

CHALLENGES OF AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IN THE PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS OF ILUABABOR ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE IN ETHIOPIA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (DED)

IN

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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I declare that this study, 'Challenges of and opportunities for implementing the school improvement programmes in the public secondary schools of Iluababor Administrative Zone in Ethiopia' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete list of references.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt and sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Professor MM Dichaba, for her valuable assistance, encouragement and guidance and unreserved help and advice during the course of this thesis. I am indebted to her particularly for her patience, interest and valuable suggestions, without which this study would have never attained its present shape.

I am grateful to Ethiopian Ministry of Education for sponsoring me my study at UNISA. My warmest gratitude also extends to Mettu University Institute of Education and Professional Development Studies, zone education office supervisors and experts who in various ways rendered me their useful help by providing me with crucial documents and necessary data for this study.

Moreover, my thanks go to secondary school supervisors, secondary school principals, and district education experts who helped me to get valuable data for the study.

My special appreciation and thanks also goes to my wife, Yobdar Kifle, and our beloved children, Henok Tekalign, Tinsae Tekalign, Biniyam Tekalign, and Tsiyon Tekalign, for their support, encouragement, and prayers as well as for their sacrifice and support towards the completion of this thesis.

Above all, I want to thank Almighty God who supported in giving me the strength, vision, courage to cope and complete the thesis and thus far has the Lord helped me.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess Challenges of and Opportunities for Implementing the School improvement Programme in the Public secondary Schools of Iluababor administrative zone in Ethiopia. In the study a mixed research methodology was employed, specifically the sequential explanatory designs with a high priority on the quantitative and the sequential exploratory design and with less priority on the qualitative data.

Out of 24 secondary schools, 12 secondary schools were selected by random sampling from six geographically clustered secondary schools. In the study (out of a total of 540 sample populations, 287 research participants were selected by random sampling/lottery method, 220 male and 67 female) were participated to fill the questionnaires. For interviews from six clusters (12 school principals, 12 district education experts, six secondary supervisors and four zone education experts) were selected by purposeful sampling to participate in the interviews sessions. Whereas, for focus group discussions (21 parent teachers' association (PTA) members; and 21 members of student councils) were as well selected by the purposeful sampling technique from three clustered geographical locations of the schools respectively. The collected data was analysed using statistical programme for social science software (SPSS) version 21. To analyse the data from questionnaires, descriptive statistical analysis like frequencies, percentile, mean values, and standard deviation were used. While, qualitative data generated from interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were transcribed, coded and interpreted thematically.

The findings indicated that with regards to the quantitative data analysis, the performances of the school improvement programme aggregate of the four domains summary of the mean values and standard deviations 287 (Mean = 2.82; SD = 0.74) showed that the indicators of practices among the school improvement programme domains were low in performance. The qualitative results as well confirmed the quantitative results. In this case, the mean value was above average and the standard deviation value was more tightly clustered around the mean. This means that the results were concurrent of each other and thus reliable. The findings revealed that, even though secondary schools put a lot of effort towards averting the challenges in school improvement, it could hardly bear fruit due to insufficient supplies of inputs and processes. This resulted in the school improvement programme performances lagging behind the set goals and targets.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the major challenges in the implementation of the school improvement programme in secondary schools (9-10) were: weak collaboration among stakeholders, lack of capacity building, inefficient administrative services, limited commitment of school leadership and school governing bodies, poor school leadership and management, passive and inactive involvement of parents and local community, and, in the academic affairs, students were not successful in terms of attendance and the achievement of learners.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that school principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents and local school communities be well equipped with basic knowledge and skills on the school improvement programme. This could help in fostering critical thinking and the problem solving capacity of the learners. In addition, school principals and the school governing bodies have to apply the recommended strategies in the study so as to alleviate the challenges in (grades 9-10) secondary schools. Above and beyond, the study suggested that in order to get

better learners achievement, a strong team spirit should be established among school principals, secondary school supervisors, teachers, students, parents and local communities, and by expanding capacity building networks within the coming five years. Consequently, the schools management teams and other stakeholders of secondary schools (9-10) have to plan for continuous training and orientation on the nature, practice and significance of school improvement programme implementation.

Key concepts

School improvement, school leadership and management, teaching and learning processes, learning environment, parents and community participation


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Programme in the Public Secondary Schools of Iluababor administrative zone in
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9. Subject category of the Thesis - Education: Administration – 0514
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UMI publication of your abstract.

D (I) PAO 2001
Abstract number

Do not write in this space
Volume/Issue
School Code
Abstract length

Author Signature:  June/ 2016

ACRONYMS

EFA – Education for All

EMIS - Education Management Information Systems

EMBA - Educational Media Broadcasting Agency

ESDP – Education Sector Development programme

ESDP I – Education Sector Development Programme One

ESDP II - Education Sector Development Programme Two

ESDP III - Education Sector Development Programme Three

ESDP III - Education Sector Development Programme Four

ETP- Education and Training Policy

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

GER- Gross Enrolment Ratio

ICT – Information Communication Technology

ISIP – International School Improvement Project

MOE – Ministry of Education

ETP - Education and Training Policy

NETP- National Education and Training Policy

NER – Net Enrolment Ratio

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's

OREB – Oromia Regional Education Bureau

PTA's – Parent Teacher Association

QEIP- Quality Education Improvement Programs

SIP – School Improvement Program

SPSS - Statistical Programme Software for Social Science

SOWT – Strengths, Opportunity, Weakness and Threats

TGE- Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TQM – Total Quality Management

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, which gives a summary of the implementation of the school improvement programme in government schools and measures taken to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia. This is followed by the motivation for the study, contribution of the study, a problem statement, and the main and sub-basic research questions. The scope of the study, limitations, delimitations and the key terms are then discussed in detail and, finally, an overview of the study is presented, followed by a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the Study

Education has long been defined as a vital instrument for development. It is the bedrock of all forms of development (social, economic, technological and political) of any nation (UNESCO, 2005:94; Firdisa, 2009:2; Abebe, 2012:1). It is a means to the end of economic growth and essential for sustainable development and participation in democratic social and political development processes. It is also currently becoming the most important contributor to national economic growth (Ayalew, 2009:9; Derebssa, 2009:3). The World Bank (2010:45) asserts that educated families tend to produce more, have a limited number of children and enjoy a relatively better quality of life compared to uneducated families. Educated people also earn more and are respected by the society. Additionally, education is an investment in children's future wellbeing and in the strength of the national economy (Amare, A. & Temesgen, E. 2002:101; UNESCO, 2009:2; Derebssa, 2008:4).

School improvement is at the centre of education reform and is perceived by many as a key to social and economic advance. It contributes to determining personal fulfilment and career paths of individual students and consequently engages the interests of parents and community members. It is an ever – present commitment of teachers and managers in schools. Policy makers and politicians at national and local levels have to devote much time and effort to their search for better schools (MOE, 2010:10; Chi – Chi, J. & Michael, W., 2014:3). This view indicates that school improvement is a change or reform which requires the schools to engage in a process that will help them to achieve their goals, so as to maximise the student achievement.

In an increasing global economy, an educated workforce is vital to maintain and enhance competitiveness; hence society expects schools to prepare people for employment. Teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders are the people who are required to deliver higher educational standards towards school improvement to enhance students' achievement (Bush, 2008:8-9; MOE, 2008:4). In line with the argument presented thus far on the importance of education, this study argues that, in order for the Ethiopian nation to succeed, there is a need to improve the quality of schooling in the nation so as to equip the majority with relevant skills to contribute to the development of the nation, communities and families. It is for this reason that the Ethiopian government invests heavily in the education of its citizens (MOE, 2008:5; MOE, ESDP, IV, 2010:6-8) and one of its investments in secondary schools is the School Improvement Programme (SIP) which was rolled out in 2008 in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools. This study therefore assesses the challenges and opportunities that emerged with the implementation of the school improvement programme so as to determine the capacity of secondary schools to equip students with knowledge and skills that contribute to their success. School improvement is a central feature in student success as noted by many educational scholars nationally and internationally.

Harris and Chrispeels (2006:3) explained that the pressure upon schools to improve performance has resulted in a wide range of school improvement programmes and initiatives - the school improvement programme in Ethiopia being one of them. The school improvement programmes have resulted in changes in the way education is viewed and the way schools are run, hence Marishame and Botha (2013:95) state that in the era of massive organisational change schools in our times are no exception to this trend. Like other organisations, schools today find themselves in a changing environment to which they have to adjust their operations if they are to continue to be relevant. Walter (2004) cited in Marishame and Botha (2013:94-95) also state that, in order to be responsive and to deal successfully with change, schools - particularly secondary schools - require adaptation in school leadership and management, teaching and learning processes, the learning environment, and parents and community involvement to harness this change and direct it towards sustainable school improvement. School improvement therefore has become a

dominant feature of educational reform and has gained prominence and recognition on the international stage.

Hopkins (2002:12) describes school improvement as a distinct approach to educational change that aims to enhance student outcomes as well as strengthen the school's capacity for managing change. Barth (1990:45) in turn defines school improvement as an effort to determine and provide, from within and without, conditions under which the students who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among them. From these definitions, it appears the purpose of school improvement is to impact outwardly on the relationship between the teaching and learning process and the conditions that support it. Hargreaves (1994:2) and Hopkins (2001:13) expand that the change which should take place as a result of the school improvement effort should not merely reflect the implementation of policies, but rather should also reflect improvements or adaptations of practices which transform the learning process to achieve the maximum impact on students, teachers and schools.

School improvement is also concerned with the 'how', that is, the process of changing schools which focuses on the process that schools go through to become more successful and sustain improvement (Hopkins, 1999:13). OCED& ISIP (1987:7) and Gray (2011:17) give a more comprehensive definition of school improvement and they say it is 'a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively, concerned with raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching and learning process and conditions that support it.

School improvement as a field of study has evolved not subtly but decisively over the past 60 years (Hopkins, 2001:33-34). This evolution has passed through five phases. The first phase focused on the ideas of group dynamics to organisational development. The second phase was on the influence of organisational development strategies on education in the 1960s and 1970s. The third phase was the use of strategies for school self-evaluation, as a response to the increasing demand for school accountability in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The fourth phase focused on building capacity for learning at the local level that was largely concerned with system level

change through collaboration and networking across schools and districts (Harris et al., 2011:9). Phase five, however, is concerned with the spread of knowledge globally and about achieving school improvement on a large scale - systemic reform. The key in this phase is not simply to identify factors that characterise high performing educational systems, but to understand how these factors combine in different ways in different innovative clusters to drive reform in systems that are at different stages of their progression along the performance cycle (OCED & ISIP, 1985:7).

The present era is a time of challenge and opportunity for school improvement programme implementation for quality education. Particularly, the time since the nineties is considered as a decade of heightened interest in quality. Currently more people in many countries and in many cultures are involved in investigating, researching, auditing, applying, controlling, assessing and writing about school improvement to enhance quality than ever before (Srikanthan, 1999, cited in Firdissa, 2008:105). This is also true of secondary schools, whose goals and missions spell out the importance of learning quality of students, in which the teaching staff, school management and leadership are key work forces in implementing school improvement programmes.

For school improvement to occur there must be a will and a strong commitment to undertake change, skill to make it happen and persistence to see it through (Firdissa, 2009:107). Because school improvement is a way of generating organisational change, it inevitably requires both pressure and support which predominantly focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning (Harris, 2002:112). Harris (2002:113) further argues that in order to improve, schools need to locate their change efforts at the level of the classroom and the level of the school. That is, school improvement will not occur unless efforts are made within the school to build internal capacity and conditions that best foster and support school improvement. Besides, schools have their own distinctive cultures and sometimes these work against organisational change. Hence the real target for school improvement is to change school culture (Nega, 2012:24; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:12). In this case changing school culture means to change the attitudes and beliefs of school principals, teachers, administrative staff, students and parents both inside the school and in the external environment, the norms of the school, and the relations between persons in

the school through articulating shared beliefs about the learning principles which form the foundation on which we plan and build our teaching and learning experiences.

Fullan (1994) cited in Harris (2002:7) expands that focusing on clearly identified student learning outcomes rather than broader organisational goals seems to be the best way of securing school improvement which is directly linked to specific issues of teaching and learning, and that school and classroom development are mutually reinforcing. Additionally, Harris (2002:13) explains that for school improvement to be effective there should be a high level of commitment among staff to innovation and change. Without this commitment, improvement efforts are unlikely to succeed. In order for school improvement programmes to be effective, there is a need to equip teachers and the school leadership with relevant skills to run these programmes. Besides, according to Gold (2009:32) school improvement as a change process or a reform requires active participation of the school community by changing the existing school culture, and making the school community take the initiative to bring improvements in the schools. This requires the school community to take responsibility with an understanding for the outcomes.

In order for school improvement programmes to be effective, there is a need to equip teachers and the school leadership with relevant skills to run these programmes. In this case, Hopkins and Levin (2000:21-24) add that one of the educational inputs that contributes a remarkable role to ensure school improvement is the availability of sufficient and qualified teachers. Fullan (1991:2) and Workneh & Tassew (2013:12) summarises that the school improvement programme depends on what teachers do and think; it's as simple and complex as that. The heart of school improvement, therefore, is teacher development and a desire to change the school culture in order to promote a school improvement programme.

Stoll and Fink (1996:2) cited in MOE (2010:13) suggested that school improvement should be the activity of each school. In line with this, Barnes (2004:18) cited in Firdissa (2009:108) has confirmed that even the highest ranked schools always need improvement because the conditions which underpin the learning environment of the children always needs change and improvement. Thus, schools must improve their basic functions such as teaching and learning, empowering all

stakeholders with active participation in the improvement efforts as well as creating conducive learning conditions and improving school leadership and management.

Contemporary school improvement programme reforms in the secondary school education of developing countries places a great premium on effective leadership and management of schools. The logic of this position is that an orderly school environment that is efficient and well managed provides the precondition for enhanced student learning (Nega, 2012:18; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:15). Thus, in order to improve classroom practice, it is recognised that many structures and systems need to change concurrently, and that the school principal, the staff and the community would need to work together to ensure that new ideas and practices are tried out, adapted and internalised by them. Research studies by UNESCO (2013:12-14) show that the interrelationships between different areas of school improvement such as teaching and learning, the school learning environment, leadership and management and community involvement have a critical role in enhancing or constraining student learning and outcomes.

