that they have a legal license to enforce tough discipline over students to inflict pain and mental anguish and to control students by fear and punishment (Manen, Ibid).

Secondary school classrooms are usually more 'ordered' focused on the contents to be learned (Myres and Myres, 1995:57). In academic subjects teachers frequently stand at the front of the class read lecture notes, follow along in the textbooks (Ibid). Students sit at their row desks facing to the teacher, listen to the teacher, taking brief notes, often talking each other or day dreaming (Ibid). Myres and Myres reported that secondary school learning is overwhelmingly cognitive and teaching considers the class as a group rather than individual students (Ibid). The teacher plays the role of arranging conditions that are suitable for memorization and repetition of facts and the student is expected to make repetition with long hours of exercise supported by a threat of force if he failed to do so (Tubbs, 2005). These repressive pedagogy led advocators (humanists) to call for emancipation of children from all forms of parental and other caretakers' influences, which should be regulated, by educational laws and more by an autonomous pedagogy in which students learn freely (Manen, 1993:69).

Research on autonomous pedagogy indicates that students are in a position to identify the skills and knowledge that they would like to acquire; the conditions, techniques and materials to be used in their learning and the methods of evaluating their performance (Arment and Obese-Jecty, 1981:25-26).

Humanists need teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to show respect and sensitivity toward learners in their charge (Atikson, 1989:268). Students on the other hand should feel that the teacher is there to help them to make as much progress as possible in learning an enjoyable and stimulating way (Ibid). It is evident that students who take the initiative in learning (pro-active learning) learn more things and learn better than students who sit at the feet of the teachers, passively waiting to be taught (Bertoldi et al. 1998:157).

The implementation of a self-initiated learning requires fundamental attitudinal and habit changes of both the teacher and the student. Teachers have to avoid their beliefs of being the source of knowledge to flow and develop instead of an "aptitude for empathy and the tendency to act as listeners and catalysts" and students must not seek refuge in this passive role in the "traditional no-risk system" (Armnet and Obese-Jecty 1981:25-26).

To enhance the discipline of learners, Foucault (1980) proposes a form of teacher-students relations, that is "disciplinary power" in which student would regulate their own body and manipulate their behaviors so that, students can act in accordance to the expectations that are carried by the discourse of education (Tubbs 2005:256). Foucault argued, "Pedagogy was now contained in the way the bodies were arranged rather than in any confrontation between (teacher and student) caused by inequalities."

Educationalists proposed that there must be a remarkable freedom in schools in which, students and teachers can act independently. To this end, they point out their views about the important of providing freedom to students that enhance their learning. Emanuel Kant (1990) argues that students should be allowed to make decisions and determinations to use their own justification without strict direction from the teacher or anybody else outside (Tubbs, 2005:259-60). Kant (1990) maintains that freedom could not be alienated from the will of the learner so that, she/he makes choices about her/his learning that must be built on reasons and thought of the student but not be imposed by external authority including the teacher (Ibid). Kant concludes that a student is learning freely, when he/she "makes his/her mind up." However, if "the teacher makes [learner] mind up this can not be freedom." This is because a student learning is something that comes from within, and cannot be imposed from without (Ibid).

Areglado and others believe that a student must have an environment where he/she will learn to educate him self/herself focusing not only contents of subject matter but also understanding his/her own work habits, knowledge bases, insights, aspirations, value systems, best learning strategies and personal talents instead of totally depend on a teacher (Areglado 1996:1). This is a student need to have an opportunity to exhibit initiation, independence, and persistence to accept responsibility for his/her own learning and consider problems as challenges not obstacles to be goal oriented (p.2-3).

Friere, in his book, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" strongly emphasized the importance of freedom to emancipate students from any sort of oppression. He recommends that engagement in dialogues between students; between students and their world; between students and teachers and the space in which they are situated are the only means to enhance critical thinking and create good communication (Friere

1972:65). Such dialogue can be implemented through “problem posing” method in which both the teacher and the student jointly are responsible for learning as a result all will benefit from the process (Ibid, p.53).

The issue of making students free to learn is stated in the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (1994) in the form of active learning by which students should be grown up as a good and problem solving citizens of the nation. However, it seems that there is no research undertaking made so far on the need of extending freedom to learn in secondary schools of Ethiopia and its importance to learning. In fact, it is true that some researches were undertaken locally in relation to active learning, which has an implication to freedom to learn. Therefore, this study is intended to contribute its part to the improvement of freedom to learn in secondary education.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The dominant opinion of the behavioral psychologists is that the student is not free for political, social, and cultural reasons. Politically, the student is often under the pawn of government; socially the student is molded by mass propaganda and their behaviors are shaped largely by the opinions and beliefs of the society he/she belongs (Skinner, 1981:10). Skinner argued that the learner is formed and moved by cultural forces, which are beyond his or her control (Ibid).

Freedom to learn, freedom to choose or self-directed learning are completely untenable concepts to the minds of many behavioral psychologists who believe that learning is the inevitable product of the learner's conditioning (Rogers, 1969:259). Behaviorists believe that a free and a happy student is imaginary. To develop a free student who has been taught however is almost too painful and takes a longer time for him/her to make such an appearance (Skinner, 1981:14).

Skinner said that children were first made free and happy in kindergarten, where there seemed to be no danger in freedom and for long time they were found no where else, because the rigid discipline of the grade schools blocked progress. However, eventually children broke through moving from kindergarten in to grade school, taking over grade after grade, moving into secondary school and on in to college and very recently into graduate school (Ibid). Gradually, they have insisted up on their rights, justifying their demand with the slogan that philosophers of education have supplied (Ibid). He said that; if sitting rows restricts personal freedom unscrew the seats; if order can be maintained only through coercion, let chaos reign. If one cannot be really, free while worrying about examinations and grades, down with examinations and grades then, "every thing is washed away with happy and free" student (Ibid).

Skinner still believed that almost all living things act to free themselves from harmful contacts. A kind of freedom achieved is by the relatively simple forms of behavior called reflexes (Skinner, 1971:26). Some traditional theories could conceivably be said to define freedom as the absence of aversive control, but the emphasis he said has been on how that condition feels (p.32). To Skinner, control is the opposite of freedom. If freedom is good, control is bad (Ibid). To Skinner, the problem is to free men not from control but from certain kinds of control, and it can be solved only if our analyses take all consequences in to account (p.41). Students' struggle for freedom is due to a will to be free but, to certain behavioral process characteristics of the human organism, the chief effects of it is the avoidance of or escape from aversive features of the pedagogy (p.43).

Skinner also criticized autonomy of learner's as an all out permissiveness where no control is exerted and makes the learner to remain unchangeable at all (p.84). He said an autonomous learner needs no

teacher; he/she learns because he/she loves learning and his natural curiosity dictates what he/she needs to know and solves his/her problems without the direction of the teacher (Ibid).

The humanists argue that students might face several challenges against their freedoms but what is desirable to them is to reduce and if possible avoid these constraints. Students should be motivated and their motivation should be derived from a basic actualizing tendency that moves the individual in the direction of a state of personal autonomy in which he/she is ultimately free from control by external forces (Shager, 1984:33).

Advocates of freedom to learn believed that the educational tasks of students are of finding out what they want to do; allowing them practice it or discover what they are capable of doing and they should be encouraged to do and help them to do it (Kandle, 1966:116). Humanists hold that freedom is not a gift but a conquest that can be achieved by a slow and gradual process (pp.117-118). Humanists urge free development of the student unstrained by any external control or obligation, or refuse to recognize any loyalties or social obligations, on the ground that external interferences of any kind will thwart student's growth (p.118). Kandle argued that the child must be free to develop his own standards of conduct, to express him and to engage in activities of his own choice (Ibid).

A sound education should be based on the concept that the student is not a passive being to be molded in a certain way or to be filled with facts and information but, an independent and active individual with interests and tendencies to grow, placed in the right kind of academic environment (p.126). In addition, an effective freedom implies a mind that is trained to think to reflect to make a choice and to exercise initiative and resourcefulness (p.120). The researcher is interested to understand the status of freedom to learn and the process of handing over the

responsibility of learning to learners by taking the case of Feres Bet General Secondary School because it seems there are no research undertakings done so far in the field.

Therefore, the general objective of the study is to enhance understanding of freedom to learn and its practice at secondary school level. The study has the following specific objectives:

- To explore the status of freedom of students to learn
- To identify teachers attempt to make their students learn freely
- To analyze the students understandings of freedom to learn
- To point out the factors that affect freedom to learn.

To this end, the following basic questions were posed.

Are students free to discover things by themselves?

How do students understand freedom?

What factors impede students' freedom to learn?

### **1.3. Significance of the study**

The major objective of this study is to increase the knowledge of providing possible opportunities to students to help them to be confident and self-dependent individuals in their lives. To this end, it is mandatory to guide students to recognize themselves as the principal partners of learning. Thus, educators' claim of teaching without full involvement of the learner as meaningless and fruitless is treated in the research with due attention.

I hope that the results of this study are significant to FBGSS, Amhara National Regional State Education Bureau and to researchers. The research might benefit FGSS in such a way that the study attempted to indicate the major pedagogical problems and the possible solutions suggested by research participants. This might motivate the school to assess its problems more in detail and take the necessary measures to

alleviate them.

The Amhara Region Education Bureau also can use the research results as a springboard to make further investigations on the schools of the Region to understand their status in providing varied learning opportunities and practicing freedom to learn. In addition, since research undertakings are almost none in the field, the findings may serve as supplementary source for those who are interested for further and more comprehensive investigation in the area.

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

Since the term freedom is very general and wide, the study is delimited to the teaching and learning processes going on in the school.

# CHAPTER TWO

## RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter attempted to provide brief review of the issues related with meaning of freedom; education and freedom; teacher freedom and authority, ethical principles for teachers to facilitate freedom to learn; learner development shifting of emphasis from teaching to learning; objections against freedom to learn and the factors that inhibit freedom to learn.

### 2.1. Meaning of Freedom

Intellectuals have no common understandings of the word freedom. They defined freedom differently from different angles of man's political, social, economic, and cultural lives. For instance, Farrer (1975:111) said that dictionary definitions emphasize two aspects of freedom, having negative and positive elements. The negative element of freedom emphasizes absence of interference or constraints in to something or some one's activity and; positive element of freedom refers to a certain ideal autonomy of self- possession or self-control in performing certain activity (Ibid).

To others freedom is "the ability to make choices and to carryout" (World Book Encyclopedia, 1994:502). On the other hand freedom is understood as "...rationality and mastery over one's passion" (Ofstand 1961:98). Clarizio and others defined freedom, as fulfillment of the order sequence of the individual life in which the individual decides to satisfy her/himself through a responsible and voluntary role to bring about the intended world that he/she live in, (Clarizio, 1981:11).

According to Blauner, freedom is an environment that permits the individual to liberate him/herself from dominating factors that makes

him/her simply a reacting object (Blauner, 1964:16). That is, freedom involves physical and social movement of an individual to walk away from coercive process and searching other non-repressive alternatives (Ibid).

The World Book of Encyclopedia (1994:502) indicates, "For some one to have a complete freedom, there must be no restrictions on how [people] think speak or act." Free person has to know the type and kinds of his or her decisions and at the same time, understand methods and opportunities to select the appropriate one among the existing alternatives that suit best (Ibid). In addition, Ofstand (1961:98) underlines that whenever some one is exposed to any sort of coercion, his ability to make a rational judgment will be often affected.

In general, the above conceptions about freedom claimed by proponents are all about the ability of an individual to make decisions and translate those decisions in to practice without interference and compulsions by an outside authority. External body may involve in making those personal choices in the form of informing the possible alternatives and opportunities (Sinclair (1999:311)).

## **2.2 Types of Freedoms**

The World Book of Encyclopedia (1994:502) grouped human freedom in to three broad categories. These are political, social, and economic freedoms.

**A. Political Freedoms:** refers to people's voices including students in the government. That is and the opportunities to participate in government and to play roles in it. Such freedom involves the rights of people to vote and elect to take part in political parties, the right to criticize government policies and strategies, the right to form and join organizations (World Book of Encyclopedia, 1994:502).

**B. Social Freedoms:** refers to those opportunities that make better living for the individual and the society (World Book of Encyclopedia 1994:502; Sen, 1999:39). This freedom includes freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly academic freedom and freedom to due process of law (World Book of Encyclopedia 1994:502-506).

**C. Economic Freedom:** refers to opportunities and abilities of people to make their own economic decisions. This freedom includes the right to own property to use it and to benefit from it. Sen defined economic freedom as an opportunity to utilize economic resources for consumption production and exchange (Sen 1999:39).

It is necessary to note that these three categories of freedom are not totally exclusive of one another. For example, some of the elements under social freedom can be political freedoms and the same is true for economic freedom (World book of Encyclopedia 1994:506). Moreover, Dereje Amara (2000:II) identified human freedom into two broad categories as internal and external freedoms.

**External Freedom:** To him external freedom speaks of independence, the right of being free of external bonds and limitations (Ibid). If some one is under the control of people who are unsympathetic to him/her, she/he will not get real freedom (Ibid). Dereje pointed out that state/government and the society are agents that restrain the individual's freedom and rights (Ibid). External freedoms involve those rights of man to make decisions on political, social, and economic issues that are not stood against the interests of others and the right to implement these decisions (World Book of Encyclopedia, 1994:502-506). External freedoms also emphasize the rights of man not to be forced /coerced by external authorities (Ibid).

**Inner Freedom:** refers to liberation from the bondage of sense and full control of these senses (Dereje 2000: II). Derje argued that unless some one liberates him/her self from the slavery of sense and controlled his/her own mind, it is impossible to say that he/she is internally free (ibid). That is, to enjoy inner freedom one thing that an individual has to do is to develop the faculty of sense control and gaining control over mind. In other words, inner freedom involves the degree to which an individual is guided in his actions by his own considered will rather than by monetary impulses or other sensual circumstances (De Crispigny, etal.1975: 50). Shuster (1967:34-35) argued that inner freedom can exist without external freedom but external freedom is meaningless without interior freedom.

Starratt (1994:30) viewed inner freedom as autonomy, acting out of an intuition of what is right or appropriate in a given situation. Autonomy is in contrast to those who act out of a mindless routine, or simply because others tell them to act that way, or who act out of a feeling of obligation to or fear of those in authority (Ibid). Autonomy implies a sense of individual choice, of taking personal responsibility for her/ his own actions not imposed by any one else and claiming ownership of one's actions (Ibid). Pedagogically, educators viewed freedom as an important ingredient to learning to develop learner's self-confidence and independence.

### **2.3. Freedom and Education**

Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (1998:8) proposed that making students to learn freely helps them to promote their thinking, reasoning, and most importantly reflective potentials to reconstruct create and understand their own meanings. This in turn aids them to challenge and emancipate themselves from "the dominant hegemonic ideologies of the school system"(Ibid). Sinclair (1999) advises that educators should work for the freedom of student to make them more effective and independent in

their learning. She suggests three things to be addressed. These are:

1. Students should be provided with situations and opportunities to exercise a degree of independence. These situations and opportunities might range from activities in the classroom, in which students can make choices and decisions about their learning for an independent participation [inside and] outside classroom self-directed project work;
2. Developing capacity of students by providing necessary, introspection reflection and experimentation so that, they can acquire knowledge about how to pursue his/her learning independently; and
3. Students should be free from constraints that violate their rights and they should have an opportunity to work for social transformation to which they belong (Sinclarie, 310-311).

Research indicates that students want freedom to exercise their own thinking; the freedom to express and define themselves freely and not to be governed by those rigid rules and regulations whose purpose they do not clearly understand (Sorenson 1954:111). More over, they do not like a "school system where there is much freedom that there is disorder" (Ibid). Manen urges that it is difficult to draw a clear boundary that separates freedom from control exclusively in favor of one from the other (Manen 1993:62). In other word, it is difficult to secure freedom with out order and control. However, the rules that are expected to maintain order must not be rigid dos and don'ts. They must be procedures evolved from the existing needs of students and put in to practice with humaneness and equality (Grambs, 1952:40). Manen explains the relationship between freedom and order and students response to wards it as follows:

*An environment of high permissiveness and the almost complete absence of control ironically does not appear to contribute to the kind of development of cooperatives, gentleness, positive self-concept...A highly regulated environment of sever rules blind obedience, imposed*

*discipline and strong punishment also has detrimental effects on the positive development of young people.*

Any attempt to avoid coercion or punishment in fact, is advisable in education (Clarizio 1981:15). Students at all levels should act to escape from such aversive control that negatively affects their educational discourse (Ibid). Even through, students are not literary free (If they are totally free, they may go in to anarchy) from the influence of their teachers (Ibid), it is mandatory to provide them with the opportunity to think, to create, to do, to make decisions, to determine their own course of action and to self-government and equality (Sorenson, 1954:111).

Letting students free to go about promotes their performance, happiness and pleasure in their learning and highly reduces the pain of aversive control (Ibid), Research indicates that a repressed student feels less interested; his/her activities are limited and, his/her experiences are some how unpleasant (Ibid). Therefore, this indicates that teachers need to be aware of this paradox of freedom and control in their interaction with students. It is better for teacher to be sensitive in letting students to work on problems and holding them back when they go in to chaos (Manen, 1993:63).

### **2.3.1 Teacher Freedom and Authority**

Freedom may be understood as the situation in which choice and initiative can be exercised with out restraint where as authority is an influence that maintains order in the life of an individual or society (Flecher, 1961:18). However, unlimited freedom to an individual or group (including teachers) may lead to "egotistical, self-inflation or paranoia"(Ibid). Like wise, unlimited authority of an individual may lead him/her to be "slavish, self-immolation [behaviors] or [commit] suicide" (Ibid). The exercise of freedom and authority without restraint in schools there fore, lead to anarchy and tyranny, respectively (Ibid, P: 62). Pedagogically, freedom stands for, free self-development of the student

and at the same time teachers' free exercise of their duties to influence the process of learning (Ibid, p.63).

According to Biggs, to develop positive attitudes towards learning, teachers like their students need an opportunity to explore and discover things. Every teacher must have the freedom and responsibilities to adapt and utilize basic principles that are compatible to his/her own personality and capability (Biggs, 1969:6). Since there is difference between teachers and students; difference between teachers; difference between students and; since there are many ways, ideas, activities and patterns to utilize to meet the needs of learners, it is essential, to allow teachers to go in their own paths. Otherwise, it becomes destructive to the education system to make use of identical or limited patterns of classroom interactions for all teachers in a school (Ibid). So, teachers are those who guide the teaching and learning process, need an environment that facilitates their attitudes of taking students to the center of learning, encouraging and assisting pupils how to inquire organize and discover solutions to problems (Ibid).

The provision of freedom to teachers has the following advantages:

- I. It allows teachers to have deep understanding of the process and assists them to value the excitement and benefit of learning without much restraint learning;
- II. It allows teacher to practice an autonomous learning in their classrooms and gives opportunities to discuss difficulties with other teachers; and
- III. It assists teachers to increase and expand their professional knowledge backgrounds (Ibid).

Research findings show that teachers especially, those successful and experienced ones do not want interference in their classroom decisions and activities (Myers, and Myers, 1995:572). They need more "professional freedom than people in other professions." At the same

time, they have more responsibility for their pupils (Ibid).

In most cases, it is believed that teachers are older than their students are. Together with [academic status], this age difference gives them an authority that needs them to recognize and demand for it (Fletcher, 1961:65). Teachers' authority is a form of responsibility that the student grants to them to be "morally responsive to the values that ensure students well being and growth toward mature self-responsibility" (Manen, 1993:70). This indicates that the source of teacher authority in pedagogical aspects is the student him/her self.

Myres and Myres (1995:564) argue that teachers require to possess this authority properly to regulate the relationships with their students, the community, and the environment. This authority therefore, makes teachers to have significant influence on the knowledge, skill, and attitudes of learners (Dalmont, 1985:50). However, teachers can only have such an influence over their student when it is only on the bases of love, affection, and internalization toward the student (Manen, 1993:70). Failure to do so or if teachers abdicate these authority and responsibility, they may jeopardize students success; make learning less pleasant (Myres and Myres, 1998:564); and more severely authority in the classroom may transferred to the "ignorant the egoists, the immature even to the sadists and then its weaker members can suffer badly" (Fletcher, 1961:65).

Therefore, to reduce and prevent such failures of students, teachers must mediate the possible influence of the experience of the world so that students initiate continually to assume self-responsibility to their learning and self-responsibility to their growth and development (Manen, 1993:50). To students, they must understand that to acquire the "painful" experience of "growing into useful, constructive and unselfish member of adult society"; it is unavoidable to submit themselves to authorities of teachers (Fletcher, 1961:65). Generally, students must be

responsible for their own interest of learning and teachers are responsible and accountable in keeping and promoting the interests of student that students want to pursue (Roges, 1969:38).

The tasks with in an educational set up should be designed in such a way that they prepare students for learning [during] and after school and help them to exercise responsibilities for effective learning (Boud, 1982:12). To structure and implement these educational activities educators argued that there must be remarkable freedoms for teachers and students in schools. To this end, Rogers (1969:32) identified two types of freedom in education. That is, academic freedom and autonomy (inner freedom).

### **2.3.2 Academic Freedom**

The World Book of Encyclopedia, (1994:502) categorized academic freedom as a social freedom of teachers and students in educational institutions. Academic freedom is an external freedom of teachers and students that provide them full rights to implement their academic activities (Ibid). Academic freedom is an idea that encompasses both individuals and the academic institution where scholars and students are working. Academic freedom is broadly viewed as the right of an individual "educator or teacher or researcher (in higher institutions) to interpret his/her findings to communicate his conclusion with out being liable to any interference, attack of penalization" (Maciver, 1955:9).

Institutionally, academic freedom is an institutional freedom in which staff members claimed the right to exercise their rights in serving their clients properly (Ibid). Academic freedom as an external freedom is meaningless without interior freedom (good will) of teachers or students (Shuster, 1967:35). That is whatever degree of rights students and teachers have, it is nothing unless they are internally free and motivated to take responsibilities and duties.

According to Jounghin academic freedom provides certain rights and responsibilities to teachers and students at all levels of schools. These are:

- a. Academic freedom gives full rights to teachers in research and making results open to the public in publications and through other methods
- b. Academic freedom gives teachers the responsibility to perform other academic activities appropriately
- c. Academic freedom entitles teachers with full rights to discuss their subject matters in the class room and
- d. Academic freedom forbids teachers to bring on controversial issues in to the classroom unrelated to their subjects (Jounghin, 1967:356).

The essential attribute of academic freedom is its advocacy for a free inquiry and a free expression by students and teachers. Jounghin (1967) argues that since students are part of the school community, they have the right to be encouraged to enhance their own capacity for critical judgment and to work on in a well-established independent search for knowledge (Ibid). Academic freedom pushes forward that students must have an autonomous learning environment with appropriate opportunities and conditions where they can act freely, without restraint. It also advocates that students have the right to make free discussion, inquiry, and expression in their classroom (Ibid).

Nevertheless, Rogers (1969:134) argue that, it does not seem reasonable, to impose freedom on any one who does not desire it. It seems wise that, when students got the freedom to learn, there should also be provision for those who do not wish freedom to learn and preferred direct lecturing (Ibid). That is if students are made free to learn independently there should also the freedom for those who do not desire freedom (and to

learn passively in a pre-determined programmed learning).

Academic freedom of students also emphasizes students' evaluation that must be done "on the basis of their academic performance, not on opinions or conducts in matters unrelated to the academic standards" and their grades must be recorded and documented properly. Students have the duty to exercise their rights and freedoms for learning with maturity and responsibility (p, 67).

### **2.3.3 Inner Freedom (Autonomy)**

According to Wenden (1991), the increasing movement towards student centered learning in the 1970s strengthening the emphasis to foster the role of student in the process of learning (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000:1). Such shifting of attention makes the learner the center of the education system instead of focusing on teaching, teachers, or the subject matter to be studied (Stevick, 1982, in, McCarthy, 1998:5). This in turn raises the issue of autonomy of learners and teachers.

#### **2.3.3.1 Student Autonomy**

Autonomy is an inner freedom (Rogers, 1969:32) that involves the degree to which a student guides his/her learning by his own good will rather, than by any other circumstance outside (De Crispigny, 1975:50). Holec (1981) argues that autonomy is the skill or intelligence of the learner to take charge of his own leaning (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000:1). Taking the responsibility of learning rests on learner's moral willingness and his/her rational reasoning capacity to make choices (Ibid) in which the learner determines what he/she thinks and exercises that are important to his/he life (Dearden, 1972, cited in Boud, 1982:22).

To Kant (1990) autonomy is the ability of the student to make rational decisions about their choices in a non-coercive environment, freely and independently (cited in Tubbs, 2005:259-260). Dam (1990) cited in

Thanasoulas (2000:1) and; McGarry (1990) cited in McCarty, (1998:1) viewed autonomy as a state in which learners are initiated to take the responsibility for their own work and to have some control in what how and why they learn. That is to choose aims, purpose materials, methods, and tasks exercise choices tasks and to choose criteria for evaluating their success and failures which help them to be efficient educable persons in their lives (Ibid).

The general intention of autonomy of the learner in pedagogy emphasizes learners willingness to play a pro-(active) role in his/her leaning processes and learner ability in creating ideas and "availing of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher"(Boun, 1988; Kohone, 1992; knowles, 1972 cited in Thanasoulas, 20001; Cook, 2001:231).