In developed nations like England, German and USA many studies on school improvement programme in secondary schools have tried to link school effectiveness with school improvement, and have indicated some common theories that help to explain effective school improvement programme (Scheerens 2013:1), for example, they identified school improvement as a mechanism that focuses on policy directions that can help the schools to look into their own practices and bring about the desired changes. Scheerens (2013:2) indicates that school improvement is a policy issue, and involves practices that will result in outcome. While, Hopkins (2005:86) showed that the school effectiveness is mostly associated with learner attainment and how well the school functions and that the school has the responsibility to ensure the success of all its learners. It measures how well the school attain its objectives, and how well its learners achieve the expected outcomes. While, as Hopkins and Harris (2002:8-9) explained school improvement is about practice to check whether the theories work or not in real school situations; and practices lead to the development of other practices, theories, analysis and various factors which may be changed into practice and may contribute to the improvement of schools.

By giving emphasis to school improvement programmes Ogden, (2013) argued that in London secondary schools although there were distinct interventions of common features that link together all of the interventions in four themes, in particular, emerged: the power of data; the importance of professional development; the contribution of educational leaders and significance of sustainable political support that everywhere performances of disadvantaged students were taken into account. Besides, Sahlgren (2013) showed that the most effective local authorities in London typically placed a substantial emphasis on the need to support school improvement through a challenge support model based on: strong leadership of school improvement function; systematic analysis of school level performance data; challenge in secondary schools that appear to be relatively underperforming; early interventions in secondary schools causing concern and robust performance management of head teachers.

Then again, school improvement programme of South Korea and Singapore demonstrated that a school system can go from low performance to high performance within few years. This achievement is even more remarkable given that it typically takes a long time to see the impact of a school improvement as a reform effort. Boston and England have also demonstrated that substantial improvement in both the outcomes and the factors that drive the schools (for instance, the status of the teaching profession) can be achieved in short period of time (Scheerens 2013:12; Chi-Chi & Michael, 2014:31). In Boston, England, South Korea and Singapore practiced that different school systems have improved significantly and have done so primarily common themes. For example, to make school improvement successful they have produced a system that is more effective in doing three things like: getting more talented people to become teachers, developing these teachers into better instructors, and ensuring that these instructors deliver their tasks consistently for student in the secondary school education to achieve good quality results (Scheerens, 2013:22) & Chi-Chi & Michael, 2014:35).

Firdissa (2008:15-16) and Abebe (2012:1), who reviewed literature on school improvement programmes in developing countries, indicate that though education financing both in terms of aid and public spending has improved schools in many countries, this has not been accompanied by good and effective education management systems. Both authors argue that in many developing countries poor education management and leadership result in overcrowded

classrooms, high pupil/teacher ratios, and a high student dropout rate where the overall effect of this is a low quality of education.

In relation to school improvement programmes in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries, UNESCO (2010:36) reveals that the major causes of low achievement in secondary schools include: poor school organisation and school management, inadequate teachers' training on subject mastery and pedagogic skills, poor school facilities, lack of instructional materials and absence of an attractive school climate. Furthermore, UNESCO (2010:37) states that in secondary school education, most school principals lack relevant skills, school leadership qualities and commitment to school improvement programmes; as a result, school improvement is greatly hindered by inadequate resources in terms of physical facilities, finances and human resources and high leadership and teacher turn over.

Lack of training also hinders school improvement programmes in secondary schools. In Ethiopia, there is a greater task ahead of school management and leadership teams in meeting the challenges of unattractive and poor conditions of buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of recreational facilities and aesthetic surroundings which have perhaps contributed to poor quality instructional processes and non-attainment of quality education by students in secondary schools (UNESCO, 2013:14). The Ministry of Education (MOE, ESDP IV 2009:10) explains that the government of Ethiopia is making a significant political commitment, and large amounts of public resources and budget allocation are meant to enable equitable educational coverage in primary and secondary schools. UNICEF (2009:3-4) asserts about secondary school education in Ethiopia that huge numbers of students are in secondary schools and there is investment of a large amount of educational expenditure going on currently, but surprisingly little is known about whether students are learning in school with reliable outcomes. Accordingly, translating these achievements into concrete improvements in students' competencies by emphasising how learning is going on is of vital importance, rather than focusing only on enrolment and attendance.

The motivation for conducting this study was derived initially from a wish to see reliable improvement in student outcomes and organisational conditions in secondary schools in

Iluababora administrative (grades 9-10) secondary schools. The study, therefore, assesses the international school improvement literature on what works and what does not work in relation to the secondary schools of the selected administrative zones. It is hoped that this assessment will allow the researcher to draw some conclusions on the challenges of and opportunities for implementing school improvement programmes in secondary schools in Ethiopia, specifically the Iluababor administrative zone. It is expected that by carrying out this study teachers, principals, school representatives and education practitioners may gain a better understanding of how to implement successful and effective programmes that elevate the outcomes of the students, the schools and the nation at large.

1.3 A Brief History of Education Reform in Ethiopia

Modern education in Ethiopia is approximately 100 years old and the historical objective of the education system was to create a few educated elite; and the majority of Ethiopian people were not beneficiaries of modern education. Access to education was very low, and inequity in the provision of primary and secondary education highly visible. The education system was also characterised by low quality and not inefficiency (MOE, 2011:1-2).

The modern school system was introduced into the country by missionaries during the nineteenth century. The first modern government school was built by Emerior Menilik in 1908; further schools were built by Emperor Haile Selassie and the subsequent regimes (Nekatibeb, 2012:23; Abebe, 2012:6). The rise of different governments to power in Ethiopia was accompanied by educational reforms and policy changes. From 1941-1974 the Imperial education system functioned on the basis of the emperor's conviction that education held a key position in the country's development. In Emperor Haile Selassie's time the education and training policy's main objective was to create a few educated elite where the majority of Ethiopian people were not benefitting from the education system (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:6). This shows that the education system has been in place to solve immediate problems, rather than tackling major challenges at national level and the education system during this period suffered from short comings in access, relevance, equity and quality.

Followed the era of Emperor Haile Selassie's government, the Derg (socialist) regime was a socialist system of governance and its education policy (1994-1991) stressed the inculcation of ideology as a prime objective with Marxism and the value of production as the main pillars. Its aim was to cultivate a Marxist ideology, develop knowledge in science and technology and integrate education with production (Nekatibeb, 2012:19; Abebe, 2012:6-7). The Marxist ideology in this case made the country's education system lack clear goals and directions. That is, policies and strategies for the secondary education sector were not streamlined with the development needs of the country and it suffered from poor planning, low quality as well as over politicisation and ideological manipulation (Workneh & Tassew, 2013 2-3).

During the socialist regime in secondary schools the disparity among regions was very high, and there were inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers, overcrowded classes, and shortage of books and other training materials, all indicating that a low quality of education was being provided in secondary schools (Firdissa, 2009:106). Access to education was very low; only less than 5% of the school age population was enrolled in secondary school. The inequity in the provision of secondary education was highly visible. There were high regional and gender gaps in the gross enrolment ratio (MOE, 2010:1-2). The above factors indicate that the education system in the socialist period in Ethiopia was characterised by low access, relevance and lack quality. High repetition and dropout rates were the main features of the education system. Teachers were poorly prepared and lacked the skills and methodologies for teaching at levels they were assigned.

Followed by the era of Derg (socialist) the new Ethiopian government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular have been extremely efficient in mobilising external funds (bilateral and multilateral) for expansion of the education sector. The situation since 1994 has been much better as the policy of federalism inevitable deals with the decentralisation of power (Chalchisa, 2012:3). In 1994 the government issued an education and training policy that envisaged the development perspectives of the nation. The policy emphasised the development of problem solving capacity in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach, focusing on the acquisition of scientific knowledge and practicum (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:5). As a major initiative to address problems related to access, equity, and quality of

educational provision, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) introduced the Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994 (Chalchisa, 2012:1).

The Education and Training Policy (ETP), supported by articles in the Ethiopian constitution, sought to decentralise educational authority to the regional states and called for new paradigms of education based on relevant, active, and student centred teaching and learning (Chalchisa, 2012:2; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:7). Following this, the government and its partners began to concentrate on access, equity, relevance and improving the quality of education (MOE, 1994:1-5). Based on the education reform, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued a policy document entitled Education and Training Policy and Education Sector Strategy in 1994. Initially, the policy focused on improving education access and equity, but the government began to emphasise the importance of school governance. In this case, the education sector development programme (ESDP) is a programme of action for the realisation of the goals of the Education and Training Policy and in Ethiopia there were four (ESDP I, ESDP II, ESDP III, and ESDP IV).

By way of ensuring the implementation of the policy and its strategies, a five year education sector development programme (ESDP I) was initiated, prepared and implemented between the period 1996/97 to 2001/2002. ESDP one has aimed to improve quality education and expand access with special emphasis on primary education in rural areas as well as promotion for girls. The expansions of secondary school enrolments were impressive but increases in enrolments were not followed by necessary expansion in school infrastructure and allocation of non-salary running costs. Both the supply and distribution of text books were problems, and the target of qualified teachers was very far from being reached.

When the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-II) was designed in 2002, the government saw the significance of management and decision-making at district and school levels. The education sector development programme two (ESDP II) has also been prepared as a continuation of the education sector development programme one (ESDP I) for the period 2003-2005 with the aim to ensure quality education in a sustainable manner. But the education sector development two (ESDP II) lacked the facilities to accommodate the surging demands by

graduates of secondary schools (9-10). Then again, NER was found to be below the weighted NER average with the set target. The Ethiopian Training and Education Policy used decentralisation and school reform as a key to decision-making at school level, and it has been a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia which enables school based management to work with stakeholders, to make decisions that will improve the school improvement process to enhance the quality of education at all levels (Abebe, 2012:16).

Followed by the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-II) the goal of the Education Sector Development Programme three (ESDP III) was to expand good quality education by providing universal primary education by 2015 thus meeting the quantitative demand of for manpower. The Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP – III) also outlines the importance of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) and community participation in decision-making and financing. In this particular programme, communities were expected to raise funds for purchasing school equipment, hiring teachers, constructing schools and classrooms, building teachers' houses, and encouraging girls to enrol in schools. Community members and the parent teacher associations (PTAs) were expected to participate in preparing annual plans (MOE, 2005:25). The Ethiopian government had recognized that weak management and implementation capacity at primary and secondary school education levels was one of the main barriers to achieve access, equity and quality education, necessitating school improvement programme implementation to enhance student achievement (Workneh & Tassew, 2013).

After 2005, the government acknowledged the importance of school improvement programmes to improve school management, leadership, teaching and learning, parent and community participation and to enhance and create conducive school environments. Likewise, policies and programmes were designed to strengthen school communities in school management and financial administration, with the primary objectives of improving the quality of education at all levels (MOE, 2005:29-37).

This was further strengthened by the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP – III) in 2005 when government decided to decentralise critical decision-making from regions and zones to districts and municipalities, and further to the school level, with the objective of having

education become more responsive to school situations (MOE, 2005:13; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:5). The devolution of decision-making authority to district level was expected to strengthen district level educational institutions, to offer better local governance, to promote accountability and to improve community participation where the focus of the decentralisation programme at this time was to strengthen the capacity of district education offices through training in educational and financial management (MOE, 2005:24; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:7).

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP – III) also outlined the importance of General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) and community participation in decision making and financing. Then, the Ethiopian government responded to the challenges in ESDP III under the current Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP IV), which strongly emphasised the need to improve student achievement through quality teaching and learning processes. Amare & Temesgen (2002:101-105) and Ayalew (2009:103) argued that in Ethiopia in the past decade and half, significant efforts have been made to expand access to primary and secondary education. The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP – IV) emphasised further the devolution of key decision-making to the local level, including improving the functioning of education offices at all levels, promoting cluster resource centres, and improving school level management through capacity building programmes (MOE,2010:69). In this regards, the General Education Improvement Program (GEQIP) was designed to improve the quality intervention in key areas, including school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment, and parent and community involvement. Priority areas that were identified included increasing effectiveness and efficiency through decentralized management systems and promoting effective horizontal and vertical communications across the education system (MOE, 2008:7-10). Ayalew (2009:104) therefore states that it seems the Ethiopian government realised that mounting the coverage of education is only part of the battle; school improvement programme implementation was still inadequate. That is, low level education quality remains one of the most significant challenges in improving learning outcomes.

Although the challenges have been many in making education accessible to the majority who were previously marginalised, the strides made by the Ethiopian government in the education

sector are worth mentioning. Derbessa (2006:11) states that compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that experienced rapid increases in enrolment, Ethiopia has been more successful at rapidly taking appropriate measures in developing policy direction and implementation to improve quality of education at all levels. Furthermore, considering the number of students entering the system, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, the decline in quality would likely have significantly been worse had it not been strongly supported by the government and partners (Ayalew, 2009:3-4; Derebssa, 2013:6-7).

As a sub-component to ensure quality, school improvement can be achieved if schools have a commitment to their communities. In the school improvement programme, implementation by developing a deep and a mutual relationship with people and organisations in the local community is promoted because a school gains not only information, knowledge and support but a sense of moral purpose (MOE, 2010:54; Abebe, 2012:18).

One of the important lessons from the above efforts, is that the government of Ethiopia has recently taken steps to improve the of quality education. The Ministry of Education in 2008 developed a new package of interventions to remedy identified weaknesses of education at all levels. This reform package, the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP), encompasses key areas of intervention such as teacher development programmes, curriculum improvement, leadership and management, the school improvement programme, civics and ethical education and information communication technology. In addition, through the Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP) and General Education Quality (GEQIP), the government is implementing the School Improvement Program (SIP) so as to improve the capacity of school prioritised needs such as: school leadership and management, teaching and learning process, how to create attractive learning environments, and how to enhance parent and community involvement in resource utilisation decisions and resource generation. It also aims to improve the government's capacity to deliver specified amounts of schools grants at the district level by providing basic operational resources to schools (MOE, GEQIP, 2008:6-8).