Thanasoulas reiterates that autonomy is not a matter of faith or ready-made output reserved for use or a personality trait or quality (Thanasoulas, 2000:1). Rather, it is student's psychology in relation to the process and content of learning (McCarthy, 1998:1) in which students become autonomous learner when they gain certain learning strategies, motivation, attitude and knowledge about their learning (Thanasoulas, 2000:1). Benson and Voller, (1997) proposed the following:

- Autonomy is used for conditions in which students study entirely on their own;
- Autonomy is used for an in born capacity which is suppressed by institution education;
- Autonomy is used for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning and;
- Autonomy is used for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000:1).

### **2.3.3.2 Teacher Autonomy**

Teachers are taken in to account as an important ingredient of autonomous pedagogy in promoting inner freedom of their pupils. For learners to follow the right track to achieve autonomy, the teacher is part of the process to light out their ways. In other words, learning autonomously does not mean students work in their own in isolation from the teacher or removes structured teaching, rather, it needs teachers' involvement and support in the process (Bound, 1982:25).

Smith viewed teacher autonomy, as a moral good will and ability to develop necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to guide an effective teaching (Smith 2000:1). An autonomous teacher has the responsibility to make appropriate decisions and choices concerning the needs of his/her student and to launch learners in to an independent self-directed learning (Sheerin, 1997 cited in Thanasoulas, 2000:1). Smith identifies three aspects of teacher autonomy in pedagogical practices to be understood. These are:

- An autonomous teacher need to have the capacity for self-initiated professional activity with a strong sense of personal responsibility for his/her teaching, exercising through continuous thinking, analysis and reflection: and cognitive control of teaching process (Little, 1995, cited in Smith, 2000:1):
- An autonomous teacher need to have the capacity for a self-initiated professional development and need to aware why, when, where, and how pedagogical skills can be acquired in self-consciousness awareness for teaching itself (Tort-Maloney, 1997cited in Smith, 2000:3) and;
- An autonomous teacher needs an environment where others cannot check his/her professional actions (Smith 2000:3).

## 2.4. Ethical Principles for Teachers to facilitate Freedom to Learn

Rogers (1969) suggested certain ethical principle that teachers should follow. These are:

- 1 Facing real life problem
- 2 Trust in human organism
- 3 Realness/ sincerity/
- 4 Enaphatic understanding
- 5 Providing with resources
- 6 Use of contractual obligations and
- 7 Self-evaluation

**A. Facing a Real Life Problem:** To pursue self-initiated autonomous learning teachers should make students to face issues, which are real meaningful and relevant to their lives, in their understandings. Exposure to real problems may face resistance from students at the beginning because it makes them responsible to their learning. Gradually however, they become highly interested in it as an opportunity and "use it for beyond their expectations" (Rogers, 1969:130). It is advisable for teachers to try out to draw real problems from their students that are believed to be meaningful to the learner and relevant to the subject under study (Rogers, 1969:130-131).

**B. Trust is Human Organism:** It should be understood that for an autonomous learning to take place, teachers initially must trust the students being a human organism with a considerable potentialities. Teachers need to trust capacity of the student who can develop his/her potentials and they need to provide him/her with many opportunities and permit them to choose their own ways in their learning (p.114). However, failure to believe human being quality to develop one's potentialities, leads teachers to prepare students only for examinations,

to fill students with a dosage of information of their own choices. Accordingly, this distrusting of being a human organism lest students to go their own mistaken ways, which might result fear, anxiety and even jeopardizes success (Ibid).

**C. Realness /Sincerity:** Realness (sincerity) is the genuine quality of a teacher in autonomous learning characterized by absence of facade (not denying what he/she is). He/she is much more seeming to be productive, honest, open, sharing feelings to his/her students appropriately, and to arrange direct personal meeting or encounter with students (Rogers, 1969: 106; Lehman 1981:100). Rogers said that a genuine teacher may face different feelings of his/her own in the process, but he has to manipulate it appropriately as follows:

*The teacher can be enthusiastic, he can be bored he can be interested in students, he can be angry he can be sensitive, and sympathetic. Because, he accepts these feelings as his own he has no need to impose them on his students. He can like or dislike a student product with out implying that it is objectively good or bad or that the student is good or bad. He is simply expressing a feeling for the product, a feeling that exists within him. Thus, he is a [real] person to his students not a sterile tube through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next (Rogers 1969:106).*

Rogers is just saying that the teacher is expected to express her/his feelings regardless of the nature of his/her feelings/. If a teacher is angry, she/he can say that 'I am angry' and if he/she is happy she/he can say, 'I am happy' (Lehman, 1981:100). This realness can be expressed without evaluating, blaming, or judging others and should not be taken for a license to down grade student (Ibid). For those harsh and uncaring teachers whose emotional problems cause to condemn others and take out their anger and create frustration on students has no room in education (Ibid).

**D. Emphatic understanding:** This is teachers understanding of student's perceptions, opinions and feelings towards the process of learning and education system as a whole. Emphatic understanding is the awareness of students' reaction to learning from the inside (Clarizio, 1985:11; Lehman, 1981:100; Rogers, 1969:112). According to Rogers (1969:12), emphatic understanding involves "...[an] attitude of standing in other's shoes of viewing the world through the student's eyes is almost unheard in the classroom" That is, teachers are expected to make an in depth understanding of their student's attitude to learning from inside.

**E. Providing with Resources:** To promote freedom of students to learn, the teacher needs to organize his/her time and efforts different from the conventional teacher. Instead of wasting much time and resource to prepare lesson plans and lectures, it is better to concentrate on supplying learners with both human and non-human resource that are relevant to the needs and physical and psychological development levels of students (Rogers, 1969: 131-132; Parrot, 1982:135). Moreover the teacher can also make him/her available to learners as a resource person but she/he must not impose him/her self on students (Rogers, 1969:131-132).

**F. Use Contractual Obligations:** According to Rogers, contract is an open-ended agreement set by students and teachers to make the process of learning productive and effective. In this agreement students develop/adapt goals and plans of whatever they want to do individually, in-group or both. Such contract "provides a sort of transitional experience between complete freedom to learn whatever is of interest and learning...which is relatively free." In addition, use of contracts helps to avoid "fear and apprehension" and creates a climate of an honest free classroom discussion, possible (Rogers, 1969:133).

**I. Self-Evaluation:** Self-evolution is a mechanism by which teachers and students are set /adapt/ standards to check the status of learning

responsibly. Here students decide criteria important to them to evaluate their performance whether or not learning objectives are achieved (p.143). That is, teachers are expected to encourage student to evaluate and criticize their classroom performance if they wish to do so (Appel, 1989:266). Appel explained that teaching becomes self-defeating if evaluating procedures are imposed on learners opposed to their good wills (Ibid).

## **2.5. Learner Development**

Since the early 1960's, proponents of the field are advocating the promotion of learner autonomy. They argue that one of the means that help to enhance learning to be free is developing the skills and knowledge of learners (Sinclair 1999:310). Different scholars named learner development as learner training, learn to learn and learn how to learn (Ibid).

Holec (1985) stated that learner development is instruction of students to adapt strategies that enable him/her to perform different activities in best and simplified way to developed his/her whole personality (cited in lake 1997:170). Ellis and Sinclaire (1989 cited in Lake, 1997:170) viewed learner development as assisting the student to consider the factors that affect their learning and discovering learning strategies that suit them best. Dickinson (1987) explains that learn development is something that involves primarily "developing knowledge about one self as a learner, Second of planning and third of discovering and then using appropriate and preferred strategies (cited in Sinclaire, 1999:315).

The above-mentioned conceptions of learner development emphasis on acquired knowledge and skills of students by which learners can understand and internalize the experiences of their worlds. To this end, Rogers has summarized the importance of learner development as follows:

*The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn the man who has learned how to adapt and change the man who has realized that no knowledge is secured that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a base for security (Rogers, 1969:104).*

The goal of learner development is to inform students the necessary skills, strategies, knowledge and self-instruction mechanisms that help them to be responsible in making and implementing decision and to formulate learning objectives to know what to learn that fit their own changing needs and, to evaluate the effectiveness of their learning (Lake, 1982:170-171; Dickinson, 1992 cited in McCarty, 1998:1).

The assumption that the incorporation of the idea of learner development in a formal school classroom interaction programs is for one reason, it is believed that the individual student may learn in various ways and apply several different learning methods. For another, it is believed that the more instructed students about how to learn things and acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes "the more effective they will be managing their own learning" (Sinclair, 1999:322-323).

The whole process of learner development is therefore to make the student on his/her own right path for a self-initiated learning and for self-reliance. However, this does not mean that the teacher, at all times dictates the process and imposes his/her choices. Instead, teachers play, partly, in leading learners and providing inputs and alternative means that might be used by learners (Ibid). In any case, it is up to the learner to decide the methods that suits best (Ibid).

## **2.6. Shifting from Teaching to Learning**

In these days, the major concern of educators is to make school life easy and attractive for learners so that they become more initiated in their learning. Lambert and McCombs (1998) point out that learning becomes

fruitful when the student actively involves in constructing his/her own knowledge and understanding by creating relation to previously developed knowledge and learned experiences (cited in Yalew, 2004:19). However, if students have limited participation in learning, their dependency on teachers becomes high and liable to external control (Glynn, 1984, cited in Amare, 2001:68-69), which may diminish their academic initiation and success (p.67). This in turn makes the interaction process simple imparting of a series of information from the teachers to students, which is less worthy value for personal development in education.

It was observed that "course of study, specific textbooks, standard report cards, external examinations and iron curtain of subject specialization" imposed mainly by authorities who have no direct contact with students are "insurmountable barriers" to create a kind of class room where students can fully involve in learning (Biggs, 1969:3). More over the existing traditional classrooms in many schools are not arranged for the purpose to promote freedom and responsibility of students to learn (Ibid). Therefore, even though there are problems it is essential to organize the school system that assures and appropriate and attainable climate to student to learn instead of for teachers to teach (Ibid). Dienes (no date) in Biggs said that creating such classroom environment requires a shift from "teaching to learning; from our experience to the children's; [and] our world to children's world" (Ibid).

The change of focus of attention from teaching to leaning according to Biggs has the following advantages. These are:

- a. It makes learners free to think for themselves;
- b. It provides favorable moment for students to discover the order patterns and relations that exist in the man-made and natural world and;
- c. It educates students to acquire the necessary skills, attitudes, and

knowledge (Ibid).

This shift of emphasis has profound implications to the works of teachers and students to think for them to challenge and to be aware of environmental possibilities that facilitate learning. If teachers are to spark learners' imagination, they need first rekindle themselves to adapt to the changes and lead the characteristics of students' curiosity and desire to learn (Ibid). On the other hand students need to understand that teachers cannot give them knowledge but only information and data that knowledge is only developed through thinking and processing of data with in the mind of learners (Areglado, 1996; 27).

Psychologist point out that provision of varies stimuli to students to improve their learning and help them to generate flexible attitudes (Ibid). Pestalozzi and UNESCO (no date) suggest that involvement of more senses of learners (hearing, seeing and touching) in the process is significant to produce an efficient learning out comes (Biggs, 1969:4). UNESCO (no date) especially confirmed that "if a student only hears but does not see he does not learn. If he can touch as well as hear and see, he will learn more soundly" (Ibid). In other wards, lack of variety and poor quality of stimulation may result in deprivation of education (Ibid).

Thus, the concern for promotion of learning requires an education systems that has a free environment where students can create related analyze and synthesize knowledge and encourage their curiosity and engender the interest to learn (Ibid). The school environment should favor and translate learner centered programs and learning experiences that would meet the needs of the individual learner and; teachers and concerned stakeholders should use their knowledge of "biology psychology and education" to change the situation which facilitates learning instead of teaching (Ibid)

## **2.7. Objections against Freedom to Learn**

Cornwall mentioned eight objections against freedom to learn.. These are:

1. Left to them, students would work at a low level and standards would drop
2. Students are not capable of working independently. This objection is usually based the assumption that students lack the basic skills and knowledge from which to begin to wok independently
3. It is more efficient and much quicker to use teacher-directed learning than to allow students to find out for them
4. In a highly structured subject it is essential that students be given a firm foundation of basic facts on which they can build
5. Students do not know what they ought to study
6. Most students prefer to be taught
7. Teacher cannot properly assess flexibility, adaptability, and other such qualities (Cornwall, 1982:198-203).

## **2.8. Constraints that Affect Freedom to Learn**

### **I. Philosophical Orientation of Teachers**

Enhancing or blocking of freedom to learn is partly influenced by epistemological orientation of teachers. If teachers advocate the positivists' philosophy that a teacher is the source of knowledge and knows best and the student is assumed as an empty receptacle to be filled with facts, it is impossible to facilitate independent learning. Such an activity according to Friere (1972:54) is a practice of domination of the learner by the teacher by virtue of power. The positivists' assumption of knowledge exists separately independent of the learners' perception, make the students' passive listeners who need to absorb or memorize highly simplified information for the purpose of repetition (Miller and Brewer, 2003:236). However, humanists criticize positivist assumption of rote learning as dehumanization of students and they advocate an opposite epistemology that is, constructivism.