The school improvement programme (SIP) was intended to improve the capacity of schools to prioritise needs and to translate these into actions captured in a school improvement plan. School

grants (based on enrolment) were disbursed to schools to finance planned improvements. However, improvements in school infrastructure and facilities have not yet reached the expected standard in (9-10) secondary schools (MOE, 2014:10-12). In the light of these reforms, this study identifies the major challenges of and opportunities in the implementation of the school improvement programme in secondary schools and assesses the contributing factors and feasible actions that schools can undertake to improve performance and to move students towards high-quality outcomes. The rationale for carrying out this study is discussed in the next section.

1.4 Motivation for the Study

The fact that secondary schools in Iluababor administrative zone could not bring into being the expected results demanded a strategy and guiding principles and practices that Ministry of Education and other stakeholders could provide to guarantee that secondary schools in Iluababor administrative zone met the expected standard. Accordingly, comprehensive strategies and practices need to be established for school leadership, teachers, students, parents and local communities to augment the poor functionality of the school improvement programme in secondary schools.

The review of related literature and theoretical frameworks for school improvement programmes in secondary schools was researched in this study so as to be able to propose a useful framework, guiding principles, and mechanisms to enhance the school improvement programme in secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone. Consequently, the end results of the study describe the foundation policy and strategy development. So the recommended strategies could be used as a base for empowering and augmenting school leadership and school governing bodies, teachers, students, parents and the community in improving the effectiveness of the schools. Furthermore, the study aims to empower the learners closest to the secondary schools to make decisions about how best to advance the existing school improvement practices in secondary schools.

1.5 Contribution of the Study

The study has identified challenges faced in school improvement programme implementation and the opportunities ahead in (9-10) secondary schools. It has also a lot to contribute in leadership and management, teaching and learning, school environment and community participation with regards to school improvement programmes in Ethiopia, and in particular Iluababor administrative zone. Furthermore, the views from the participants indicated a need for various challenges that needed to be addressed in the schools improvement programme implementation. Moreover, the study created a significant contribution in building relevant body of knowledge to the existing practices of school improvement programme in secondary schools.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

Education reform and school improvement reform programmes in particular are mainly the responsibility of school leadership and management. Nevertheless, any public education reform programme should be well planned and effectively implemented, and should get support from all the main stakeholders. Therefore, to implement the school improvement programme, school leaders and school governing bodies need to have theoretical knowledge, skill and adequate experience in the areas of the school improvement components. Leithwood (2002) cited in Marishane (2011:95-97) states that a critical aspect of educational reform is linking the schools' internal structures, strategies, capacities, and processes in a coherent manner to advance student achievements in schools. In this case school improvement is, therefore, finding ways that will strengthen the management and leadership capacities of those working in schools to ensure that learners are provided with learning opportunities of a high quality (Leithwood, 2002, cited in Marishane, 2011:98).

In the present competitive market economy, the success of any education system depends on the quality of education service rendered. Based on this view, the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:9-10) shifted its focus to comprehensive quality improvement of education to cope with the demand of the workforce needed by the socio-economic system of the country. However, schools at all levels, particularly secondary schools, are facing challenges due to rapidly changing technology, and growing international and national competition for students and teachers.

A study conducted by Sumara and Rajani (2010:13) reveals that some students finish secondary school education without the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills in life. This is an indication that expansion has been prioritised over quality which needs school improvement at large. This reality is prevailing in the current secondary school education system of Iluababor administrative zone (Iluababor administrative Education Office Annual Report, 2013:13-14). Even though the school improvement programme was functional for the last seven years in secondary schools, some problems have been identified such as: low leadership and management commitment, teachers and administrative staff resistance to reform (SIP), lack of confidence to practice SIP, failure of leadership and management to accept collaborative work/teamwork, and absence of proper planning, monitoring and evaluation – all were the bottle necks of school improvement programme in secondary schools (MOE, 2010:20).

Additionally, Ethiopian secondary schools have been facing challenges for a long time regarding the quality of Education in enhancing students' academic achievement due to a shortage of facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, poor leadership and management, absence of attractive learning environments and unsatisfactory parents and local community involvement (Ayalew, 2009:1-3). Nevertheless, to minimize the challenges in the education system, the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) was designed and the School Improvement Program (SIP) as a sub-main component was launched in 1999 so as to enhance quality at all levels to improve secondary school education.

Educators in the area of education sector programme in Ethiopia indicated that there is a shortage of studies on school improvement of secondary schools (Derebessa, 2008:3). It is as well true that when school improvement programmes were under implementation, it is likely that confront will be visage while the programmes outcome is a positive return. This necessitate that the result of a school improvement programme in secondary schools (9-10) ought to be examined to maintain the positive results, and classify areas of limitations for furtherer improvement. Research studies at a national level also confirms that more consideration is given to theoretical traditions and the development of models than to practical aspects related to school improvement programmes although research is being done on school improvement (Scheerens 2013:1-2; Derebessa, 2008:5). These primary facts give the impression to be relevant for the researcher to

select the topic for study being school improvement programme as a quality concern and a crucial programme in secondary schools. Besides, my previous experiences being as a supervisor and secondary school teacher initiated me to select the topic for the study. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify the challenges faced and opportunities ahead of public secondary schools in Iluababor administrative zone.

Then again, while the school improvement programme was among the decisive policy directions in Ethiopia, there is little empirical research that has been done to measure school improvement programmes' effectiveness in secondary schools. In this regard, MOE (2013:34) states that the school improvement was the least studied and most misunderstood area in the secondary education system in Ethiopia and in the secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone in particular. Although quite a number of scholars have written about school improvement in primary and secondary school education, not many have examined school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment, and parent and community involvement holistically as the basic components in the school improvement programme in secondary schools and their effectiveness. Abebe, (2012:8) confirmed that even the few existing studies on the secondary schools improvement programme remain limited in scope and pervasiveness

Consequently, to implement effective school improvement programme in secondary schools (9-10) of Iluababor administrative zone improving students' achievement, the school community and stakeholders must also have the knowledge and understanding of school improvement strategy. Otherwise, secondary schools will experience immense problems. Despite school improvement changes taking place at secondary school level, the researcher feels that most school communities and stakeholders in Ethiopia particularly in Iluababor administrative currently seem to be lacking effectiveness with regard school improvement programme. The schools, therefore, perform below government expectations with respect to the achievement of secondary school improvement programme goals. In this case, even though the secondary schools have made various attempts to improve the schools, there are some observed limitations that hamper the teaching learning process in the secondary schools. In this case the researcher had the opportunity to observe such gaps and conditions. Therefore, the existing challenging

practices need to be investigated so as to achieve effective implementation of school improvement programme.

More to the point, the review drawn from the literature above shows the school improvement programme requires the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels of the education system. Therefore, there is a need to have a more integrated improvement strategy for Ethiopia, in particular Iluababor administrative zone secondary schools (9-10) since some areas of improvement strategies have yielded poor results.

The Iluababor administrative zone is located 600km from the capital Addis Ababa and lacks basic education facilities and a well trained workforce in secondary schools. Moreover, to the best of this researcher's knowledge, very few studies have been carried out so far to scrutinise the school improvement programme in the secondary schools of Ethiopia; as a result, research on the Iluababor administrative zone in particular is insufficient. Furthermore, in its five year strategic plan, the Iluababor zone Education Office pointed out the following as challenges faced by the zone at secondary level: poor leadership and management, unattractive school environment, poor teaching and learning processes, and passive and inactive parent and community involvement.

Besides, the strategic plan emphasises the need to implement an effective school improvement programme that can bring committed leadership and a systematic management system to each school (zone Education Office, 2013:2-3). The implementation of the school improvement programme points to a need to examine the challenges and opportunities that arise with the implementation of the programme, focusing on its ability to address the ills that were identified by the Education Office such as leadership and management, teaching and learning, learning environment and community participation. Thus, the question that the researcher seeks to answer is as follows:

1.6.1 Basic Research Question

What are the major challenges of and opportunities in the implementation of the school improvement programme in the secondary schools of the Iluababor administrative zone?

The sub-research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent do school leadership and management improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme?
2. How effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?
3. How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?
4. To what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?
5. What are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?
6. What are the major opportunities of implementing the school improvement programme?

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the extent to which school leadership and management in secondary schools improved as a result of implementing the school improvement programme.
2. To determine the effectiveness of the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools.
3. To assess the success rate of the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of the selected secondary schools.
4. To evaluate the extent to which community participation improved as a result of the implementation of the school improvement programme.
5. To identify the main challenges of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools.
6. To explore the major opportunities of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study will identify challenges in the areas of school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment and community involvement in the school improvement programme implementation. It will also recommend possible solutions to the challenges facing the school improvement programme implementation. These recommendations will hopefully contribute to better implementation and management of school improvement programmes.

This study is significant because it can add to the existing knowledge base on school improvement programmes, especially at secondary school level. The results from the study can help policymakers in Ethiopia, mainly in the Iluababor administrative zone, to make informed decisions about reform in secondary schools (9-10). Furthermore, it will inform the school principals and school governing bodies of the performance gap in the implementation of the school improvement programme. Above and beyond, the study will hopefully improve the practice of teaching and learning, thereby contributing to the success of students.

The study will also help to explore challenges and opportunities and pave ways for improving secondary school reform to influence school principals, school governing bodies, teachers, students, parents and other partners to take on their roles in an effective and efficient way that will inevitably improve the secondary school quality of education. Finally, it will also serve as a springboard for other researchers to carry out in-depth studies in the field.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations: first the study considered only grades 9-10 secondary school improvement programme implementation practices like school leadership and management, teaching and learning process, learning environment, parents and community participation. Second, some school improvement perspectives like school governance were not considered. Third, in interviews and focus group discussions most participants were not willing to be recorded as result of which the researcher only took notes on their interviews and focus group discussion responses. Thus, there might be loss of some significant information. Fourth, the researcher excluded school board members and students in the classroom in the sampled

secondary schools by involving parent teachers associations and student council members as representative of grades 9-10 secondary schools students. If school board members and students in the classroom were included, they might have had different views. Consequently, different results might be obtained from these groups as compared to the present findings.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The proposed study was delimited to assess the challenges and opportunities of the school improvement programme in secondary schools in the areas of school leadership and school management, teaching and learning process, school learning environment, parents and community participation and to measure the current performance of the school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools in terms of inputs, processes and outcomes. In the study, the data collected was limited to 12 secondary schools (grades 9-10) only out of 24 secondary schools in the Iluababor administrative zone.

1.10 Operational Definition of Key Terms

- A. **General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP):** this is a programme designed to improve the quality of education in the schools. It is one of the Ethiopian education strategies to remove fundamental obstacles that stand in the way of quality education (MOE, 2010:5).
- B. **School Improvement Program (SIP)** is an educational programme which includes major components like management and leadership, teaching and learning, learning environment, and community involvement (MOE, 2009:7).
- C. **School leadership:** the term refers to the capacity to influence others to work together voluntarily in the schools (UNESCO, 2009:11)
- D. **School management:** the term refers to the process of working with and through the school community to accomplish school improvement aims efficiently and the ability to motivate others to perform the activities which the secondary schools planned to do (Adeyemi and Olusula, 2008:2).
- E. **Instructional leadership:** the term has to do with the principal's responsibility to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place in the school (Leithwood, 1999:7-8).

- F. **Parents and community involvement** – is a partnership where the parents, community and the school work together towards the success of their children and sharing the responsibility for school improvement (UNICEF, 2010:23).
- G. **Learning environment:** The term refers to the physical environment of the school and has an important influence on the behaviour of both teachers and learners. The environment of the school can help to establish and maintain a sound culture of learning and teaching (UNICEF, 2010:13).
- H. **School governing bodies:** refers to those responsible for working with schools to ensure the schools deliver good quality education. Together with the school principals, the school governing bodies are responsible for the day-to-day management of the schools, that is, they participate in setting the aims, policies and strategies of the schools (MOE, 2009:34).
- I. **Challenges:** The term is used in the study to indicate problems encountered in the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement programme in secondary schools.
- J. **Opportunities:** The term refers to advantages given by government as a policy and strategy direction and support that is given by development partners.
- K. **Administrative zone:** is an administrative division managed by the regional government.
- L. **District:** is an administrative division managed by zone administration.

1.11 Chapter Divisions

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview and rationale for the study on the school improvement programme in secondary schools. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework on school improvement and the third chapter reviews related literature in the global context and the education system in Ethiopia, taking into consideration the stipulations of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy. Chapter four outlines the research design and methods and chapter five analyses and interprets the collected data. Finally, chapter six presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.12 Summary

The background of the study provided a general overview of the school improvement programme in the global context and the school improvement programme context in Ethiopia. The study further gave the motivation for carrying out this research, contribution of the study and highlighted the research problem, the research questions and objectives, contributions of the study, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. A foundation of the study was laid through the review of facts about school improvement programmes as a component to enhance quality education. The next chapter will present the theoretical framework used to guide the study.

Chapter 2: The Research Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual framework of the study. It begins with conceptualisation and a brief history of school improvement and then outlines the components of the school improvement programme diagrammatically which include major components of school improvement such as school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment as well as parents and community involvement in the implementation of the school improvement programme. In the study, the Total Quality Management model was selected to supplement the school improvement programme model to overcome the prevailing challenges in secondary schools. The next paragraphs present the concept of school improvement.

2.2 Conceptualisation of School Improvement

When it comes to the concept of school improvement, it is complex and difficult to conceptualise with simple terms as it is constantly evolving with differentiated calls for action over time (Potter & Chapman, 2002:7; Hopkins, 2001:3). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED) and International School Improvement Project (ISIP) conceptualise school improvement comprehensively as:

“A systematic, sustained effort aimed at a change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools with the ultimate aim of enhancing, pupil progress, achievement, development and then accomplishing educational goals more effectively.”

This concept indicates the plan to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. It also points toward a desire to bring about genuine improvement in student outcomes, an increase in the life chances of learners in the school and to develop attractive conditions in the schools in a systematic and sustainable manner.

Besides, Potter & Chapman (2002:7) and Hopkins (2001:3) argued school improvement as an approach to education change where as the definition of ISIP rested on a number of assumptions:

- **The school as a centre of change:** this means that external reforms need to be sensitive to the situation in individual schools, rather than assuming that all schools are the same. It also implies that school improvement efforts need to adopt a classroom-exceeding perspective without ignoring the classroom.
- **A systematic approach to change:** school improvement is a carefully planned and managed process that takes place over a period of several years.
- **A key focus for change is the internal conditions of schools:** these include not only the teaching/learning activities used in school, but also the schools' procedures, role allocations and resource use that support the teaching and learning process.
- **Accomplishing educational goals more effectively:** educational goals reflect the particular mission of schools, and represent what the school itself regards as desirable. This suggests a broader definition of outcome than student scores on achievement tests, even though for some schools these may be pre-eminent. Schools also serve the more general development needs of students, the professional development of teachers, and the needs of its community.
- **A multi-level perspective:** although the school is the centre of change, it does not act alone. The school is embedded in an educational system that has to work collaboratively or symbiotically if the highest degrees of quality are to be achieved. This means that the roles of teachers, school heads, governing bodies, parents, support people, and local authorities should be defined, harnessed and committed to the process of school improvement.
- **Integrative implementation strategies:** this implies a linkage between top down and bottom up, remembering, of a course, that both approaches can apply at a number of different levels in the system. Ideally, top down provides policy aims, an overall strategy and operation plan; this is complemented by a bottom up response involving diagnosis, priority goal setting and implementation. The former provides the framework, resources and a menu of alternatives; the latter, energy and school-based implementation.

- **The drive towards institutionalisations:** change is only successful when it has become part of the natural behaviour of teachers in the school. Implementation by itself is not enough.

The above of assumptions of school improvement highlight the fact that improvement strategies must be well planned and managed over a relatively long period. In this case, schools are expected to become effective and need to focus their efforts on systematically enhancing their own ability to run, transform and maintain the impetus for change. This shows that school improvement is about enhancement in the lives of students and the role of the school in supporting the students to attain their educational goals in an organised, systematic and a focused approach.

2.3 School effectiveness and School Improvement

Harris (2005:2) justified school effectiveness and improvement as that school effectiveness ensures that learners achieve outcomes, while school improvement is about changing conditions so that learners can achieve as expected. The indication is that both processes have related objectives, but are realized in a different way. Besides, studies on school effectiveness run matching to that on school improvement. That is, school improvement is a repeated process of enhancing the effectiveness the school (Macbeath & Mortimore 2001:5). As Beare (1989:11) school effectiveness is defined as the process by which the school accomplishes its objective. Macbeath and Mortimore (2001:9) again verified that school effectiveness is a process that includes effective teaching. This concept views school effectiveness as a process that determines how well the school enhances learners' achievement through effective teaching, leadership, management and governance. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, (1989:11) explained that when an organisation accomplishes its specific objective, it said to be effective which is associated with learner attainment and how well the school functions. Besides, Teddlie and Reynolds (2000:23) described s school improvement as a process by which schools implement change towards perfect condition, to be a process with the long term goal of moving towards an ideal type of a self – renewing school.

Ainscow, Dayson, Godrick & West (2012:198) explained that School improvement is educational change/ reform that aim to create an environment from which students can gain the best experience. The authors further make clear that if students learn in a favourable and encouraging environment their achievements will be maximised that needs exerting all

coordinated efforts by all stakeholders. It may take place in a context where the schools work under complex situations which are within the schools, between the schools and beyond the schools.

The schools which are considered as being effective, there are non - non-compulsory elements which have become the focus of schools in the areas of elements such as: a central focus on teaching and learning; a commitment to meaningful professional development; distributed forms of teachers/ leadership (Harris and Muijs, 2005:132). This idea indicates that school should focus on teaching and learning and make it effective so as to improve the students' results. School effectiveness could also indicate how well the school is managed by the principal, how well parents and the community are involved in its activities, and how well the school is known (Hajnal, Walker & Sackney, 1998). While, the school improvement programme, in Ethiopian context, is designed to assure quality of secondary education (9-10) by mainly focusing on school improvement processes which are meant to enhance school effectiveness (MOE, 2009:15). Unless, there is constant improvement school effectiveness is doubtful. For the purpose of this study, school improvement will be assumed to mean the effort aimed at to change learning conditions and to enhance students' progress, achievement, development and to bring about secondary education goals more effective in Iluababor administrative zone.

In sum, school effectiveness is constantly achieved through the school improvement process, which fosters change for the school to attain its objectives; it is therefore important to contextualise the concept of school improvement programme. Thus, the school improvement domains indicted below are expected to result in school improvement which enhances school effectiveness. The next paragraphs present a brief history of school improvement at a global level.

2.4 A Brief History of School Improvement at a Global Level

The reform of education has been on the educational agenda since 1960 and the early 1980s, due to globalization where education has occupied governments focus (Hopkins, 2005:15). By the 1990s, governments around the world were seriously implementing agenda for educational improvement across schools and systems.

As Hopkins and Reynolds (2001:45) explain, there were five distinct phases of school improvement in the past five decades as follows:

A) Phase One

The first phase of school improvement was the period of free floating during the 1970s and the early 1980s rather than representing a systematic and programmatic approach to school change. The main focus of this phase was organisational change: school self-evaluation and ownership of change by individual teachers and schools (Townsend, 2007:44). The school improvement programme practiced in this period was fragmented both in conception and application. As a result, school improvement practices did not have much impact upon classroom practice (Reynolds, 1999:123). Furthermore, Hopkins (2001:33) underpins that in the phase of the 1980s, school improvement was paying attention to individual schools, groups of students or teachers. This was followed by phase two of school improvement as follows.

B) Phase Two

The second phase of school improvement started in the early 1990s, and the focus was on the interaction between school improvement and school effectiveness in communities. In this regard, Desimone (2002:45) notes that the second phase of school improvement was facilitated by more systematic interaction between school improvement and school effectiveness research communities. Teddlie and Reynolds (2000:146) and Joyce & Showers (1995:47) explain that this merged perspective brought significant changes, which represented a knowledge base about what works at school level to enhance student achievement and focus was also on organisational and classroom change as reflected in approaches towards staff development premised upon models of teaching. Furthermore, school improvements were alert on the classroom level as well as the school level. This phase was typified by providing schools with guidelines and strategies to

promote classroom level change (Vinovskis, 1996:32; Joyce & Showers, 1995:133 cited in Hopkins, 2001:17) and governments starting to play a more active fundamental role in school improvement. Additionally, a 'whole school design' approach became common with the focus on curriculum and instruction as well as management and organisational variables (Slavin, 1996:43; Hopkins, 2005:18) and on a broad set of principles for organisational change and development (Hopkins, 2001:19). This was followed by the third phase of school improvement as follows.

C) Phase Three

In many countries numerous resources have been targeted at programmes and projects aimed at improving schools and raising standards of performance. The evidence supporting the relationship between school improvement and increased student achievement remains weak and contestable. As Hopkins (2001:22) noted, "the achievement gap between pupils from disadvantages backgrounds that seemed initially to narrow in the late 1980s stayed the same or widened again in the 1990s raising alarm among national governments in Canada, England, and the United States."

The third phase of school improvement has arisen because of the relative failure of existing school improvement approaches to make a difference to schools on a large scale. In response to the previous limitations, the third phase of school improvement attempted to draw upon its robust evidence and to produce interventions that were solidly based on tried and tested practices. Programmes of improving quality education for all in the schools (IQEA); High Reliability Schools (HRS); the Manitoba School Improvement Project (MISP) and the Dutch National School Improvement Project were all examples of projects in this third phase (Reynolds, 1996:33; Hopkins, 1994:45).

Nevertheless, if one looks at these examples of third wave of school improvement as a group, it is clear that there has been an enhanced focus upon the importance of pupil outcomes. Instead of the earlier phase two school improvement that emphasised changing the processes of schools, the focus of third phase school improvement was upon seeing if these changes are powerful enough to affect pupil outcomes (Townsend., 2007:43). Hence, the learning level and instructional

behaviours of teachers have been increasingly targeted for explicit attention, as well as the school level. This was followed by the fourth phase of school improvement.

D) Phase Four

Phase four of school improvement was largely concerned with system level changes through collaboration and networking across schools and districts (Harris, 2008:76). Harris further suggests that district reform and network building (including professional learning communities) need to occur side by side, and they need to be linked. It was also characterised by building capacity for learning at local level, with the key features of professional learning communities and networks; and recognising the importance of leadership in the school improvement programme (Reynolds, 2001:17; Harris & Lambert, 2003:26).

A desire to link school improvement to student learning outcomes was the main goal during this phase, which was pursued with varying degrees of intensity. This has included a much richer and deeper appreciation of what the transition from a system based on teaching to one that embraces learning actually implies (Stoll, 2008:45). Such a system doesn't neglect the achievement of learning outcomes, but provides evidence that learning can make a difference to school improvement (Watkins, 2010:12). This phase reflects the growing recognition of the nested nature of the school in systems and the frustration, especially of policy makers, of scaling up and transferring more quickly the advertised success stories of individual school reform. To speed the school improvement process, system changes are occurring at two levels as system changes at national or state level, and renewal and redefinition of the role and work of local education authorities (Harris, 2005:77). This was followed by the fifth phase of school improvement.

E) Phase five

This phase of school improvement focuses on systematic improvement. In the last decades, we have begun to learn far more about the features of an effective educational system, but we are now only beginning to understand the dynamics of improvement at system level (Townsend, 2007:47). The review of the broader international school improvement experiences is intended both to confirm the trends identified in the previous phases and also to highlight the importance of international comparisons and learning from international experiences that is at the heart of

the fifth phase (Mckinsey, 2010:74). Two points are critical here; the first is the move from individual to local and now to systematic approaches to school improvement; and second the evident proposition that we can learn about system change only by studying systems and working on how to improve them (Watkins, 2010:7). This is from secondary analysis such as that of Fenton (2009:34): Lessons Learned: How good Policies Produce better Schools and the (Mckinsey, 2010:75) studies: How the World's most Improved School Systems keep getting Better.

Phase five of the school improvement programme is characterised by an approach towards systemic improvement with the key features of the influence of the knowledge base and the impact of international benchmarking studies; and differentiated approaches to school and system reform (Townsend, 2007:49). Watkins (2010:10-11) explains that phase five was mainly focused on the idea that school improvement is emerging and largely connected with system level changes through collaboration and networking across schools and systems. That is, it is necessary to maximise the benefits of networking, as networking may have its strongest impact if there is a close interface between networking with improving schools through system wide and system change efforts especially at the local authority or school district level. Accordingly, in phase five, as Hopkins (2005:13) describes, authentic school improvement programme approaches are:

- **Achievement focused** – focus on enhancing student learning and achievement, in a broader sense than the mere examination of results or test scores;
- **Empowering in aspiration** – that intends to provide those involved in the change process with skills of learning and ‘change agent that will raise levels of expectations and confidence throughout the educational community’;
- **Research based and theory rich** - that bases their strategies on programmes and programme elements that have an established track records of effectiveness, which research their own effectiveness and connect to and build on other bodies of knowledge and disciplines;
- **Context specific** – that pays attention to the unique features of the school situation and builds strategies on the basis of an analysis of that particular context;
- **Capacity building** - aims to build the school conditions to support continuous improvement;

- **Enquiry driven** – which appreciates the reflection in action is an integral and self-sustaining process;
- **Implementation oriented** – that takes a direct focus on the quality of classroom practice and student learning;
- **Externally supported** – that builds agencies around the school and provides focused support, and creates and facilitates networks that disseminate and sustain ‘good practices’; and
- **Systematic** – that accepts the reality of centralised policy context, but also realises the need to adapt to external change for internal purposes, and to exploit the creativity and synergies existing within the system.

These practices represent a new approach to initiating and sustaining the school improvement programme implementation processes and outcomes in the education system at all levels. In this study in relation to phase five the authentic school improvement programme approaches will be considered to connect with school system level changes, collaboration and networking across the education system and in particular in secondary schools in the current practices.

From the above concepts we can conclude that School improvement programmes in different countries share common aims, objectives and characteristics. Rabichund (2011:91) argued that the goals and intention of school improvement programme have certain similarities across the world. The education sector development programmes in different countries have identified different models, domains and /or characteristics of school improvement. For example, the Australian school improvement model addresses four domains of school improvement as learning and teaching; leading and managing; student environment and community involvement (ACT Department of Education and Training, 2009:3).

These domains are exactly the same to the school improvement programme domains identified by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education which are in detail discussed in chapter one and two of in the system of education sector development programme of Ethiopia. Here the schools in Ethiopia at all levels are expected to see to their own needs in line with the four domains which have actually been identified by concerted efforts of Ministry of education and other stakeholders in the country. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008 41) lay emphasis on the domains

where all the schools conduct self – evaluation with the participation of the stakeholders, and identify their own school improvement needs similar to the Australian Model. That is, all schools in the country follow steps like by setting their priorities and then they develop a school improvement programme plan and implement the plan (See Figure - 2 stages of school improvement programme development plan (adapted from MOE, 2010:7).

Futhermore, Khosa (2010:2) argued that the philosophy of the South African school improvement model incorporates many dimensions about what should be taken into consideration while initiating school improvement programmes. The South African education system experienced that side - by- side setting the approaches to improve schools is imperative to think of strategies of school improvement programme. Tsedisco, (2011:93) for example showed that in the South African experiences school improvement programme attempts to enhance school improvement but the analysis of the projects showed that very little improvements was actually registered at schools. Additionally, in South African perspective Khosa (2010:3) discusses school improvement initiatives without ambiguity based on the principle of management by fact, developed through the full participation of the school community, and implemented by making the necessary resources available, can achieve the intended target in specific schools as well as in the South African education system. Then, from South African Education system experiences we can infer that school improvement should be initiated based on evidence, that is, there must be stakeholders' participation, and a need to have adequate resources of various kinds.

Opposite to the above discussed literature, relation to Australian and South African experiences Abebe (2014:27) verifies that with regards to authentic school improvement implementations in Ethiopia, there are problems with current school improvement programme interventions that include:

- A failure to embed school improvement initiatives within a contextual and diagnostic analysis of the school;
- Lack of focus upon the level of the classroom and the primacy of instruction;
- A neglect to consider differences between schools and the need for more accurately targeted programmes focused upon the particular growth states of schools;

- The continuing need to understand the complex dynamic between structure and culture in school reform; and
- The necessity to focus not just on how innovation impacts on schools, but how such innovations can move up to scale and impact on many schools and systems (Abebe, 2014:27).