The humanist referred constructivism as their base for knowledge claim. Humanists argue that, the learner constructed knowledge through an active and free interaction with the environment he/she situated (Rogers, 1969:152). This interaction helps the learner to understand and interpret his/her experiences (Ibid). To humanists the world is not seen as being made up of fixed facts; instead, it is unstable depending up on the interpretation of the learner or observer (Miller and Brewer, 2003:41).

Learning to humanists is, learner's free interaction with the world around his/her to understand, think, make linkage, interpreter, draw conclusions and communicate about what he/she is learning not to memorize and repeat facts accurately (Rogers, 1969:93). A humanist teacher is there fore expected to facilitate this interactive learning of students not pass down information from generation to generation (p.5).

## **II. Teachers' Abrogation of Authority and Responsibility**

Freedom to learn cannot be developed if teachers deny their authority and responsibility to influence learning (Boud, 1982:28). Boud argued that it might be difficult to imagine teachers who are not initiated in their own work environment being able to effectively assist students who are trying to make decisions of their own (Ibid). This failure to exercise authority and responsibility may lead to improper application of extrinsic rewards and incentives to students' performance (Ibid: 25). If students are judged and rewarded on grounds, which has no relevance to the goals of learning, it may block the effort to develop learner freedom hence independent learning and students themselves will be discouraged (Ibid). Boud added that if teachers are not free, they are not best facilitators of freedom to learn (Ibid; 25).

### **III. Lack of Necessary Resources**

Unavailability of the necessary human and non-human resources has a significant impact on freedom to learn. Instructional materials; committed and qualified teachers are highly needed to implement learning in freedom. Nevertheless, if these resources are not fulfilled with the required quantity and quality, the attempt to develop learner freedom might be aborted (Rogers, 1969:131-132, Perrot, 1982:135).

# CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

Methodology implies an approach that has set of rules and procedures that govern the research and give the structure of inquiry to draw conclusions from the evidence at hand (Miller and Brewer, 2003:192; Walker, 1996:99). These rules and procedures are used to evaluate and pass judgments about the quality of the work in the field (Ibid).

A qualitative approach is used to undertake this research. The rationale for selecting qualitative research paradigm is that advocates of it argued that an individual is an active creature having feelings, meanings, and intentions in accordance with the environment he/she lived in and he has the capacity to create his own realities (Laws, 2003:27). The advocates claimed that reality is partly constructed by the natives (participants) not by the categories constructed by the researcher, (\*which is the knowledge claim of quantitative researchers) who believed that reality exists outside the human mind (Ibid). Qualitative research proponents proposed that “background assumptions about people and situations; the taken for granted aspects of people’s live and the hidden issues” should be brought to fore to be viewed in the eyes of the public in a relatively safe way (Ibid).

According to Flick (2002) and Walker (2003), qualitative approach helps to view the participants understanding of reality; their socio-cultural knowledge and to bring their tacit knowledge to light (Flick, 2002:6; Walker, 2003:100). In addition, Flick (2002:6) stated that qualitative approach makes the researcher and the research flexible in improving and redesigning research objectives, research questions and methods of data gathering, sampling, data analysis, and other bodies of the study. Thus, for the aforementioned reasons, qualitative approach was preferred than quantitative one in order to have a deep understanding of the

phenomenon under study.

### **3.1. Research Design**

A descriptive case study was employed for this investigation in view of understanding the pedagogical approach in the context of freedom of students to learn. Case study helps to make a detailed exploration about a single case rather than making general explanations about a population (Bassey, 1999:24-25). Case study focuses on a few cases and many factors of the subject to be studied (p.24). It is possible to have intensive description for a single contemporary phenomenon with in its real life context. The study focused on FGSS's human and non-human factors, which had direct and indirect links to freedom to learn that enhance or inhibit it.

### **3.2. Sources of Data**

The sources of information for the study were teachers, students, principals, guards, Librarian, other government officials, parents, classrooms, and documents.

- **Teachers:** Since teachers are one of the important elements of the teaching learning process, their experiences are used as a useful source for the study.
- **Students:** Students were taken as one source of data to furnish important information pertaining to their freedom to learn
- **Principals:** since principals are responsible to the academic and non-administrative activities, they were used as source of data.
- **School Guards:** Guards had a direct link with students. They were expected to maintain disciplinary problems in the school. Thus, they were one source of data for the research.
- **Librarian:** Library is the major factor that helps to foster free learning. To get valid data about students' attachment to it, the librarian was interviewed.

- **Government Officials and Parents:** Government authorities and parents who had relations with students were other sources of data.
- **Classrooms:** Classrooms were the major areas where the instructional activities took place, were one sources of data.
- **Documents:** Valuable documents were used to supply data to the research.

### **3.3. Data Gathering Tools**

The intended information for this study was obtained through interview, observation, and document analysis.

#### **1. Interview**

Interviews were the primary data-collecting tool in this study. To get detailed information from research participants about the overall condition of freedom of students to learn, in-depth interviews were undertaken using unstructured and semi structured interviews. The process of interviewing was supported by audio-equipment (tape-recorder) to minimize lose of information. To minimize risk and increase confidentiality pseudonymous names were used to all participants.

#### **2. Observation**

Observation was the second data-collecting tool. Observation was used to obtain a first hand account of the situation and to give meanings of what is interviewed in terms of what is observed. Observation was employed to obtain information of the context in which events occur and enable to see things that participants are not aware of or that they are unwilling to discuss. To get such valuable data, the researcher stayed at the research site for more than 90 days. As an observer, the researcher watched what the participants do; listened to what they said and interact with them to get the required information.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

Sampling in qualitative research is conceptually different from survey. It is not sampling for representation and generalization to the universe, which follows the procedure of probability. Sampling in this research is purposeful that seeks highly informed informants. A total of twenty five participants were selected and among them eleven teachers (eight males and three females), nine students (five males and four females), one principal, one librarian, one school guard, head of Dega Damot Wereda Administrative Office and the head of Dega Damot Wereda Police Office. Accordingly, the researcher chose some sections from grade 9 and grade 10 based on students' cooperativeness and concern for their learning. This selection was done based on the witness of homeroom teachers, unit leaders, principals, and students themselves of the school. This was also applied to the selection of student informants to the interview. Teacher participants were selected based on the criteria of their willingness, concern, responsibility, and roles they played.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

According to Bogdan and Patton (1982) qualitative data analysis involves breaking the data in to manageable units, synthesize it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what the researcher will tell to the reader (cited in Hoepfl, 2006:no page). The data obtained through interview, observation, and document analysis are discerned, examined, triangulated, and interpreted in to meaningful patterns and themes.

Analysis of the data began with the identification/coding of themes emerging from the raw data. The mass of data were reduced in to some how meaningful reconfiguration by selecting, focusing, simplifying and transforming it from written field notes and transcriptions of recorded cassettes. The reduced data are combined and organized and displayed

in narrative form that permits to draw conclusions. To increase confidentiality of participants, pseudonymous names were used.

### **3.5 The Rationale for Selecting the Research Site**

The rationale for selecting Feres Bet General Secondary School as the site for this research was due to my personal experiences of being a native to Feres Bet. I was born and completed my primary and secondary education there. After I graduated from Addis Ababa University, I taught history for three months. After I left teaching and joined Dega Damot Wereda's Education Office, I had a direct contact with this school for administrative and academic purposes (to provide supervision services). Moreover, there were my friends who taught there, which created an easy communication with the other teachers. On the students' side, since I am a native of the Wereda, I was not a stranger to most of them. Some of the students were my relatives and neighbors. All these factors have facilitated the researcher's entry and access to the site and thereby develop my confidentiality. In fact, these closeness and affiliation with the school community highly helped me to go deep in to the phenomenon without difficulty.

The reason for including students from Grades 9 and 10, in this research was that I taught history and civic education subjects in these grade levels for about three years in government secondary schools in different areas including FBGSS. This teaching experience helped the investigator to have some general understanding about the behaviors of these students at these levels and in deed, it was helpful to me to have an easy interaction with these students.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter involves the general background of the research setting; history, physical and social conditions FGSS. The data obtained were also analyzed, interpreted, and presented in the form of narration.

### 4.1. Description of the Research Site

#### 4.1.1. Brief History of Feres Bet General Secondary School

Feres Bet General Secondary School (FGSS) is situated at the town of Feres Bet, which is the administrative center of Dega Damot Wereda. Feres Bet is found in the Amhara Regional State under the administrative Zone of West Gojjam, located southeast of Bahir Dar at a distance of 266 km and 401 km away from Addis Ababa. The town is one of the “less developed” towns of the Region, which has very poor infrastructures. There are a problems of transportation; lack of 24 hour electric power service, absence of automatic telecommunication, shortage of pure water, poor health service, etc.

Feres Bet General Secondary School was established in 1983 to provide academic services to those students of Dega Damot and near by Weredas who completed their primary education. The school was established by the initiative of some individuals worked in government offices and by high public demand and pressure for secondary education. Since its foundation, the school was named and renamed for several times. At its beginning it was called Feres Bet Junior and Senior Secondary School having grade levels from 7-12. Following the downfall of the *Dergue* regime, it was named as Feres Bet senior secondary school by separating the junior one (grades 7-8) from it, in 1996. The introduction of the new Education and Training Policy of the country in 1994 has certain

structural effects on primary and secondary schools. As a result, the level of the school was reduced to first cycle secondary school and became Feres Bet General Secondary School having only two grade levels (9 and 10) by the year 2001. By September 2006, Amhara Regional Education Bureau opened second cycle secondary school (11 and 12) in the same campus and now becomes Feres Bet General and Higher Education Preparatory secondary school. Since the study focused on grades 9 and 10 and for sake of convenience, I used the former name that is, Feres Bet General Secondary School.

#### **4.1.2 Physical set up of the School**

The school has an extended area of land and almost half of it was covered with eucalyptus trees (used for construction and maintenance purposes and partly as a source of income to run academic and administrative machineries). The school has volleyball and basketball fields. In the surrounding of the school, there are 23 blocks of buildings. For instructional purposes of (grade 9 and 10), 22 classrooms are used in double shifts. There were 21 sections in grade 10 having an average of 88 students in each and in grade 9, there were 22 sections having an average of 87 students in each section.

The physical appearances of classrooms were less attractive, dark, and its floor covers (made from bamboo) were worn out. Floors are filled with dust particles that are harmful to the health of students. Classrooms for grade 9 particularly were uncomfortable and had rough, clumsy, and broken chairs and tables that collapsed immediately following students leaving it (standing up). The seating arrangement was in rows where, all students faced the blackboard and it was highly crowded. In some classes of grade 9, there were no rows and columns; students sat in any order facing the teacher. It was impossible for the teacher to check and supervise students if she/he wanted. The school had a laboratory (non functional), pedagogical center (non-functional), library, and conference

hall and computer laboratory rooms. For administrative purposes, there were four rooms; two for store; one for the school's HIV/AIDS and Red Cross club; one for school guards and two toilet rooms (that serve only teachers and male students). There were 41 rooms constructed for the purpose of implementing preparatory education although, its construction was not finalized. The Amhara Regional State Education Bureau was also building eight additional rooms in the school that were expected to give services by the September 2007.

The school had a very poor sanitation. At any Corner of its surroundings, scattered distributed animal dung was very common. The vegetation areas were also filled with human excretes. The researcher observed cows, oxen, sheep, and some how horses were grazing in the compound from down to desk. I observed also particularly, at break times, students were urinating around bushes and trees.

#### **4.1.3 Social Conditions of the School**

When we see the human assets, 86 academic and non-academic staff members gave services for both the general and preparatory secondary school programs. These groups of people had different educational backgrounds that ranged from grade 10 (who were school guards) up to first-degree holders. The January 2007 statistics of the school indicates that, there were 29 male and 8 female college diploma holders; and 18 male first-degree holder teachers who taught in grades 9 and 10.

They had diverse experiences in teaching that ranged less than one year up to 12 years and more. Out of the 37 diploma teachers, 16 males and 6 females were currently studying for their degrees in the summer in-service training program of Bahir Dar University. For the second cycle, there were 17 male teachers, among them 16 were bachelor degree holders and the other one was a diploma holder, who was currently studying for his first degree in the summer in service training program of Bahir Dar University. Those staff members who serve in administrative

positions were totally 15. Among them, there were 3 male principals that had first degrees and of which 2 were deputies. The rest 5 were females and seven were males who were grade 12 completes had responsibilities in financial, secretarial, guarding and other administrative activities in the school. Here, one thing that needs to be clear was that some teachers taught in both the first and the second cycle grade levels.