Consequently, it becomes vital to realise some models and strategies of school improvement which are discussed below in detail this study. Hence, the objective of the study was to identify challenges of school improvement programme with regard to the result of school improvement programmes in Iluababor administrative zone on the effectiveness in secondary schools and to come up with conclusions that will help everybody concerned to understand the reality regarding what has been achieved through the school improvement programme in secondary schools (9-10). Therefore, the study aimed at identifying the outcomes of school improvement programme on the secondary schools function and to classify issues for discussion to help educators and other concerned bodies understand the results of the programme at secondary school level. The next paragraphs present the principles of school improvement programmes.

2.5 Principles of school Improvement

The school improvement process is a systematic approach that follows its own principles.

Luneburg & Ornstein (1991:124) cited in MOE (2010:15) have listed the following guiding principles that need to be followed in the school improvement process as listed below:

- Schools should employ a set of goals and mission which are easy to understand;
- Student achievement must be continuously checked and evaluated;
- Schools need to help specially the low achievers need to be tutored and enrichment programmes should be opened for high talented students;
- Principals and staff should actively be involved in continuous capacity building to update their knowledge, information and to develop positive thinking;
- Every teacher needs to contribute to successful implementation of the school improvement programme;
- Teachers must be involved in staff development by planning and implementing the school improvement programme;
- School environment has to be safe, healthy and pupil friendly;

- School community relationships should be strengthened so that community and parents need to be involve in school improvement programme implementation;
- School leadership should be shared among staff, student and parents.

In line with the school improvement principles above the study will weigh up the practices of current school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools (grades 9-10) of the Iluababor administrative zone. The next section presents the types of school improvement programmes.

2.6 The Types of School Improvement Programmes

There are three major types of school improvement programmes known by different countries. These can be characterised by the initiator of improvement efforts (whether it came from within the school or outside) and the perceived need for improvement (felt by the school or defined by others (Sally, 2013:21). These are:

- Bottom up programmes – improvement programmes fully initiated and implemented by the school, for example in Finland;
- Top down programmes – external improvement programmes forced on the school, including improvement programmes supplied to schools with low results, aimed at solving the troubles that determined the low results, for example in Italy;
- Mixed programmes – improvement programmes initially developed by external agents but subsequently voluntarily implemented in schools or adapted by them, for example, in Portugal where schools have some freedom to adjust nationally prescribed programmes to their own contexts and needs.

According to Sally (2013:10) there was no linear relation between the types of school improvement programme and educational system in a country. Abebe (2014:37) argued that it would be far too simplistic to say that relatively decentralised countries only have bottom up school improvement, while relatively centralised countries only have top down school improvement programmes. Sally (2013:20) verified that countries moving from a centralised system to a more decentralisation one did not automatically show a mixed approached to school improvement.

In theory, all types can occur in all countries, although the bottom up approach is more likely to be found in countries where schools have some freedom to make their own decisions; however, freedom of schools does not guarantee effective ‘boom-up’ school improvement (Sally, 2013:21; Abebe, 2014:37). The type of school improvement programme that a school is involved in has consequences for the occurrence and the influence of the particular factors explored. For example, readiness for change and school ownership of school improvement tends to appear more frequently in bottom-up approaches (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:20). The types of school improvement we examined, therefore, did not lead to totally different sets of factors that may explain effective school improvement programmes, but the role that these factors played in a specific situation varied. It was important for us to keep this context specifically of school improvement efforts in mind in interpreting the influence of factors included in the effective school improvement (Sally, 2013:14; MOE, 2010:5). Since the Ethiopian government follows the top-down approach to school improvement programmes to get better results from schools aimed at solving the difficulty, this study will verify the results that have been seen in the education system of the country at secondary schools secondary schools’ school improvement programmes in the Iluababor administrative zone. The next section presents school improvement domains and elements of the domains respectively.

2.7 Domains and Major Elements of School Improvement Programme

School improvement needs to be planned and managed to take place over a period of several years. Then has it to be related to the schools’ procedure, role allocations and resource use that support the teaching and learning process (Hopkins, 2005:10-12). Professional development of teachers and needs of the community are also features of school improvement. School principals, teachers, school governing bodies, parents, administrative staff, and local authorities should be harnessed and committed to the process of school improvement. School improvement will be successful when it has become a part of the natural behaviour of teachers and all stakeholders in the school (Townsend, 2007). This requires making all school activities contribute to raising broad student outcomes. The broad outcomes of learning encompass: academic, social, emotional, cultural and environmental outcomes (ACT, 2009:1-7). The school capacity determines the provision of quality learning for all students. Thus, schools need to apply

best practices in terms of the four domains and 22 elements to provide quality education for all students as listed below:

Table 1: Domains and major elements of school improvement programmes

No	Domains	Elements of school improvement domains
1	Leadership and management	Administrative regulations and staff structure
		Strategic direction
		Strategic planning of SIP
		Consultation and communication
		Financial management
		Management of infrastructure and physical resources
		Human resource management
		Building the leadership capacity of the school community
		Establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices
		Monitoring and evaluation
2	Teaching and learning Process	Curriculum
		Use of teaching methods in the classroom
		Teachers' professional development
		Learning and evaluation system
3	School learning environment	Student empowerment
		Student support
		Relationships among school staff, students and families
		Students' behaviour
		Student facilities
4	Parents and community participation	Working together with parents
		Involving the communities
		Promoting school improvement

In the table above, four domains with their respective 22 major elements on a regular basis affect the teaching and learning processes in the education system. Therefore, to bring real

reform in the schools, there is a need to conduct self-evaluation by involving teachers, students, parents and local communities to know the status of improvement practices in terms of the four domains and its major elements (ACT, 2009:7). On the other hand, other than Table 1 above, the school improvement domains and elements can also be described as presented in Figure 1 below.

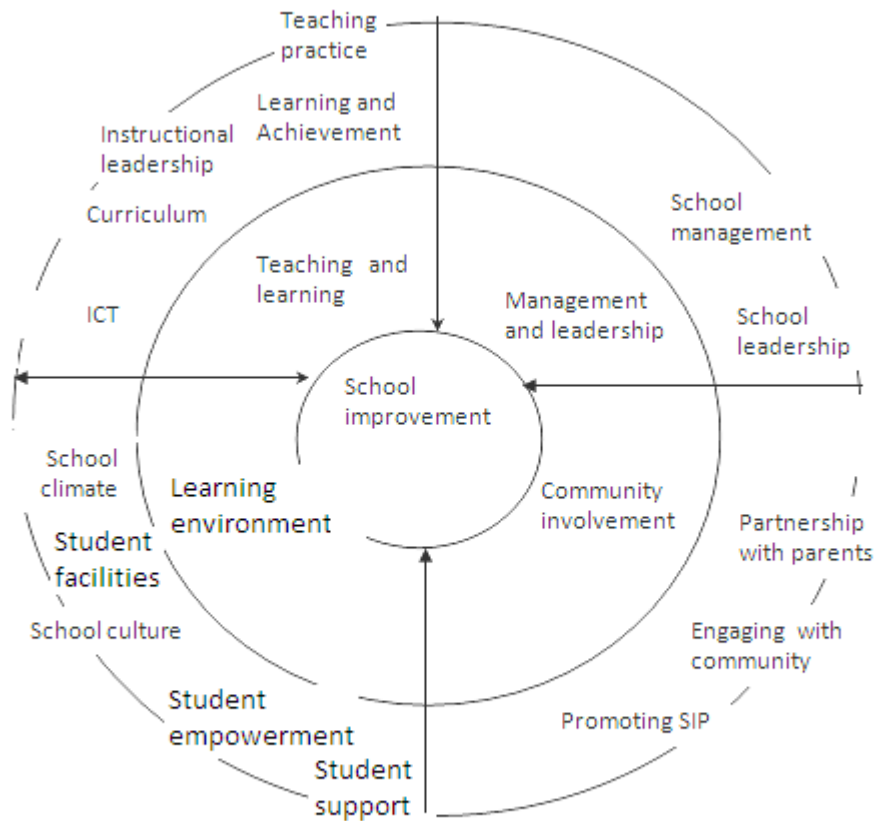


Figure 1 - This figure is adopted from *Managing the Learning Environment* (Briggs, 2001:186); and the Australian Capital Territory School Improvement Planning Frame Work (ACT, 2009:6).

In the study school improvement domains are school leadership and management, teaching and learning process, learning environment, parents and local community involvement which, together with the 22 elements of the domains, are the major points of the study to identify major challenges and opportunities of secondary school improvement programmes. Additionally, in the study to foster continuous improvement within the school, there are six stages to be followed,

that is to gather and analyse data to determine priorities; explore possible solutions; assess readiness and build capacity; create and communicate improvement plan; implement the plan; and monitor and adjust the plan. Figure 2 below therefore shows the stages of the school improvement programme implementation as follows:

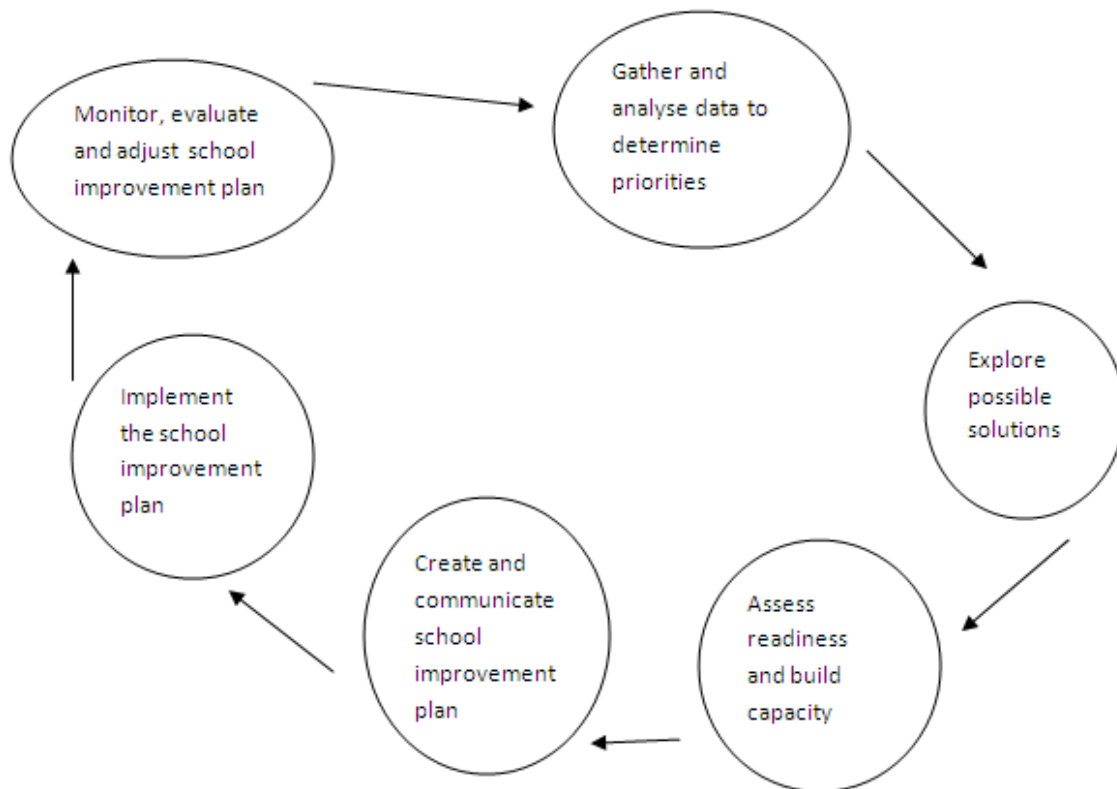


Figure - 2 stages of school improvement programme development plan (adapted from MOE, 2010:7).

It is believed that a school principal alone cannot reach each student and help each student to succeed. Nevertheless, we need principals who can lead and manage in the school in many different ways and in numerous circumstances to implement school improvement programme domains that are presented above based upon the stated stages of the school development plan framework. In this regard, principals, teachers, students, government bodies, parents and the local community are very helpful for the rigorous efforts of school improvement programme implementation. In addition, collaboration within secondary schools of grades 9 to 10 provides

the backbone for the sustainability and implementation of the stages for an effective school improvement programme.

From what has been discussed above, school improvement is the process of making schools healthier/better places for learning. This relies on changes in the commitment of school leadership and governing bodies to augment the teaching and learning process and to make schools attractive learning environments which, in turn, depend on schools' leadership being dedicated to satisfy the prospect of students with good quality outcomes. As presented in the school development plan, one of the aims of the school improvement plan is to build individual school leadership and school governing bodies accountable for students' enrolment, attendance, learning and successful completion, and to promote the active participation of students and communities in school governance. School improvement also helps to ensure support to every aspect of the school in creating an attractive learning environment for students.

Then again, for school improvement in the stages of the school development plan to be successful, strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism systems have to be established. Based on the conceptual framework, the definitions of school improvement and basic questions in the study, and considering that secondary education is a dynamic, living and growing institution, this study assesses school development planning and implementation in 12 secondary schools. The framework shows that secondary schools can develop their own school development planning approaches anchored in Total Quality Management (TQM), that provides a thoughtful framework as a management tool for secondary schools that necessitates a holistic approach, with existing school self-assessment practices in terms of service orientation and a focus on learner satisfaction.

So, as a conceptual framework of the study, Figure 3 below shows the road map of the study in the light of the school improvement domains such as leading and managing, teaching and learning process, learning environment, parents and local community involvement and their cyclical process with their expected outcomes.