FGSS had a total number of 3756 students enrolled in the school. In grade levels, the enrolment is shown below in the table:

Table 1, Student enrolment at FBGSS:

Grade Levels	Number of Students in Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Grade 9	1164	738	1902
Grade 10	1210	644	1854
Grade 11	383	258	641
Total	2757	1640	4497

Therefore, table1 indicate that the total enrolment in the school is 4497, which might be difficult to manage.

#### **4.1.4. Vision, Mission, and Goals of Feres Bet General Secondary School**

Behind the main gate of the school (to the right side) vision, mission and goals were displayed on a sheet of iron written in English language. Even though some of its characters were scratched and difficult to read, it is displayed as follows.

##### **Vision**

1. The school is very ambitious to create generations who are initiated enough in their knowledge, attitude and skill.

## **Mission**

1. Taking students to their fullest intellectual potential
2. The provision of thorough and systematic intellectual training in the fundamental discipline
3. Developing the pursuits of academic excellence

## **Goals**

1. Increasing students academic achievement according to their ability
2. Developing a spirit of co-operation among pupils and staff
3. Increasing promotion rate of students by 10 percent
4. Motivating the staff and the students by using different mechanisms.

For an external observer the school had these vision mission and goals but the principal of the school fictitiously, Tizazu Beshah reported that these things were non-functional and the school had other visions mission and goals. However, these new ones were not visible any where even in my interview with him, he never clearly stated them. The rest principals and teachers claimed that the vision, mission, and goals were those described above and until now there were no others.

### **4.1.5. Ethical Principles and Civic and Ethical Values**

Ethical principles and civic and ethical values were displayed separately, next to the right of vision, mission and Goals of the school. They were written in Amharic language and its translation reads like this.

#### **12 Ethical Principles**

1. Honesty
2. Loyalty
3. Transparency
4. Confidentiality

5. Responsiveness
6. Accountability
7. Working to community interest
8. Exercising legal Authority
9. Impartiality
10. Respect the Law
11. Serving the Society
12. Leadership

## **11 Civic and Ethical Values**

1. Building Democratic system
2. The rule of law
3. Equality
4. Justice
5. Patriotism
6. Responsibility
7. Industriousness
8. Self- reliance
9. Active community Participation
10. The pursuit of wisdom
11. Saving

## 4.2 Participants Understanding of Freedom as an Inviolable Right

Different thinkers viewed freedom from different angles of life experience of human beings, from political, economic, and social aspects. Similarly, my research participants understood freedom from its pedagogical aspect in various ways. For instance, a student participant fictitiously, Hiliena Misikir, conceptualized freedom in terms of learning without violation of her human and democratic rights. In her words:

*To me, freedom is learning without violation of my human and democratic rights by my teachers, friends, parents, and other individual.*

She claimed that she felt free when she was not forced to do something without her will and she needed those people who had direct and indirect contact with her to understand and accept her feelings otherwise, her academic success might be at risk. Hiliena explained that starting from her primary school at Grade 1 until now (Grade 10), she observed people who committed or suffered physical and psychological attacks of one against the other both in and out side the school: parents against their sons and daughters; teachers against their students; students against students etc. She wishes all these things to be changed.

In the same way, a student participant fictitiously, Befirdu Dagnachew viewed freedom as a cooperative life having rights and responsibilities that one had to deserve and exercise respectively. He said:

*No one is born to be forced to go in a certain direction by mere decision of an outside body. At the same time no one is created fully self-sufficient that did not need any support.*

He asserted, "Freedom is living in cooperation built on the willingness of individuals." Teachers need to work with students and students need to work with teachers and students need to feel responsible for their education.

Participant Students fictitiously, Tigist Teshager and Ashebir Behailu, understood freedom as learning with out demoralization and labor abuse. They explained that for various reasons, students were demoralized by the unethical activities of teachers (will be discussed later). In addition, they reported that, *"the government claimed that students should not do forced labor but we [students] are obliged to do so."* Another student fictitiously, Kibrua Yitebeqe mentioned that those students who failed to do their home works and committed other disciplinary problems were made to carry pieces of woods, dig the ground, or clean school surroundings as a punishment for their misbehavior.

I witnessed that one day I saw Grade 10 students who carried and transported heavy long pieces of eucalyptus woods to an individual's house that was neither a teacher nor staff member of the school. In the mean time, I heard students who were angry by the decision of those individuals that made them do so against their wills. All my student participants reported that demoralization and labor abuse were common practices in the school.

#### **4.3 Participants View of Freedom as Equality**

Kibrua, a student participant conceptualized freedom in terms of teachers' methodological treatment of the subject matter and students' interest. To her, *"freedom is equal treatment of individual and group interests."* She said that in her classroom, the major focuses and attentions of teachers were those gifted learners while the rest group members were ignored or dominated by a few. Teachers did not exactly felt the dominance of minorities' interest at the expense of majorities.

She explained that, *"students are oppressed by students."* That is during lectures, high achieving students respond by saying "Yes!" "Yah!" "Ok!" and showed gestures, and nodded their heads to indicate that they were communicating with teachers. At this time, teachers wrongly perceive

that all students understood the subject matter and they progressed to the next portion of the lesson. There were also teachers who ignored medium and low achieving students out of the domain as "lazy" who had less contribution to the process of teaching and learning.

However, in light of students' treatment, Manen has a different argument that a teacher should not choose his or her students like a friend or a lover or develop bond with some students (Manen, 1993:66). Instead, teachers need to treat students with love and care as they appear in classes and help them to develop identity, character, and selfhood (Ibid). Kibirua asserted that outstanding learners easily benefited from classroom discussion, but to cater for the needs of medium and low achieving students, teachers should create other learning environments such as tutorial programs.

On the other hand, student participant fictitiously Chirotaw Kefale viewed freedom from psychological perspectives of learners. In his understanding, *"freedom means expressing ideas and beliefs without fear, anxiety, and frustration and struggling to develop confidence."* He attempted to understand freedom in terms of classroom learning activities, in which the majority of students in the class were passive learners who did not say anything throughout the day during instruction. His justification was partly because of students' fear of making mistakes in front of their friends and teachers in the class. Chirotaw recommended that to reduce such kind of psychological problem students should be aware of equality of human beings. What makes the difference between students is their devotion to learning and the amount of time they invested.

Student participant fictitiously, Nestanet Bilelign, on the other hand defined freedom in terms of freeing oneself from unnecessary addictions. He said, *"Freedom is freeing one self from any form of addictions such as,*

*drinking, smoking, chewing chat etc.*” He added, “These mentioned behaviors were very challenging to life in terms of health and in fulfilling one’s duties and responsibilities, appropriately.” If a student had such kind of behaviors, he might not attend classes properly. Since most of the students in the school including him were dependent and came from poor families, they could not afford it financially. Addiction thus becomes a danger to students that might make them ineffective as result became hopeless to forth-coming life situations. Hence, they develop a feeling of inferiority.

Teacher participants shared a similar understanding among themselves about freedom in relation to teaching and learning. They viewed freedom as the rights of students to raise doubts and ask questions in and out side the classroom and, teachers’ responsibilities to listen, accept, and solve students' problems. However, in practical application of learning to be free they had two different ideas. Some argued that students in the school were learning freely and equally and the other group claimed that students were not learning freely and treated equally.

Those who mentioned that students were learning freely and equally argued, “*Every student is allowed the chance to raise their problems in classroom discussions and could be clear of with it.*” They gave an example to justify their argument as students were observed in comparing one teacher from another in terms of academic competency and inviting the competent one to teach and prohibiting the incompetent one from entering their classes. They hold this students’ act of choosing effective teachers from the less efficient as a major student practice of freedom. These group of participant teachers also understood freedom in terms of rights of learners coming to school, sitting in the class, and going back to home at the end of the day. Nevertheless, they did not mention the necessary qualities that made learners free from the inside. That is, they emphasized only external freedom of students but ignored

inner freedom of learners.

The other group of teachers' participants argued that for various reasons students were not free to learn and equally treated. Teacher participant fictitiously, Mintesnot Fekadu, believed that the provision of freedom is extremely valuable for self-development of learners and laying the foundation for the development of self-actualization in their later adulthood. However, the problem was that teachers were not working responsibly to enhance freedom to learn. Teachers are expected to exercise meaningful academic activities that are relevant to the learner. It seems that they gave little attention to the teaching learning process. Teachers' efforts to benefit learners in accordance with their needs were limited. In addition, it seems for teachers that they were working only for gifted learners the rest medium and lower learner were either ignored or left unfit to learning.

In addition, Mintesnot said that students did not have in-depth understanding of their freedom to learn. Students preferred dependence on the teacher and disliked those teachers who encouraged them to learn freely and responsibly. They were full of complains to do hard work. In his words:

*...I attempted to make students learn freely and responsibly either peacefully or through threatening them that they would lose some marks if they failed to do tasks and actively participate in class discussions. Nevertheless, I am not effective in all my works. Students lacked willingness and the courage to learn with interest.*

Mintesnot added that there were also teachers who were careless and non-responsive to their professional ethics. Moreover, poor instructional material supply was an obstacle to practice freedom to learn. As a result, he concluded that because of the prevalence of these major and other minor problems "*it is impossible to claim that students lean freely.*"

#### 4.4. Freedom as a Free Access to School Resources

Nestanet a student participant viewed freedom in terms of learning with qualified teachers and; free access to school instructional and other materials of the school. He said, "*freedom is learning with qualified teachers with full school facilities such as library, laboratory, textbooks, classrooms, desks and other necessary inputs.*" Nestanet reported that the major obstacle to learning in freedom was lack of sufficient amount and quality of human and non-human resources in the school. Like him, other participants agreed to the idea of poor supply and availability of inputs in the school. Participants explained that library student textbooks laboratory and broke of transmission of satellite television instruction were the major problems that affect their independent learning negatively.

The library of the school had some outdated books and question papers of national exams displayed on shelves. These books had almost no value to the teaching learning activities except for statistics purpose to report it as there are these numbers of books in the reading room a teacher participant fictitiously, Tihitena Mulluneh, said. Its area was so small that it might not exceed a medium size instructional classroom. It had only 60 chairs that were expected to serve a population of 4461 students and teachers, excluding those library users who came from outside. I interviewed the school librarian fictitiously, Bedilua Digafu, how the library could afford services to this large population. She explained with a saddened face that when there were large numbers of users, students had only 30 minutes to stay in it and must leave the space to the next group of readers and to staff members and visiting readers. She added there was no time limitation for teachers although mostly they do not use it, as they preferred to borrow books and read at their respective homes.

Student participants complained that in addition to poor holdings, the

working hours of the library were short. The librarian provided poor service to clients, including harassment «ታመናጭቀናለች::» Kibirua student participant said that she came to school for several days to read in her free times but there was no times that she was successful. Degu Alemayehu, teacher participant, elaborated the situation as:

*“Because of poor service of the library and absence of public library, students were seen sitting and reading under the tree and others were wasting their spare times wondering here and there gambling, playing jitney and Billiard.”*

Bedilua, a participant libertarian, accepted the truth of Kibirua’s idea. She said that because of personal health problem the library was inaccessible to clients when she got sick. I observed the library was closed for a week (on the fourth week of May, 2007) and in some working days; it was opened most of the time late.

Participants also asserted that scarcity of student’s textbook was another headache to the teaching and learning process. There were about 17-20 textbooks on the average in each section for students of 85 or 90. Since these books were distributed on lottery system students were unable to use textbooks freely at any time they went. Participant teachers described that due to shortage of textbooks, they were in trouble to enforce students to do academic tasks (home works and assignments). The scarcity of textbooks was created because of printing and delivery delay from the Amhara Regional Education Bureau.

Students indicated that there was a mischief in distributing textbooks to students. Those students who had relatives and close links with staff members got some extra textbooks from the school store. One of participant students Kibirua explained that she had an extra English textbook through her sister (staff member). In addition, other students got additional textbooks like her through affiliation.

Finally, a student participant, Ashebir declared on behalf of students *"students need freedom and independence but the school system in general and teachers in particular were oppressing us, mentally and physically and our voice for liberation is aborted."*

#### **4.5 Participants View of Inner Freedom**

Dearden (1972) believed that a student or a teacher is said to be internally free when he/she thinks and makes determination at least in important areas of his /her life (cited in Boud, 1982). This personal thinking and determination is possible by bearing relevant considerations in the activities of mind such as choosing, deciding, deliberating, reflecting, planning, and judging (Ibid).

Research participants' understandings of inner freedom go with the ideas of intellectuals. They reported that inner freedom in education is a personal motive. It is the attempt to learn independently with personal decisions without external compulsion or impulsion of senses to get some material interest. Chirota, a student participant asserted that he was internally ambitious to learning. That is why he had dropped out of the traditional church education and joined secular education. In his secondary school education, he said, *"I am responsible to my learning more than any body else. I attempt to perform academic requirements with less teacher pressure."* In most cases, he described that he completed educational tasks earlier, before the teacher reached to that particular lesson for classroom activities.

Another student, Ashebir said, he had the initiation to learn by himself overcoming those parental and somehow pedagogical problems. Ashebir described that even though his families did not support his academic activities; he determined to learn effectively and complete his secondary education with great success and change his future life conditions. It seems for Ashebir that he had set his goals and objectives of his learning

to be achieved through education to make his future life conditions better.

Nevertheless, teacher participants criticized majority of students as less interested and discouraged in their learning. Teachers referred students' earlier educational backgrounds as the major reason for their loss of internal initiation to take the responsibility for their learning.

#### **4.6 Students Demanded Freedom from Treatment as "Empty Vessel"**

Psychologists suggest that contents of different subjects are prepared to promote benefit of learners. These contents should be instructed through appropriate methods of teaching to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes and more importantly to train the minds of learners for an independent leaning that help them to change themselves and their situation. In light of this idea, the researcher interviewed teachers understanding of methods of teaching and its application. A teacher participant, Mintesnot reported:

*Teachers know pedagogical and psychological theories that state what teaching and learning look like, during their pre-service trainings in college and universities. These theories emphasize that any teaching activity in a formal schooling should satisfy the needs of the learner.*

Other teachers confirmed that they did not have problem with the theoretical aspects of teaching and learning but the problem was its application. They said there were several obstacles that hinder them from going in line with the suggestions of educators and psychologists. Among these problems, the major one was students' prior educational background and its deficiencies. Tizazu, a principal reported that students who completed Grade 8 and joined this school, having several personal and academic problems. He said that the administration system of primary schools was a laissez-faire type and haphazard and

students conditioned by it and expected such kind of environment here, in this school. These students came to school late and would want to go home early. They hate to attend classes through out the day. In general, they were ineffective academically and did not know how to learn and how to behave in school life, «ይለቀስ አያውቁ፣ ይዘፈን አያውቁ::»

I observed that in each school day, many students were pleading with the school guards at the Main Gate, to come out of the school compound. This was especially observed at break times. One of the guards' Tateqe Kumlachew reported that these groups of students did not bother about their education and wanted to miss class and go to their own personal business somewhere.

Tateqe argued that they used those unemployed graduates from private teacher training colleges live in the Wereda as an instance so that no need to sit in classes for longer time. In an informal discussion with these students, I understood that, the above-mentioned group of graduates had created a negative impact on students that they might no succeed to change their lives through learning. They said *"These graduates learned for about 11-13 years in schools and colleges but left with an empty hand..."* They hold that they wanted to use their times in other productive fields other than learning. Nevertheless, what they needed the Ministry of Education was to give them a certificate, which mentioned, *"The undersigned students had completed grade 10."* They need this certificate as a means to be employed if there are government vacant posts when need arises. According to Tateqe, school guard participant, that is why they came early in the morning to have an attendance not to be dismissed for absenteeism and left the school either through the main gate or jumped over the fence.

A teacher participant, Girum Damot, expressed a similar instance. In his words:

*In these days teaching and learning becomes a joke, a joke with out communication. In my, classes' students did not understand what I am saying. To make things clear, I continuously explain the subject matter in English and more in Amharic languages. Students never understand neither language explanation.*

Learning is meaningful when it begins with the real life of the learner and the environment where he/she situates (Davis, 1971:3). In any teaching and learning process, it is fundamental to consider previous learning experiences and learners needs (Bound, 1982:26). For Girum, it seems that he failed to understand the existing mental, physical, emotional levels of his students. If he did this and began from those gaps, such kind of failure to communicate with his students might be reduced and increased learning. The only thing that Girum did was, he attempted to identify that there was no much information in their minds, and all of his attempts were directed to pour facts in to their mind so that they were full of it. It seems that he did not go far to identify the causes of this problem and tackling it to improve this weakness and increase learners' effectiveness.

To the contrary, a teacher participant fictitiously, Kindu Belachew was a resistant to letting students free to learn. If students were free to learn, they might jump some important facts of the subject matter to be acquired. He argued that such kind of teaching methods led learners to miss to raise, some major points of the daily lesson in classroom discussions and presentations. To him, making learners to mention/memorize these jumped facts, took time. The only thing that he wanted to do was he decided which information is necessary to the learner to be remembered then narrating them. However, Rogers (1969:114) criticized that teachers who attempted to fill the intellectual vacuum of students is their failure to trust students' as human beings. Boud also argued that whatever the cases are, students must not be treated as an empty vessel (Boud, 1982). Boud holds that even newly arrived student brings a vast wealth of experiences about his/her own

reasons for taking a particular subject (Ibid). If learner's prior experience is abandoned, the teaching will be inefficient, the students will receive message, and his ability to synthesize and construct knowledge will be degraded (Ibid).

Student participants had a different idea to what Girum had said. Although they agreed that, there were students who had such kind of qualities like he mentioned. In the words of Ashebir:

*Even though there are some students who do not care about their learning, the majorities are sensitive and eager to learn. However, the problem is teachers' competence to facilitate learning. Teachers could not identify our [students] knowledge needs and rushed to fill these knowledge gaps. We students are here to learn, we did not have other business. Teachers need exactly to understand it but they did not. Some teachers came to class with less academic preparation and psychological readiness to teach. They entered the room, put their hands in their pockets, and spent our time telling unnecessary issues that have no relation with the subject matter at hand. Sometimes these teachers missed classes.*

In relation to this, scholars said that trends of school system need teachers to equip themselves with the necessary professional competence and spirit and are committed to make constructive contributions to this end (Goodlad, et al. 1991:69).

Ashebir criticized the teaching methods used by teachers as similar, poor, and incompatible to the requirements of the current educational and training policy of the country as follows.

*I am very much surprised and feel guilty by those teachers who simply narrate those mathematical contents like history do, with out showing the necessary procedural steps of solving the question on the black board. Other social science teachers too, continuously dictate students what comes to their mind since, the beginning to the end of the period. In the mean time, the only chance students have to listen them quietly. Students are not allowed to*

*raise question and doubts. If students did so, they would be insulted, threatened, and even expelled out of the room. Students feared them like an armed individual who comes to make them silent... Most teachers advised students to ask questions at the end of lecture but, no more time left for this purpose, which is contrary to the new education and training policy advocacy of active learning.*

Hiliena a student participant also said that she expected her teachers to follow-up activities of learners, provide tasks, checking it whether students did it or not and arrange tutorial programs to those lower and medium achievers and female students. She said except lecturing teachers never did any thing to empower students. Erickson argued that when the student perceives his/her interest is to be fundamentally in conflict with that of the teacher and when the student resists the teacher by with holding learning, the teacher is unable to teach (Erickson, 1986:137).

My observation witnessed teachers' dominance and students' passiveness starting from introduction to the end of the instruction. The only thing that dominated the environment was the voice of the teacher. Students were calm; extremely bored; even dreaming. Their eyes weakly followed the drama of the teacher that seems felt the teacher to stop lecturing or come out of the room and be relaxed. In an informal discussion with students whom I got wondering in the school compound declared that except note taking classes they were impatient to sit and listen an extended lecture of the teacher, «የእሱን ልፍለፋ ማን ቁጭ ብሎ ማን ያዳምጣለ::»

I interviewed participant teachers why they used lecturing as the only, best method of instruction. Mintesnot reported on behalf of teachers that teacher themselves were not free to promote freedom of students to learn.

*Teachers could not make students to learn actively (in fact, the best way that ensures freedom to learn) in their classroom interactions for various reasons. First, problem of large class size reached up to 90 students in each*

*section. Second, there is lack of sufficient textbooks. The third problem is learners' lack of willingness to take the responsibility of their learning. Fourth, freedom to learn creates additional task on teachers compared to lecturing. Fifth, teachers have over load of credit hours, reached up to 30 periods, teaching above 14 sections. Six, There is no material and financial incentives to teachers.*

Mintesnot was arguing that these problems of the school limited teachers' freedom; hence inhibit the promotion of learning to be free.

To the other side of the coin, Minesnot added that there was the belief on the part of students that the only best teacher to them was the one who grasp the facts stated in the textbook and presented it in the classroom like a journalist who reads news in a radio or television. A teacher who attempts to make learners to discuss and present freely in his/her classes is, criticized by his/her students as an incompetent teacher. Students felt as they are doing the teacher's business. As a result, the teacher turned his/her face towards lecturing and did most of class room activities "መምህሩ የቤት ስራ ይሠጣል መልሶ ራሱ ይሥራል።" Iyasu reminded that teachers had the concept of making students to learn freely by themselves but they were pulled back by the these feelings of learners (who did not want to challenge hard work).

Participants did not deny that there were teachers who attempted to make students to learn by themselves (such as civic and ethical education, history, mathematics and geography subjects' teachers) although their attempts were limited. These teachers tried to make students to perform assignments and present it in the class. However the activities were not properly planned and students' performance were not well evaluated and recorded.

In the same token teacher participant fictitiously Aschenaqi Tagaye claimed that when students became free to learn, they did unnecessary things in the class such as writing certain information on pieces of

papers and throwing it to friends, discussing social issues ignoring the subject, laughing, sitting idle, etc. He maintained that theoretically, freedom to learn was interesting but practically it was destructive to the teaching and learning process and less suitable to cover contents. All participant teachers agreed that the contents of each subject are vast and often complex so difficult to cover on time in accordance with the stated academic calendar. As a result, teachers forced to incline to lecturing instead of helping students to develop confidence and learn independently.

Research participants indicated that poor administrative system of the school affected freedom to learn, negatively. A teacher participant fictitiously Yehuala Teshome said:

*... School administrators lack knowledge of how to plan coordinate, organize, and lead the system. They are amateurs who lack administrative skills who work in try and error. Moreover, they did not know how the structure of the school system works. They did not know clearly the rights and responsibilities of teachers and other personnel in it. Direct interference of directors in professional activities of teachers is observed. An organized Supervision, inspection, and other academic supports to teachers to improve the situation never exist. In fact, these problems are direct reflection of above officials of the hierarchy. Regional Education Bureau's control and follow up of Zonal Education Department (West Gojjam) is very weak. Zone Education Department to Woreda Education Office has loose control. Woreda Education Office to schools and schools to teachers is similar. In general, the weakness of control and follow up in the hierarchy lead teachers to work in unorganized and miscellaneous way. Moreover, to school administrators, teaching and learning is interpreted in terms of covering the content in accordance with the academic calendar and the annual lesson not in terms of knowledge acquisition and behavioral changes of learners.*

Student participants too explained that the school administrative machinery was failed to screen those students and teachers who had

disciplinary problems and taking the necessary correcting measures. The school principals admitted that there were such kinds of problems. They themselves were busy through meetings and conferences and other conditional activities in the Wereda and other areas so that they did not do appropriate administrative activities.

In an informal discussion with teachers, they had dissatisfaction with school administration system and they were not treated properly. For example, they mentioned that they had a grievance in the application of result-oriented evaluation done by students and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members. They complained that they got results that did not express their efforts, which were lower than what they expect. They related the problem directly to the principals' poor administration system that they never properly orient those students and PTA members why and how this evaluation was done. Teachers said that numbers were simply put in front of their names but nothing was said about their weakness and strong sides and didn't differentiate efficient teacher and less efficient one's, They felt that they were demoralized, less motivated to teach properly "ሠርተን እንዳልሠራን እየተደረግን ነው።"

Teacher participants mentioned administrative problems, which limited them partly to administer proper assessment activities. Bakalu reported, there was an interference by Woreda Education Office experts and school principals who forced some teachers to add some grades to those incompetent students, «ተባበሯቸው እንባላለን» In an informal discussion, teachers seriously, with an in depth feeling, expressed that some grade 9 students were detained by 2005/2006 academic year because of poor performance. However, through unjustifiable reasons, these students made to promote to grade 10 by direct interference of the Wereda's highest officials, called Cabinets. These cabinets decided to give summer tutorial programs for the aforementioned students and promoted to

grade 10. These teachers highly resented in the direct interference of their professional freedom and the right to pursue it. In addition, currently teachers said that officials who have highest authority informally told them not to give students below pass marks in their own respective subjects.

These teachers also had other complains that directed toward the government of the country. They said that they know how to benefit students but they had some basic question that should be solved. One was money and the second was workload.

They claimed that if the Ethiopian government needed them to work appropriately in accordance with pedagogical and methodological principles it had to pay sufficient amount of salary and other over time and part-time incentives. Secondly, the amount of credit hours should be reasonable. Iyasu said that in the existing condition he could not do more than lecturing if he did more than these he was doing additional instructional activities to which he was not paid.