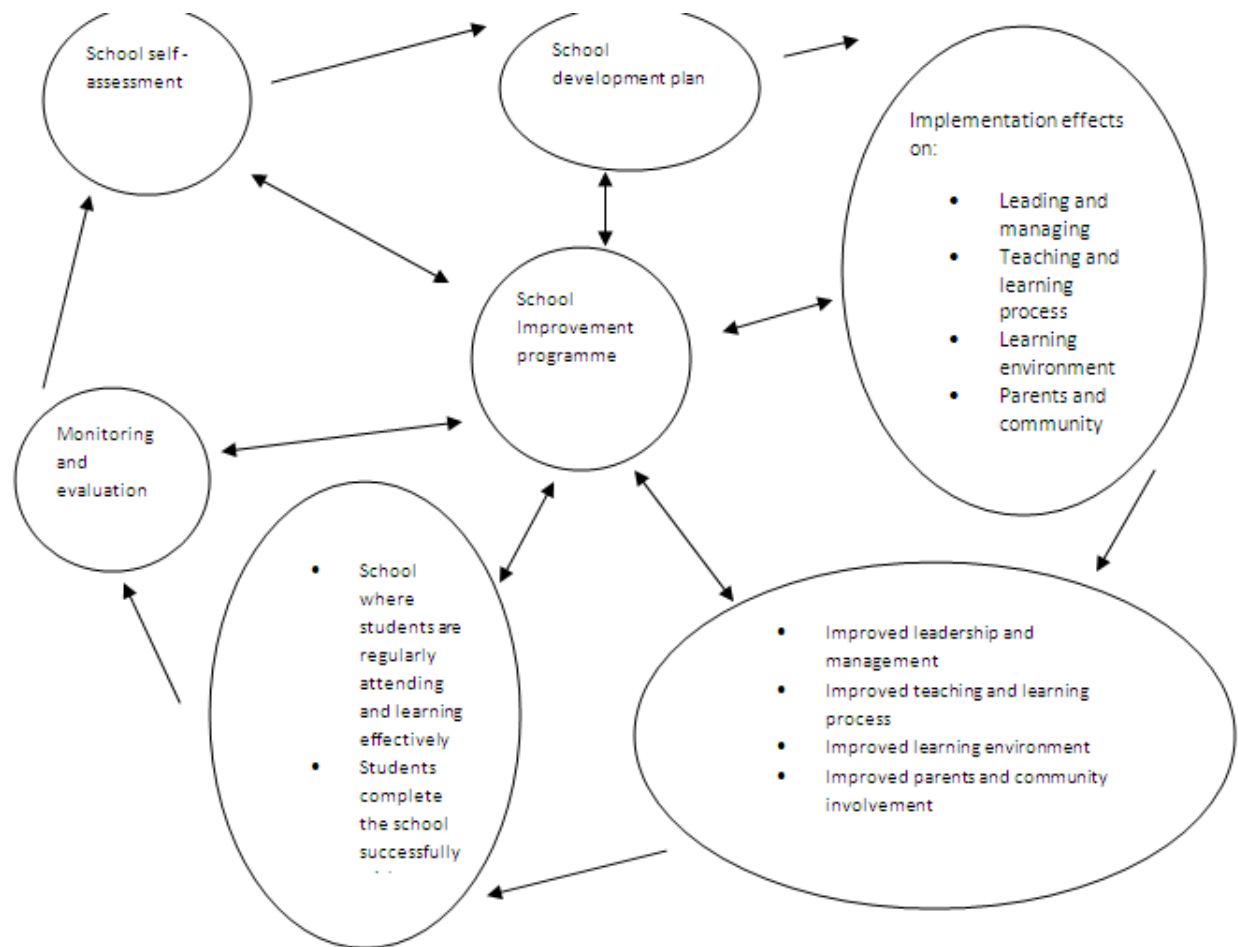


Figure 3 - School development plan conceptual framework for secondary schools

The study is anticipated to bring new ideas into secondary schools, inspire reflection from the study, growth and change to open the way for school improvement in other schools, and to reflect the conclusions reached and implications of the study gained through research. The schools are also expected to use the challenges seen in the study as a learning opportunity. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education, zone education office, district education officers, secondary school supervisors, secondary school principals, teachers, parents and the local community at large are likely to learn from school improvement programme implementation practices so as to build their capacity as management teams. All stakeholders of secondary school education are anticipated to enrich and encourage reflection by reflecting on their experience to share with others for improving secondary school education. The next section

presents the school as an organisation within the perspectives of the school improvement programme.

2.8 The School as an Organisation in the Perspective of School Improvement

The school as a body (organisation) consists of body parts (organs) that enable it to function in order to perform certain tasks - teaching and learning. If these body parts are not coordinated and regulated in their functioning, the essential task, which is quality teaching and learning, will not be attainable (Marishane & Zengele, 2013:17). Marishane & Zengele (2013:18) further underline that the school as an organisation comprises of activities that are meticulously planned and coordinated. They in turn form significant components of the educational structure in the education system. That is, the school principal, parents, teachers and learners form part of the school as an organisation (Marishane & Zengele, 2013:19).

In the school, the principal, teachers, parents and learners as organs of the body (school) are essential for the body (school) to function properly. The organs of the school need to have common goals which are driven by the vision and mission statement of the school. The place of the school is within the community that it serves, while its purpose is to achieve the educational goals of the community. The educational goal of school improvement is quality learning and teaching in an environment that it is conducive to learning (Marishane, & Zengele, 2013:18). As Elmore (2000) cited in Marishane & Zengele, (2013:18) suggests, schools should be remade so that they can focus on the core function of teaching and learning.

The school as an organisation is a place where activities are assigned to various stakeholders that function together to achieve the educational goal as a main target of school improvement. Assigning various activities is the responsibility of the principal and the school management team (Marishane & Zengele, 2013:19). The responsibilities of teaching and managing are delegated to the individuals who contribute their skills and intellectual resources to achieve the aims of school improvement as an organisation (Gultig and Butler, 1999:16). From the management perspective, the school is concerned with the functions that allow it to operate as an institute or organisation and, in terms of the leadership perspectives, it involves the manner in

which the principal brings all stakeholders together to function as a unit towards achieving goals (Zengele, 2013:20).

Everard and Morris (1996:150) also state that schools as organisations consist of a structure (hierarchical chart, committees, department, procedures, etc.), people (teachers, pupils and non-teaching staff), technology (the plant and the process) and culture. Everard and Morris (1996) further explain that the management of a school as an organisation involves not only managing each of these elements separately, but also bringing about balance or harmony between them. Accordingly, Clark, (2012:6-10) summarises that a school as an organisation has ten ways of improving as follows:

- **Create a safe school** – is a place where a culture of inclusion and respect is established, welcoming all students and making sure that students interact safely.
- **Ensure good order** – without good order, teaching and learning become a rather haphazard affair. Good order means discipline within the school environment.
- **Ensure a clean and well maintained school** – a school that is clean, neat and well maintained is more pleasant for everyone. Cleaning and maintenance need to be part of a systematic and ongoing process with clear standards and regular monitoring.
- **Teachers teach** – if our teachers are in class when they are meant to be, are well prepared and teach every lesson completely, half the battle is won.
- **Good work should be acknowledged** – teachers should be expected to be praised for good work and, where suitable, to display such acknowledgements on the walls of their classrooms and in the corridors of the school.
- **A range of extracurricular activities should be provided** – participation in extracurricular activities has a significant impact on how students relate to their school, provided the activities are well organised and provide opportunities for students with a wide range of interests to participate in the activities on a regular basis.
- **There should be fun events** - fun events for each grade and/or for the whole school have to be there to build a sense of belonging in each grade through shared experience.
- **Students should be involved in decisions that affect them** – part of the value of a representative council of learners and other management structures involving students is that they give them an opportunity to influence decisions that may affect them.

- **Parents should be involved in the school** – when parents become involved in the activity of the school, education becomes a family affair which is always good for pupils.
- **Parents and students should be kept informed** – keeping students and parents informed of what is happening makes them feel part of the school.

When it comes to the practices of the current trends of school improvement programmes, the major problem in Ethiopia was that a home-grown movement has never existed even if there were some promising signs for the future (Melanie & Caine, 2013:22). It is equally clear that much of the research within these traditions has been undertaken by outsiders. Numerous school improvement projects and programme evaluations consistently point to reliable patterns of failure and the absence of sustainability (Abebe, 2010:18). Learning results in Iluababor administrative secondary schools, as measured by the Regional Education Bureau and National Education Assessment results showed student achievement remains very low due to poor leadership and management, inadequate funding, lack of adequate governance and autonomy, lack of infrastructures, unattractive learning environments and absence of continuous professional development (MOE, 2010:9-10).

Likewise, Iluababor administrative zone secondary schools in particular have not been improved due to poor efforts made by educational leaders at national, zone education, district and school levels where the student achievement results were deteriorating in secondary schools (Zone Education Office Annual Report, 2010:3-4). Thus, school improvement oriented leadership and management is needed for the effectiveness of a school improvement programme by focusing on clear structuring, enhancing of school teaching and learning by means of evaluation and feedback, and by obtaining consensus and cohesion with respect to school improvement basic goals and values (Melanie & Caine, 2013:22). The next section will present school organisational theory models with particular attention to Total Quality Management (TQM) which is directly related to school improvement programmes.

2.8.1 Organisational Models

In the following paragraphs a review of organisational theories is carried out, beginning with the closed system model.

2.8.1.1 Closed System Model

The closed system model considers the external environment (technological advancement, the cultural and demographic characteristics of the community, legal decisions, political decisions) to be stable and predictable, and they assume that it does not intervene in or cause problems for the functions of the organisation. Therefore, the closed system model does not depend on the external environment for explanations or solutions to managerial issues; instead, it is enclosed and sealed off from the outside environment (Daft, 2001:21). The model relies primarily on internal organisational processes and dynamics to account for organisational, group, and individual behaviours. The central management objective addressed in this model is the efficient running of the organisation. Daft (2001:22) explains that the theories and models that emerged as a result are often termed 'machine models' ('classical models' or 'traditional models'). These models sought to make organisations run like efficient, well oiled machines by correcting the internal functioning of the organisation. According to Daft, (2001:23) there are three main subfields of the classical perspective closed system models, that is, scientific management, administrative management, and bureaucratic management and these are explained below.

- **Scientific management model** – its focus was on improving individual productivity. Here decisions about the organisation and job design are based on a precise, scientific study of individual situations. To implement these scientific principles, it was expected that management would do the following: develop standard procedures for performing jobs; select workers with appropriate abilities and skills to do each job; train workers in the standard procedures; and support workers through careful planning of their work.
- **The administrative management model** – it focuses on managers and functions they perform.
- **The bureaucratic model** – it emphasises designing and managing organisations based on five principles: impersonal social relations; employee selection and promotion; hierarchy of authority and spheres of competence; system rules and procedures; and task specialisation.

2.8.1.2 Open System Model

During the 20th century, industrialised nations experienced better standards of living and improved working conditions. Simultaneously, it was observed that effective managers were not necessarily following all of the principles laid down in the classical closed system models. That is, it was realised that human behaviour was an important factor in shaping the managerial style and worker actions. External factors to an organisation therefore had to be considered in the management principles, giving birth to the open system model.

The open system model is based on the assumption that external variables or events play a significant role in explaining what is happening within an organisation. This is explained in Draft (2001:28) who says the open system model of organisation focuses on events occurring external to the organisation that influence changes within the organisation. It considers an organisation as a set of interacting functions that acquire inputs from the environment, processes them, and then releases the outputs back to the external environment. Since most work is done by teams in direct contact with the customers, the open system model (Total Quality Management model and the supply chain/synergy model) includes customers in an attempt to create modern organisations. This is similar to the Total Quality Management (TQM) model that supports the inclusion of the voice of the customer in designing the service and modifying the process to provide higher quality through elements of TQM, that is, employee involvement, customer focus, benchmarking, and continuous improvement.

In this case the study aims to design open system model within the framework of total quality management (TQM) for the school improvement programme implementation; because the open system approach makes the schools constantly interact with their environment to structure so as to exchange ideas with other schools, parents, communities, other stakeholders and information to develop the overall school improvement programme implementation to get better teaching and learning process.

Additionally, the open system model considers a school as an organisation, as a set of interacting functions that acquire inputs from the environment, processes them, and then releases the output back to the external environment. That is, the open system theory supports the concept that organisations are strongly influenced by their environment. The environments consist of other

organisations that exert various forces of an economic, political, or social nature. It also provides key resources that sustain the organisation and lead to change and survival (Michael, 2004:47). Here the objective of the open systems model is to address the efficient running of the school improvement programme.

While the open system is of the view that the school as an organisation is influenced by the environment, the closed system model considers the external environment to be stable and predictable and assumes that it does not intervene with or cause problems to the functioning of the school as an organisation (Michael, 2004:47). As a result the closed system model sought to make schools run like efficient, well-oiled machines by correcting the internal functioning of the schools. It is for this reason that the open system theory is preferred in this study because it is more realistic in identifying workable solutions as compared to closed system models. It is important, however, to state that these variables are extremely difficult to interpret due to dynamic interactions among the external variables (Michael, 2004:47; Lombardo, 2013:1; Zeiger, 2014:11). Among the many external influences that can be experienced by organisations, the following are some of the variables: actions of the existing competitors, potential competitors, suppliers, customers, and government. The influences of these external factors has been amplified in recent years due to a changing environment as reflected in growing globalisation, increased diversity, rising ethical standards, and rapid advances in technology (Michael, 2004:49; Lombardo, 2013:1).

Besides, human relations theory focuses more on the individuals in a work place than the rules, procedures and processes. It provides communication between employees and managers, allowing them to interact with one another to help make decisions. It seeks to develop satisfied employees (Zeiger, 2014:12).

Human relation theory focuses on the person as an individual and not as just another part of the mechanics of production. It also a study of human problems arising from organisational and interpersonal relations designed to better interpersonal and intergroup adjustments (Lombardo, 2013:2). Its focal point is on looking at workers solely as a means to get work done and also focuses on developing an organisation and the behaviours and motivations of employees

(Lombardo, 2013:2; Zeiger, 2014:12). According to Daft (2001:47-48) the four basic characteristics that flow from human relations theory, which differentiates the open system models from the closed system models, are as follows:

Individual differences - management must recognise that people are different and will react differently to similar situations. Therefore, management must not assume employees to be homogenous when designing and allocating tasks. However, greater standardisation among employees can be achieved through good training.

Motivation - individuals can be motivated to work toward achieving organisational goals. Therefore, it is essential for the managers to be constantly designing and creating schemes to stimulate the interests and desires of the employees towards the planned goals of the organisation.

The mutual interest - employees have an inherent need to socialise at their work, which drives them to pursue membership in informal groups that have common interests. The management must recognise that these needs cannot be satisfied by formal groups. Therefore, the management must facilitate the formation of informal groups, which brings employees together to pursue common interests.

Human dignity – employees like to be treated with respect. Their individuality needs to be respected in order for them to love their job and work toward organisational goals. The next section will present the benefits of the open system model in the perspectives of school improvement programme implementation.