In the discussion of over loaded working hours, it is essential to see some important things in it. Teacher participants said that they had 25-30 credit hours per week, which is 5-6 periods per day, each period having 42 minutes. This indicated that they were working 3 and half hours to 4 hours and 20 minutes per day. However, it was said that each government civil servant had to work an 8 hours per day. Therefore, they had 4 and half to 3 hours and 40 minutes free time per day. Teacher participants also reported there were teachers who had 15 periods per week who worked about 2 hours per day, even less than it. In addition, I observed that many teachers sat in the school lounge for longer time and wondering here and there in and out side the school compound.

## **4.7 Students Demanded Freedom from Superficial Continuous Assessment**

Success and failure of any teaching learning process is evaluated through proper assessment of students' performance with appropriate measuring standards. To this end, Ministry of Education (2002) urged the national educational institutions to apply continuous assessment in judging students educational progress.

The Amhara National Regional State Education Bureau too on its part tried to influence its schools to use proper assessment Tizazu, a principal participant said. In a similar pattern, Feres Bet General Secondary School was attempting to apply it although the practical application had problems. The evaluation mechanism of the school had some sort of paradox and misunderstandings in it. There were dilemmas about assessment standards between principals, teachers, and students, even between teachers and students.

The administrative group forced teachers to use continuous assessment but teachers had their own resistance to it because, of large class size, over load and other obstacles but they had to do it. In my interview, teachers reported that the government forced them to use such kind of evaluation mechanism more than administering tests but its application is difficult. For instance, a teacher participant fictitiously, Tibiqa Getachew, highly resisted that if she wanted to assess students continuously and support them; she needed to know every aspect of each student's psychological, emotional, and physical conditions. In her words:

*...I have 28 credit hours per week teaching in 14 sections, each section having more than 85 students on the average let alone understanding the overall states of learners, there are students whom I did not know to which grade and*

*section they belonged. However, I have to use continuous assessment. However, I administer it superficially.*

Teachers were expected to make continuous assessment that weight 40 percent and final exam 60 percent. For continuous assessment, teachers are expected to establish different standards that could evaluate the weakness and strength of each learner. Tibiqa said that she thought to use quiz, test, group assignment, field trip and class activities, as criteria to assess learners but she did not decide which standards to use.

All teacher participants reported that they attempted to assess students continuously but they applied it superficially because of the prevalence of those problems what Tibiqa mentioned.

My student participants agreed with teachers' idea of superficiality of assessment but they had a reservation in the application of several evaluation standards. They said, in most cases, teachers used paper-pencil tests, group assignments, and unclearly defined class activities. That is, at the end of the semester teachers gave some marks that did not exceed more than ten in the name of class activities and for the neatness of their notebooks. Nevertheless, they said that they did not know which class activity was evaluated and; the given marks were almost similar to all students of the class that range on the average from 8 to 10.

Student participants had other dissatisfactions on group work evaluation. Befirdu said that the whole students of the class was divided into some groups and were given similar often, different assignments to be done and submitted to the teacher. He reported that few gifted students did these assignments. Sometimes other teachers did these assignments. It was then handed over to subject teachers as a result; the same mark was given for all group members. Participant students criticized such an evaluation mechanism as an inefficient to differentiate students of harder workers from those less hard workers. Befirdu summarized the situation as *"teachers used continuous assessment as an*

*instrument to gather marks but not judge students behavioral changes*  
«የማርክ ማጠራቀሚያ ነው ያደረጉት::»

Nevertheless, Aggrawal (1994:78) argued that assessment is not mere collection of information instead collection with purpose to come up with an integrated development of the whole personality of the learner.

Solomon Fikiru, student participant declared that this tradition of doing assignments by few students and providing the same marks to group members produced many students who cling to the hard working students and score good marks (which was sported by cheating). The situation reduced the competitive spirits among students and discouraged high achiever students (which might lead them to develop dependency and loss confidence) that backfired independent learning. Solomon demanded tests instead of assignments.

Hileina, student participant had a different idea about group work assessment. She said that "*group work is important to lower and medium achievers because, it helps them to learn more by discussing with friends and help them to make a vigorous reading to get good marks compared to tests.*" A teacher participant, Tibiqa on her part argued that lower and medium students liked group work very much because they scored better grades in it than paper pencil tests .On the contrary higher achievers hated it as wastage of time and inefficient to differentiate learners. Teachers knew these problems of doing assignments by a few and providing similar marks to the mass but it was difficult to them to administer it properly because of large class size and over load of periods.

The feelings of students about group assessment indicated that there was unjust evaluation of students, which was not done in accordance with each student's contribution to the work done. This was probably due to teachers' lack of concern to employ the mechanism properly.

#### **4.8 Freedom from Cheating at Exam Halls**

The discussion of assessment raised another challenge that was cheating at examination halls, which created high dependency of one student on the other that in turn negatively, affected an independent learning. Participants claimed that except some students the rest were seen striving to copy answers from those whom they believed students. Samson Shiferaw teacher participant explained that majority of students were attempting to grab answers from their near by sitting friends. Except limited students, no one looked towards the black board and read what the question was. He added the general attitudes of students were in one way or another to get good passing marks, not to learn and bring about behavioral changes. He strongly believed that this was the result of the direct impact of their experiences at primary school education.

According to participant students, during their primary school education they adapt unjust educational experiences. Student participants particularly expressed that at primary schools evaluation was a simple writing of numbers on mark list in front of students' names. They said that students registered at Grade 1, in spite of whether they came to school or not or whether they acquired knowledge and skills they reached grade 8 without any problem. They raised a very surprising example; a child who died when at he was at Grade 1 was reported that after three years he reached at grade 3.

In an informal discussion with full cycle primary schools' principals, promotion of students from grade to grade without acquiring the required skills and knowledge was a common tradition in these schools. There were students who could not read and write their names but reached Grade 5 and above. Students that never properly spell Latin alphabets were also common even at grade 9. This was done due to teachers' fear of getting low result in result-oriented evaluation. If students scored

lower results in their respective subjects and eventually detained there was a belief on the part of teachers that they would get low results in result-oriented evaluations. As a result, whether students brought about behavioral changes or not, pass marks were written on their report cards. There was a traditional saying in the area, especially in the first cycle (grades 1-4), if a student is detained, the situation was reversed and it was said as the "teacher detained «ተማሪው ከወደቀ መምህሩ ወደቀ ነው የሚባለው፡፡»

Students still maintained that when they reached at Grade 8, subject teachers, gifted students and examiners collaboratively did the Regional Exam and almost all of them who took the exam promoted to the next grade level «እንደበግ ተነድተን ነው የመጣነው፡፡»

At secondary school, students expected such kind of environment and wanted to get pass marks without doing any thing. Instead of studying and exercising duties, students were seen in designing techniques of how to copy exam answers from their classmates. This system of student transition from grade to grade made many students dependent to their friends and eroded the intention to learn in freedom. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education demanded that the transition of students from one grade to the next and from one lesson to the preceding one when they acquired the required skills at each particular level which is checked through proper evaluation (Ministry of Education, 2002:39).

A teacher participant Tihitena, who did an action research for partial fulfillment of the requirements of her bachelor's degree, on cheating claimed, *"since majority of students are lower achievers, they adopted cheating as the best outlet to pass from grade to grade."* She argued that the school had a fertile ground for this behavior of students to be reinforced. The school had over crowded sitting arrangements. There were teachers who were laissez-faire (did not control students properly at exam halls). Moreover, students themselves were highly collaborative to

disseminate exam answers to their friends. Tihitena suggested that improving sitting arrangement and making examiner teacher responsive as a remedy to reduce the problem.

Participants pointed out another most destructive problem that particularly affected girls' students, academically and personally. This was the transaction of marks against sex. Kibirua a student participant claimed that those girls who were poor in their performance made some sort of sexual relations with male students whom they believed that they would help in supplying answers in exams and doing other academic tasks. In addition, student participant fictitiously Aster Assemu, indicated that there were teachers who committed sexual intercourse using girls' academic weakness as a gap. Girls who had low performance were raped for sake of obtaining passing marks.

Tamiru Yineger, teacher participant described that sexual transaction against marks liable many girls for sexual transmitted diseases and pregnancy. It was said that roughly, there were 90-150 pregnant students in the school. As a result, act of abortion and leaving newly born infants to the forest happened. In addition, some pregnant students were drop out of school. Tamiru also indicated that for the unknown reason some girls were psychologically stressed and sometime became faint, fall on the ground, and shout. At this time, students were disturbed and became difficult to teach or learn.

#### **4.9. Student Demanded Freedom from Physical Harassments in the School**

Psychologists proposed that avoiding any form of punishment is advisable in education. Student participants reported that they were punished, insulted, and threatened by principals, unit leaders, and the school guards for major or minor misbehaviors. Subject teachers particularly, punished student, severely. For instance, Nestanet student participant said that teachers kicked students without identifying their

sensitive body parts, " ሲግቱ አይገነሽ ጥርስህን ሳያሉ ያወላልቁናል።" Student participants claimed that among subject teachers, physical education teachers were very cruel in committing corporal punishment. In addition, they forwarded unnecessary, demoralizing, words such as "donkey, bull stupid non-sense dull etc."

Female students pointed out that their physical education teachers were attacking particularly girls physically, psychologically, and morally. These teachers forwarded taboo words toward girls for being they were created biologically as females. In addition, these teachers purposely gave to some girls whom they wanted for sexual intercourse, a very low grade, and some times, it was said that they succeeded in raping them.

I interviewed the head of physical education department, Samson Shiferaw about the truth of what has been claimed by students. He confirmed that some members of the department including him had certain qualities of punishing and demoralizing students on the belief to make students disciplined and learn better. Department members raised the issue and made series of discussions and evaluation on each teacher's misbehaviors. As the result, corrective measures were taken and now teachers were some how improved their behaviors. However, Samson had a different idea about sexual harassments of girls by these teachers. He went some steps to identify the victims of it, but he did not get any valid information that proved the situation. He concluded that it was an ordinary rumor forged to create popular dislike on these teachers.

The school principal participate, Tizazu shared the idea of student participants and indicated that he had observed some unethical activities on some of these teachers, such as making appointments for individual girls on non-school days in their office and sport fields. He witnessed that; he saw one of these teachers who gave make up practical exam on Saturday (even though he stopped the teacher from doing so from that day onwards). Moreover, Tizazu said that there was a rumor that some

of these teachers gave practical make up exams at their living homes to girls. Tizazu added that there were much complains that came to his office by students and their parents against these teachers for their unethical professional activities.

As a result the cases of two physical education teacher who had serious disciplinary problems were tried by the School and Wereda Educational Administration and Training Boards' members, and finally these teacher were punished in money and one of them was send to a certain remote rural primary school to teach there as a demotion.

According to teacher participant fictitiously, Lamiro Dejenie, student harassment was common in the school Students were punished for failure to do their home works, punished for coming to school late and; sometimes insulted because they raised questions and doubts in classes. Lamiro also reported that some teachers threatened to revenge students who evaluated teachers' performance and gave low results to them in result-oriented evaluation.

I asked participant students to express their feeling when teachers punish or insulted them. They asserted that they were too much depressed; strongly hate the teacher and the subject he taught. They did not follow what had been going on in the class attentively and they thought things of outside the classroom.

On the contrary, Degu, teacher participant claimed that the current situation of the school, which emphasizes on respect of rules and regulations and observance of the law, challenged teachers to teach freely. He reported that students were very much sensitive to their rights and they forget to exercise their duties and responsibilities. He further explained that students defined their responsibilities as their rights. When they failed to do their duties, teachers could not punish or reprimand them because the law forbids them to do so. This made

teachers to teach their students *"neither rebuking their heads nor pinching their ears."* Degu on the other hand complained that students were evaluating teachers' performances efficiency not based on their efforts to help students based on their cruelty.

#### **4.10 Students demanded Freedom from Harassment for Political Cases**

Student participants claimed that in addition to school problems that offended them to learn freely, there were also other illegal acts committed on them outside the school. Ashebir pointed out that the Wereda policemen and Feres Bet 01 *Keble* armed group of people called «ታጣቂች» cruelly attacked male students. This armed group took students taking out of their dormitories and harassed them, at night. Ashebir said that this was done for political reasons that following May 15, 2005 national election students were categorized informally as members and supporters of Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPDRF) and members and supporters of Coalition for Unity Democracy (CUD) political parties.

Ashebir, Solomon and other students whom I talked in informal discussions nervously explained that those students who were suspected to be members and supporters of CUD were severely chastised, disturbed and even imprisoned by the above mentioned armed group of people. While, those students who were expected to be supporters and members of EPRDF facilitated conditions against suspected CUD members and were free to do what ever they want «ቅንጅቶች የሚባሉት ይደበደባሉ አሁክዲጎች ይዘናናሉ።» Yeshamed added that there were also students who were cruelly punished on behalf of their relatives whom they were suspected to be members of CUD.