2.8.1.3 Benefits of Open System Model

Daft (2001:28-33) presents the major benefits of the open system looking at school clients from an open systems perspectives as follows: more effective problem solving, more effective school leadership, more effective communication, more effective planning, more effective design of services, and more effective school results. These are:

- **Effective problem solving** - without clear understanding of the big picture of the school principal the school tends to focus only on the behaviours and events associated with problems in the workplace, rather than on the systems and structures that caused the

problems to occur in the school in the first place. To effectively solve problems in the school, it is critical to be able to identify the real causes of the problems and how to address those causes. A system view provides clear understanding of the big picture.

- **Effective school leadership** - the most important responsibilities of a school principal are to set direction and influence others to follow that direction. It is difficult to establish direction for a school and to keep that school on its course if you do not understand how the school works in the first place. Without a clear understanding of the overall nature and needs of the school, the school principal can get lost in the day-to-day activities, never really giving attention to the more important activities, such as planning the school improvements overall direction and organising their resources. Thus, an open system view helps the school principal to really understand the overall structures and dynamics of the organisation and what must be done to guide the school towards its strategic vision and goals.
- **Effective communication** - one of the most important ingredients for the success of any system is ongoing feedback, or communication, among all the parts of the school. Some of the first symptoms that a school improvement programme is in trouble are sporadic and insufficient communications. In these situations teachers, administrative staff and other stakeholders often struggle to see beyond their own roles in the school improvement programme. Consequently, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders are much less effective than they could be otherwise. Without a clear understanding of the parts of the school improvement programme and how they relate to each other, it is difficult to know what to communicate and to whom.
- **Effective planning** - the planning process is basically working one's way backwards through the system of the school improvement programme as a project. It includes identifying desired results (goals and outcomes), what measures or outputs (tangible results) will indicate that those results have been achieved, what processes will produce those outputs, and what inputs are required to conduct school improvement processes in the school system. Thus, a system view makes the planning processes much more clear and orderly to the school improvement committee and the school principal.
- **Effective design of services** - an advantage for school improvement designers, especially the school principals who have a systems view, is that they have stronger

knowledge of the primary parts of their school improvement project service and how they should be aligned to more effectively reach desired goals. A system view also promotes focus on achieving overall results, so the day-to-day details of managing the school improvement programme or service do not become the most important activities for people to address – so teachers, students and other stakeholders do not become focused on matters that are urgent, rather than those that are important.

- **Effective school results** - the most successful school improvement programme often uses a variety of methods to achieve results. These methods include coaching, facilitating, training, providing resources, leadership development, team building, etc. Any school principal or school management team would be hard pressed to employ these various methods in an effective fashion without a good understanding of the overall system of their school improvement project.

Consequently, the benefits of the open system view are critical in accomplishing successful results in the school improvement programme implementation of the secondary schools included in the study. Two open system models are discussed next.

2.8.1.4 Types of Open System Models

Next let us see two popular open system models that express the implications for improving service quality in the organisational systems:

2.8.1.4.1 Supply Chain/Synergy Model

Most complex organisations are often viewed as a collection of interrelated systems, where changes in one subsystem will impact the functions of the other system. Therefore, promoting coordination between different subsystems, known as a supply chain perspective, will accomplish more than when the subsystems are working in isolation. This property, in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, is referred to as synergy (Lewise, 2001:52). Since the supply chain/synergy model is more related to business institutions than to schools as teaching and learning institutions, this model is not considered in the study. The next section presents Total Quality Management as a model for a school improvement programme.

2.8. 1.4.2 Total Quality Management (TQM) Model

In the 1970s and 1980s Japanese organisations made a significant impact throughout the world with their extremely high service and product quality. The success of the Japanese companies was attributed to their shift from the American model of an inspection-oriented quality approach to a prevention oriented quality approach through employee involvement. They incorporated the suggestions from their employees in improving the manufacturing process to prevent errors from occurring. They also introduced the voice of the customer in designing the product and modifying the process to provide higher quality, because they realised that the customer is the final judge of service and product quality. A product that is well made but that does not satisfy the needs of customer will not be highly rated by the customer on his or her scale.

In an attempt to develop models for school improvement, TQM is often drawn upon. TQM is defined as:

A management approach of an organisation, centred on quality, based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long run success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the organisation and society (ISO 8402 in Wiklund, 2003:99).

TQM has the potential to encompass the school improvement perspectives of both external and internal stakeholders in an integrated manner, and thereby enables a comprehensive approach to quality management that will assure quality as well as facilitate change innovation. Total Quality Management (TQM) moves far beyond school management paradigm by endorsing stakeholders, intrinsic motivation, and systems theory. Even some business leaders have united in suggesting that Total Quality Management (TQM) is the solution to educational problems (Westhuizen, 2010:298). Some schools and businesses have joined together to promote and implement Total Quality Management. This is because business and education now realise that there are certain commonalities between them, such as financial administration, recruitment and management of personnel.

Total quality management is regarded as a method by which management and employees can become involved in the continuous improvement of the production of goods or services. It is a combination of quality and management tools aimed at increasing business and reducing losses due to wasteful practices (Munoz, 1999:6). It is also a management method relying on the cooperation of all members of the school. It centres on quality and the long term success of the

school through the satisfaction of customers, as well as the benefits of all its members and community (Van der Westhuizen, 2007:7). Total quality management has a total approach to quality education which involves every element of the entire school and draws on the abilities of all school communities at all levels in all school improvement activities. TQM is also managing for total quality and managing for effectiveness and competitiveness, involving each and every school community and school improvement activity at all levels of the school. TQM, therefore, provides the framework for implementing effective school improvement programme initiatives that can increase the effectiveness of school service and competitiveness of schools.

Then again, since TQM is a systematic approach designed to enhance performance, it helps with pre – empting and predicting mistakes that lead to inefficiency. It can influence the leadership and management of schools in a positive way. In this study, therefore, the main aim of TQM for school improvement programme is to enhance efficiency by eliminating problems that arise at the implementation of school improvement programme in (9-10) secondary schools because it relates to customer service satisfaction. If the TQM is strongly applied in the school improvement programme of the schools it possible for the schools to identify the best strategies approaches to match customer satisfaction and expectations, thus doing the best in proving quality service.

Implementation of TQM in school improvement programme will ensure that the schools change how they perform activities of school improvement programme so as to eliminate inefficiency. It will also ensure that ever school community does his work with quality. It can make for school improvement programme the development of high performance teams that can take the combined efforts of visionary leaders and motivated team members. For school improvement programme the core advantage of Total Quality Management is customer care, both internally and externally. Thus, it must be supported by commitment to quality, communication of the quality message and recognition of the need to change the schools. It also facilitates to create teamwork for school improvement programme for successful implementation of school improvement in schools as well as processes and systems. In this study, the school as an organisation needs to adhere to the principles of TQM for competitiveness in school improvement in performance.

In general the beginning of the Total Quality Management philosophy in schools has been perceived as desirable because of the clear parallels between organisational quality culture in industry and in schools and that Total Quality Management principles are relevant to the learning process in classrooms as they are to organisational learning (Westhuizen, 2010:299). Berry (1996:13) cited in Westhuizen, (2010:298) argues that Total Quality Management is particularly applicable to education since the central concept of Total Quality Management, namely continuous improvement, is fundamental to school improvement programmes.

The following aspects of Total Quality Management are relevant to schools for implementing school improvement programmes (Irwin, 1993:15, Dahlgard, 1995:56; Berry, 1996:13): school top management commitment and the role of school leadership; articulation and development of a vision; employee empowerment; management of human resources; customer focus and satisfaction, rational decision making based on facts and data; focus on teamwork; team building and processes that cross functional boundaries; continuous improvement (kaizen); total involvement/everybody's participation; process thinking; benchmarking; cycle time reduction; cultural change; training; strategic planning; and business support. The figure below presents the association of each of the elements of Total Quality Management (TQM) as follows:

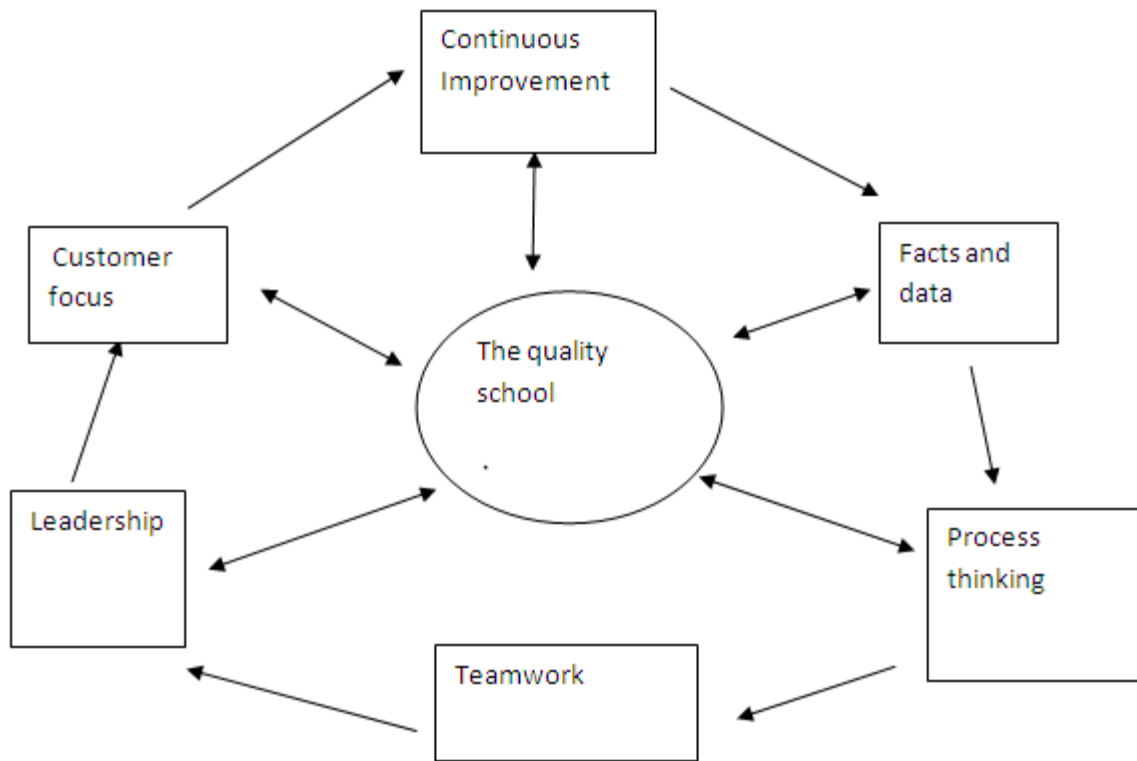


Figure 4 - Total Quality Management in School Improvement Programme (Adopted from Irwin, 1993:15).

From the perspective of a school improvement programme there are six cyclical processes of TQM for effective school improvement. In figure 4 the TQM steps are continuous improvement, design school improvement based on facts and data, process thinking, team spirit, effective and efficient leadership, and students and parents focus. These are the peculiar characteristics of TQM from the perspective of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools.

Daft (2001:47-48) is of the view that there are four important major elements of the TQM model and these are:

- **Employee involvement** - this means organisation wide participation of the workers in quality control and quality improvement. It also means active thinking on the part of all employees on how to improve the system. This radical thinking was a significant departure from the classical management models in which the workers were hired for their physical work and the thinking was to be left to the management.

- **Customer focus** – instead of focusing on service and product attributes that management thinks are important, which was the dominant paradigm for the classical management models; the TQM organisations/companies consult on these attributes with their customers who are the final judges of quality. The TQM companies or organisations then try to meet or exceed the needs and expectations of their customers.
- **Continuous improvement** – the TQM organisations are not satisfied with their performance, but are constantly striving to do better. They are constantly making incremental improvements in all areas of the organisation, which are typically suggested by the employees. Employee involvement is a paradigm shift as compared to the classical models where the improvement was initiated by the management. These small changes are easy to implement because they have been identified and approved by the employees who feel involved and because these modifications do not require drastic changes to the existing work conditions.
- **Benchmarking** - the TQM organisations are constantly studying the best organisations in the public services or in the business to identify areas where improvements can be made, and to find the best method of incorporating improvements. Benchmarking is outward looking, which is again a paradigm shift in comparison to the classical models that were inward looking for making any changes and improvements.

Out of these two open system models, the Total Quality Management model was selected for this study to minimise the challenges faced in implementing the school improvement programme in secondary schools. This is because the model takes into account four important elements - employee involvement, customer focus, continuous improvement and benchmarking that are important in school improvement.

Thus, TQM is an approach that can be adapted to SIP in secondary schools to improve the quality in education as in the business sectors. Consequently, in this study the aim of Total Quality Management in the school improvement programme is to involve principals, administrative staff, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in decision-making with the aim of achieving the highest commitment from the whole school community and stakeholders. In this case, therefore, Total Quality Management was selected to bring about changes in the school improvement programme implementation for continuous school

improvement which can provide a set of practices, tools and techniques to meet the present and the future desires of SIP implementation. Therefore, this study adopted TQM in the school programme of secondary schools (grades 9-10) in the Iluababor administrative zone. The next section presents a summary of the conceptual framework discussed in this chapter.

2.9 Summary

Since the 1990s, governments around the world have been seriously implementing agenda for educational improvement across schools and school systems. Five distinct phases of school improvement have been identified in the past 60 years. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCEDs) sponsored by the International School Improvement Project (ISIP) gave a comprehensive concept of school improvement as a systematic, sustained effort aimed at a change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools with the ultimate aim of enhancing pupil progress, achievement, development and then accomplishing educational goals more effectively (Hopkins, 2001:5). From this concept we can deduce that school improvement was about making schools healthier and making them better places for teaching and learning.

The school as an organisation was described as a body that consists of body parts (organs) that enable it to function in order to perform teaching and learning processes as the main tasks. The conceptual framework discussed above within the perspective of a school improvement programme is needed to apply the best practices in terms of four domains and 22 elements of the domains to provide quality education for all students. The open system theory model (supply chain and Total Quality Management models) are discussed in detail. Out of these two open system models, the Total Quality Management model was selected for school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools due to its four important elements of employee involvement, customer focus, continuous improvement and benchmarking. The Total Quality Management model paradigm represents a fundamental change in thinking about school management practices, particularly for the secondary school education sector. In this case, TQM for secondary schools provides the thoughtful framework for the management of schools and necessitates a holistic approach for dealing with existing school improvement practices that require a major effort and an openness to innovative, and fresh thinking about the current school

improvement challenges in schools. The next chapter reviews literature on school improvement in relation to major components of school improvement programme implementation.