Adane one of the victims of it expressed the situation in an elaborated way as follows.

*...The reason is that during the 2005 election CUD was the winner and EPRDF was the loser of it. As a result, the Wereda Administrative Office (the highest authority at wereda level) and members of EPRDF conclude that the major cause for their Political failure was students themselves. They believe that before and during May 15, 2007 students of secondary schools played a great role in agitating the society not to elect EPRDF candidates and students were the main instruments of CUD in disseminating its political programs, objects and propagandas and students were the one who resisted EPRDF's political, economic and social ideas in different meetings and conferences. Thus, to revenge this political loss, armed groups began to attack the suspected, students.*

Ashebir explained his experience as one day at night; the policemen took him out from his dormitory accompanied with corporal punishment until down. In the coming day he scored 5 out of 15 at mathematics test because, he did not read and prepared for the exam as the result of the problem. Participant students described that they faced anxieties at night and could not read and perform their home works freely.

I interviewed the Wereda's Administrative and Security Office head and Police Office head, Siletanu Bazizew and Assistant Inspector Endalkachew Yigezu, respectively about the truth of students' claim of their human and democratic rights violations. Lake said it is true that students had played a great role during election process in favor of CUD and opposing EPRDF but their mode of support and opposition was not done in a democratic and peaceful manner.

*Students and other members of the society who supported CUD reveal their opposition against EPRDF was by committing illegal activities. Such as disturbing urban dwellers, by throwing stones on their houses [mainly government officials and supports of EPRDF, obtained at informal discussions], by a continuous laud (shouting and often by calling names of individuals declaring that someone has lost his life); stealing dwellers properties; and creating sanitation problems.*

To settle such kind of security problems, there was group of people called «ፎንደፕ» recruited from the *Kebele* to keep peace and security of the town. When disturbance created this group of people moved to the areas and attempted to settle it. In the mean time he believed that problems of threatening and light punishment of students "SNAWV" might have happened. Nevertheless, he underlined that there was no any measure taken against CUD supporters and members for political reasons, unless failure to respect the law.

Endalkachew Police Office head participant, on his part explained his experience with particular reference to students disciplinary problems that during exam weeks and examination's result report dates, they were seen shouting, drinking moving at nightfall, until 2:00 am to 3:00 am even quarreling with the policemen and other peace keeping people of the town. At this time attempts were made not to hurt these students when measures were taken to control the situation but he believed that there might some sort of mistakes committed on them. Endalkachew also indicated there were teachers who over drank and disturb at night together with their students. However, in informal discussions with teachers there were teachers who were victims of 2005 election like students for being suspected as members and supporters of CUD.

In informal discussions with some of the armed group of people, they said that when students disturb dwellers, sometimes sorts of corporal punishments were taken against students as a measure to correct their discipline. This indicated that there was a likely hood of student's harassment even though, it is difficult to generalize whether it was done for political reasons or not.

Students indicated that there were students who had disciplinary problems and disturb the dwellers at night. However, the disciplinary problems of these students were used as a pretext to attack suspected

CUD members and supporters. Students demanded that peace keeping people of the Wereda to respect the law and not to harass them. They strongly urged that if there are students who move against the law, it is preferable to take them to the court.

#### **4.11 Students Demanded Freedom from Parental Harassment**

Solomon, a student participant maintained that the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution states that children should learn freely with proper protection, love, and, economic support etc. However, some parents were not found in a position to afford the necessary financial and material support to their children's educational needs. For instance, Ashebir a student participant explained that his families were in different to support his education. In his words:

*My families never provide me with proper financial, material, and nutritional support. It is my friends and relatives partly funded my learning expenses. My families needed me to drop my education and become a cowboy to a rich farmer household and generate money. As a result this attitude of my families made me to come out of their house even though; I am not a street boy until now.*

Solomon, student participant, said on the behalf of rural boys' and girls' that their parents, needed the labors of students for agricultural and other activities and wanted them to be absent in school days.

*... Parents forced students to miss some academic days and perform agricultural activities such as plowing, weeding, harvesting, herding cattle etc. To girls, particularly, parents needed them to fetch water, collect firewood, and look after their younger sisters and brothers (this true for urban girls).*

Solomon further explained that these students were in a dilemma whether to be absent and help their parents or to go to school ignoring parents' ideas. That is, if they were absent from school, they might loss

tests, quizzes and more than these they had to learn to gain knowledge and skills; and if they came to school ignoring parents' ideas, parents might nag, punish, or expelled them out from the household. He further explained that there were parents who made students to do some laborious tasks before they went to school and after they returned from school. This made learners unable to read and complete their assignments on time using their spare time. This failure to do academic tasks had a vicious circle, which result misunderstandings with subject teachers and poor academic performance.

In light of education and economy Erickson argued that when the life situation of the poor are difficult and if their vision of life situations is limited, families of the poor may not provide children with the amount of intellectual stimulation and motivation for achievement (Erickson, 1986:186).

In informal discussions with students, their parents were not voluntary to allow their students to do academic activities such as reading, doing assignments and homework at nighttime. They said that since the town had no a 24 hour hydroelectric power supply, the society used firewood and gas as a source of heat and light. These resources especially gas was costly compared to their economic potential. As a result, parents ordered their students not to over consume it «እናነባለን ብላችሁ ላምባውን እንዳትጨርሱት ይሉናል::»

Solomon also pointed out that there were parents who did not have a positive attitude towards students' attendance of modern education. This group of parents called modern education as an education of "*devil spirit* «የሠይጣን ትምህርት::» They believed that modern education made their children to deny Orthodox Christianity religion (the dominant religion of the area). These parents need their boys to go and learn church education and need their girls to be farmers strongly observing the faith. According to him, the students from such kind of parents were

To the contrary, participants declared that, there were parents who made their children extremely free. This group of parents gave excess money to their children to finance academic expenses. However, they did not make proper follow up of "*what do students do? Where do students use their times?*" As a result, according to them these students develop unnecessary addictions such as over drinking; smoking cigarette; chewing chat; committing unsafe sexual intercourses; creating disciplinary problems both in and outside school and sometimes they attempted to break down female students dormitories to rape.

Female student participant on the other hand mentioned that they faced multidimensional problems to learn freely. Because of economic problems, more female students reaching up to eight or nine in number lived in a single house together with male students. As a result because of close intimacy some became pregnant and; often dropped out of school. Those girls who lived in independent dormitories were also disturbed at night by ill-disciplined males. Teacher participant, Tsehay Mull explained that she knew many girls who were raped by students and other individuals when they came back to their homes from school and; in their dormitories.

My research participants referred absence of sufficient secondary schools in the Wereda as the source of some of the above-mentioned problems. There were only two secondary schools which were expected to give service to those students who came from ten full cycle primary schools and of which majorities came to FGSS. The school is located far a way from the residence of students. When these students departed for their parents, they faced political, economic, and social problems. To minimize these problems, participants suggested that secondary schools should be expanded so that students can learn living with their parents.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This chapter has two sections, one is conclusion part, and the next is implication. In the conclusion, part attempts were made to indicate the results and the possible conclusions drawn out of the research. The implication part also showed the educational implication of the research results.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this research indicate that participants have no problem with the theoretical aspect of freedom to learn at least in a very general sense. Research results reveal the participants understanding of external freedom as an inviolate right of learners to be protected by the law; and pedagogical rules and regulations (that should be evolved from the existing experiences of students and to be practiced on the basis of rationality, equality and humanity). Participants understood inner freedom as a personal self-determination of the learner to be responsive to ones learning.

The findings showed that students need freedom. Freedom to learn requires the cooperative attitudes of teachers and students among themselves .It is not a phenomenon pursued separately one from the other. Instead, it is teachers' belief to show respect, sensitivity, and encouragement toward students and students feeling of the teacher that he/she is there to assist their progress.

Research findings revealed that the promotion of freedom to learn needs the availability of necessary inputs such as qualified teachers, textbooks,

libraries, comfortable classrooms, teaching aids, laboratories and others. Nevertheless, the research found out that these human and non-human resources were not found in the required quality and quantity. That might be due to the weak economic base of the school and the situation risked freedom to learn.

The study showed that the concept of handing over the responsibility of learning to students seems aborted. Teachers considered majority of students as less interested to learning; lacking the skills how to learn and adapt new situations. It seems that teacher denied the rich potential of learners to grasp, comprehend and to construct knowledge. Teachers themselves lacked the initiation foster learner freedom. The only thing they did was that they understood students having intellectual vacant spaces to be packed with dosages of facts .As a result they concentrated on content coverage through lecture. Such pedagogical approach according to Rogers (1969) was a inefficient to learning that might result confusion, frustration, dependency on the side of students.

The findings of the research indicated that what has been going on practically in the school was incompatible to its vision, mission and goals .One of the missions states that the school is devoted to provide “thorough and systematic intellectual training in the fundamental disciplines” to develop “generations who are initiated enough in their knowledge attitude and skills.” The general intention of vision, mission and goals of the school is to create students who are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for their future lives. Nevertheless, practically the patterns observed and understood seem discouraging. The attempts to make students to learn how to learn were very much limited; more attention was given to teaching (teachers) and to make the situation worse, evaluation mechanism was ill-designed and inefficient to differentiate learners.

The research findings showed that students were severely punished,

insulted, demoralized and harassed, partly for their own good because of the belief to cultivate their lives in the right direction and to make them morally disciplined but these activities pulled back students from their learning.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The above conclusions imply that, it is better to the school to give emphasis to the practice of training the learners' mind to think, reflect, and make choices and determinations. It is also essential to note that these qualities cannot be achieved simply by giving the students a chance to grow, without doing something more than guidance and advice from a teacher. Students' personality development requires a selection of those valuable experiences from the point of view of the learner and the society. The findings imply that there should be a plan and a sense of direction; well-defined plans and methods to attain freedom. The plans and directions should be clearly spelled out personal, intellectual, and institutional constraints on freedom to learn and the possible measures to solve it.

The results of the research imply that students should have an environment that provide a proper sequence of articulated experiences by which students can discover the need and significance of the acquisition of those skills, knowledge, and other resources to make their growth in freedom meaningful.

To make education credible to life it is better to enable students

- To understand the environment in which they live;
- To cultivate breadth of interests and gain the ability to find information for themselves;
- To develop the capacity for judgment and acquire an appreciation of standards of right and
- To be initiated to a readiness to work and cooperate with others; and to motivate in to the art of living is.

It is also better to the school to organize and arrange series of discussions between students, teachers, and the community to reduce the prevailing harassments committed on students both in side and out side the school.

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## **APPENDIX-A**

### **ETHICAL GUIDELINES TO THE INTERVIEW**

The purpose of the study is to undertake a research as a requirement for Masters of Art at Addis Ababa University. The study highly needs your cooperation with a better understanding of freedom to learn and how and how the process of handing over the responsibility of learning to learners is going on. In the research I want to investigate the attitude of teachers and students toward freedom to learn, its practice and the problems faced to foster freedom to learn.

One of the major criteria to be considered in qualitative research is the issue of ethics. Scholars advised that each activities of a research should be guided with ethical principles. Otherwise, the research participants may not share personal information to the researcher. Thus, the following ethical principles are the guidelines that light out the interview process with you to be employed based on consent and agreement. These are:

1. Your participation in the research is voluntary that you partake according to your own free will. You have the right to withdraw at any time you want.
2. You have the right to clear with the objectives, purposes, significances, and other things related with the research.
3. The data you supply to me will be used only for the purposes of this study.
4. You have the right to debrief the information give to me.
5. Your identity will be protected through anonymity. I will not use your

real name unless you allowed me to do so.

6. I will use tape recorder to reduce loss of information if you permit me.  
You have the right to improve, change, and even totally dismiss your recorded information.
7. The interview with you will proceed in accordance with your permission and good will until I obtain the necessary data for analysis.
8. The Data you supply will be treated as your own. Analysis and interpretation will be mine.

## **APPENDIX-B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDELINES TO TEACHERS**

1. What is freedom to you? How do you promote it?
2. How do you evaluate students' attempt to learn freely?
3. How do you help your students to learn freely?
4. What factors limit you to foster freedom to learn? How it affects?

## **APPENDIX-C**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDELINES TO STUDENTS**

1. How do you see freedom?
2. How do you compare autonomous learning and heteronymous learning? Which one do you prefer? Why?
3. How do you behave in your class?
4. Teachers say that students are sensitive to their rights but ignorant of their responsibilities. How do you see this argument?
5. Do your teachers let you free to learn? How? If not, why?
6. What factors limit you to learn freely? How they affect your freedom to, learn?

# DECLARATION

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

Name Lakachew Gebeyehu  
Signature   
Date of Submission 16/07/2007

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

Name Dr. Amare Asgedom  
Signature   
Date of Approval \_\_\_\_\_