Chapter 3: Review of Related Literature

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that is pertinent to the study in relation to the basic research question of the study. The literature review consists of the school improvement programme's major components, which include school management and leadership, teaching and learning, school learning environment, parent and community participation and the context of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy with regards to school improvement programme implementation.

3.1 Major Components of the School Improvement Programmes (SIP)

The first component to be discussed is education management as it influences the leadership of schools.

3.1.1 Educational Management

Schools as organisations need strong leadership and strong management for optimal effectiveness (Luncenburg, 2001:1). Managers advocate stability and the status quo and carry out responsibilities, exercise authority, and worry about how things get accomplished. Leaders advocate changes and new approaches, and are concerned with understanding people's beliefs and gaining their commitment (Kotter, 1990, cited in Luncenburg, 2001:2). In the view of the above definition, school management is the combination of the different administrators' actions and their roles in the operation of a school while school leadership is about coping with change in the school.

Luncenburg (2001:5) explains that the management process involves planning and budgeting, organising and staffing, and controlling and problem solving, whereas the leadership process involves developing a vision for the organisation, aligning people with that vision through communication, and motivating people action through empowerment and through basic need fulfilment. He then concludes that the management process reduces uncertainty and stabilises the organisation by implementing the vision and direction provided by leaders, coordinating and staffing the organisation and handling day-to-day problems while the leadership process creates uncertainty and change in the organisation.

Good management skills transform a leader's vision into action and successful implantation. Effective implementation is the driving force of school success, especially in relatively stable, domesticated schools (Luncenburg, 2011:3; Colin, 2014:152). Underpinning this, Bass (2010:4) suggests that there is greater opportunity for more input from group members at all levels of education systems. Bass (2010:5) also explains that in today's dynamic work place we need school leaders to challenge the status quo and to inspire and persuade the school community. We also need school managers to assist in developing and maintaining a smoothly functioning school as a work place.

The concept 'school management' can be examined in different ways. Firstly, it can be examined as a subject of study that is concerned with principle and practice of school administration. Secondly, it can be seen as a hierarchy of people and their functions within a school as an organisation. Thirdly, it can be seen as the effective use of resources in a school in a bid to achieve the goals of the school that involves decision-making, organizing, staffing, controlling, communicating and directing (Adeyemi & Olusola, 2008:1). In this definition, school management consists of practical measures which one can take to ensure that the system of work used in school will be of the greatest possible assistance in carrying out the school aims with the greatest possible benefit to school children.

Education management as a specific term can be conceptualised as a process of getting activities completed efficiently and effectively with and through other people. In other words, it is a process of working with and through individuals and groups and other resources to accomplish organisational goals. It is a continuous process through which members of an organisation seek to co-ordinate their activities and utilise their resources in order to fulfil the various tasks of the organisation as efficiently as possible (UNESCO, 2009:12-13). It is an activity involving responsibility for getting done through other people. UNESCO (2009:14-15) further explains that management is concerned with the internal operation of educational institutions, and also with their relationships with the environment, that is, the communities in which they are set, and with the governing bodies to which they are formally responsible. In the perspectives of this definition, school management is an organised body or system or structure or arrangement or

framework in the schools which is undertaken for ensuring unity of effort, efficiency, good will and proper use of resources.

In the light of the above presented data, it is clear that school management involves the ability to control or carry out an action for the purpose of the school. It is a social process designed to ensure the cooperation, participation, intervention and involvement of people in the effective achievement of a given objective in the school. The goals can be achieved through effective planning, organising, directing, motivating, controlling, budgeting and evaluation of the teaching and learning process (Quinn, 2009:56). From the above statement, it can also be noted that managing is about maintaining efficient and effective current school arrangements that often exhibit leadership skills; where its overall function is toward the achievement of maintenance (Bush, 2007:1). Within this concept school management is related to implementation and technical issues.

More to the point, the school has to provide its managers with legitimate authority to lead so that they will be able to lead effectively; and then to assist in developing and maintaining a smoothly function workplace in the school. At the same time, the school management body is expected to challenge the status quo and inspire and persuade the school community (Lunenburg, 2007:145; Bass, 2010 14-15). School managers in the school conquer the context – the volatile, turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that seem to work against the school improvement reforms. Bennis (2007:12) and Garland (2013:20-21) summarise the concept of managers and leaders as: “managers do things right, while leaders in the school do right things”. In summary from the definitions above, school management is a process of working through teachers and other stakeholders in order to enhance the achievement of the students. It is also a practice concerned with the operation of school education as an organisation; and an executive function for carrying out agreed policy, strategy and programmes of school improvement. School improvement management is, therefore, a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilisation of school resources in order to achieve school improvement programme goals.

Garland (2013:20) stipulates that in order to be effective in school improvement programmes, school managers have to change their style of management from the autocratic style based on

laws and regulation and work together towards personal development and the development of the school. He also emphasises that school managers need to listen, consult, engage in dialogue more and identify needs of teachers, parents and teachers. Bass (2010:16) also argues that school managers, teachers, parents and learners have to work together to plan personal development and development of the school. The main purpose of a school's existence is to enable the teaching and learning process to take place. Underpinning this, Garland (2013:15) explains that the school improvement programme and the school managers must create conducive conditions that allow quality teaching and learning. The school management team, together with teachers, learners and parents' committees, must aim at promoting high standards of learning and teaching. The next section will present the different styles of school management.

3.1.1.1 Styles of School Management

Managers have to perform many roles in a school and how they handle various situations will depend on their style of management. A management style is an overall method of leadership used by a manager and it is often used to describe the 'how' of management. It is a function of behaviour associated with personality. It is the way in which a manager performs his responsibilities, particularly relating to his subordinates (Ayalew, 2009:9) According to Uche, (2012:4) and Ayalew (2009:12), a management style is the adhesive that binds diverse operations and functions together. It is not a procedure on how to do, but the management framework for doing. Uche also emphasises that managers utilise different styles for different situations when interacting with different people.

Management styles therefore vary according to the experiences of different leaders and the most commonly exhibited styles of management include: autocratic management style, participative management style, management by walking around and the laissez faire style of management (Uche, 2012:3 – 9; Ayalew, 2009:14). These are explained below:

- **Autocratic management style** is a strict, top-down, chain of command approach. Procedures are maintained in exquisite detail and enforced by frequent audits. Autocratic managers attempt to simplify work to gain maximum control. In this style of management planning, including quality of planning is centralized. It is the belief that in most cases

the workers cannot make contributions to their own work. The leader makes all decisions unilaterally.

- **Participatory management style** is the belief that the workers can make a contribution to the design of their own work. Workers are internally motivated, they take satisfaction in their work, and would like to perform at their best (Uche, 2012:5). He further argues that managers who practice this style establish and communicate the purpose and direction of what the organisation should be, and develops a set of shared plans for achieving the vision.
- **Laissez faire management style** is the direct translation of 'leave well alone' and this is exactly what managers who subscribe to this style do. Middle managers and subordinates are just left to get on with their jobs and given the minimum of guidance; they succeed or fail on their own (Uche, 2012:6).
- **Situational management style** is a process where managers adjust their styles to the situation that they are presented with (Uche, 2012:7). As Uche (2012:8-9) and Ayalew (2009:15) explain, there are a number of situational management styles and these are: Telling: works best when employees are neither willing nor able to do the job (high need of support and high need of guidance); delegating: works best when the employees are willing to do the job and know how to go about it, that is, low need of support and low need of guidance; participating: works best when employees have the ability to do the job, but need a high amount of support, that is, low need of guidance and but high need of support; selling: works best when employees are willing to do the job, but do not know how to do it, that is, low need of support but high need of guidance.

Since the styles of management are many and varied, Uche (2012:204) further suggests that organisations should employ management styles that are people orientated, goal orientated and task orientated in order to foster motivation of the workforce and commitment of employees to goal attainment and increase the effectiveness of the organisation and the researcher concurs with this suggestion. Therefore, in view of the above school management styles, this study examines to what extent secondary school managers use them in implementing the school improvement programme. The next section presents key strategies of school management for school improvement.

3.1.1.2 Key Strategies of School Management

As Hopoper, & Potter, (2000: 60-61) and MacBeath, & Mortimore, (2010:56) explain management is about getting systems to operate effectively in four key strategies managers use to ensure operational effectiveness. These are:

- **Planning and Budgeting:** creating systems for operational efficiency is the first step to creating an effective and well run school planning. Planning is about setting up the system, procedures and time tables necessary to make your school work effectively. It is about assessing your physical, financial, and human resources, and allocating them according to priority and need. Planning is about ensuring that everyone knows what to do, how to do it, and by when to do it. Every school should have a set of planning, policy documents, drawn up by management team, which provide the framework for effective management a school improvement.
- **Organising and staffing:** Making sure that everyone knows what is expected – a compressive set of planning and policy documents forms a very important part of effective management, but the documents do not themselves promote effective management: they simply set out expectations about the way things should be done. Management becomes effective when effective systems are put in place to ensure that staff and students are aware of what is expected, that is, they know what is in the policy documents and, more importantly, that systems are put in place to ensure that the school operates according to the policies and procedures as they are laid down in these documents. Once the policies and procedures are in place, it is important that the principal and his management team delegate to individuals and groups the responsibility for ensuring that the plans, policies, and procedures are adhered to.
- **Controlling and Problem Solving:** Making it happen – delegating responsibility for the various management functions listed in the planning and policy documents does not ensure that the policies are adhered to or even that these function are carried out at all. It is important therefore in any management structure to have a system for monitoring progress and performance to ensure that tasks are completed on time and to an acceptable standard. Systems therefore need to be put in place for reporting on and monitoring progress and performance on a regular basis. These systems serve two functions. They ensure that the job is done on time and according to acceptable standards, and they give

warning of potential problems with tasks when deadlines are not met or when tasks are incomplete and/or where quality are poor.

- **Predictability and Order** - Perhaps the greatest value of good management is that it creates an expectation of predictability and good order. In a well managed school there is good order, things happen on time, as planned, and to an agreed standard. The stability created by this sense of order and predictability established an environment which is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Teachers, pupils, and parents know how things function and what to expect. Operation efficiency is at the heart of good education and is the product of good management practices.

In the view of key strategies of school management above this study identifies in (9-10) secondary school to what extent the school principals uses the strategies in their respective schools. Next page will present change and school improvement plans.

3.1.1.3 Change and School Improvement

The school improvement and change tradition emerged in industrialised countries as a decentralised approach to school reform within nationally set policy and accountability structures (Bry , 2010:1; Ayalew, 2009:17). School improvement is concerned with how schools can effect beneficial change for students in terms of teaching (Bry, 2010:2) and the quality of experience. It has been defined as the process of enhancing the way a school organises, promotes and supports learning (Mitchell, 2014:4). Improving school internal conditions requires the involvement of all levels of the school community (Hopkins, 2001:23), demanding leadership change for the school as an organisation and a professional learning institution. According to Mitchell (2014: 4), key elements of school improvement are:

- **Self-evaluation** – with inputs from all levels of the school community for the purpose of identifying barriers to learning (MacBeath, 2010:2);
- **Development planning** – with broad based participation in decision making to foster ownership and ensure impact across all levels of the school (Hopkins, 2001:13);
- **Continuous professional development (CPD)** which emphasises the schools as places for learning for staff as well as students (Mitchell, 2014:4).

Each of these elements has been a feature of the Ethiopian school improvement programme (SIP) policy in the last decade, starting with the national programme for teachers (MOE, 2004:12),

followed by the school improvement programme (MOE, 2007:6), which fits Harries' (2000:17) conception of a mechanistic, top-down programme.

Implicit in the school improvement programme is the repositioning of the school principal from an administrator to a leader of the school (Mitchell, 2013:5). Bry (2014:4) and MacBeath (2010:2) explain that, whereas principals were previously responsible for administration, and were upwardly accountable with the civil service system, the school improvement programme charges them with decentralized planning based on community consultation and locally identified development priorities.

Currently, change and school leadership are two sides of the same coin. Without change schools become sluggish, with no growth and improvement. But change demands school principals, supportive staff and teachers who are competent enough to shape school visions and realise the aspired changes in areas of school improvement domains and elements. Effective school leadership, therefore, empowers each and every one in the school to create future life situations, act and achieve breakthroughs. Consequently, having and internalising the concepts and basic knowledge of school leadership skills builds the competence for school leadership and the potential to make it happen.

As Colin (2014:568) explained, leaders need to understand what forces drive change and what forces restrain school improvement to bring the expected change. He suggested a three step approach to understand these forces:

- **Unfreezing** – finding ways of making the need for change so clear that most people will understand it;
- **Changing behaviour** – bringing new attitudes, values, and behaviour that become the dominant culture within the organization;
- **Refreezing** – introducing supporting mechanisms that consolidate and maintain the new behaviour patterns.

In the view of the above steps or forces to drive change in the school improvement programme, this secondary schools study will determine the driving and restraining forces in the current practices.

3.1.1.3.1 Types of Change in School Improvement

Colin (2014:564-591) & Deventer (2009:37-47) express the types of change that can be categorised as follows depending on their magnitude and the time frame of the change process. These are:

- **Technocratic change** – changes and improvement in technology to make school improvement adaptations necessary to accommodate changes;
- **Interactive change** - this occurs when a group of people or a school community decide on change to improve matters; and there are changes in the classroom, in the programmes and structures of a school and in the education system;
- **Social change** – this type of change is generated by a variety of aspects, namely: changes in the relationships between parents and learners and between teachers and learners; a change in roles such as the reformation of teachers' tasks; and change in philosophy, such as a new perception or belief which informs the policy programme.
- **Competitive** – this kind of change is brought about by competition and the desire to be better than other schools.

In view of these types of changes in school improvement, this study will evaluate to what extent the practice of school improvement in secondary schools is steering towards the set targets. Then again, Herman (1994) cited in Westhuizen (2010:188-189) describes the following types of organisational change in schools:

- **Transitional change** – refers to the process of moving from one state to another of getting from here to there - like shifting from one way to another way of doing things.
- **Incremental change** - that one does not change overnight. This is the preferred choice when the school is operating well, but the stakeholders agree the minor changes will improve current operation further. What happens in this kind of change type is that it happens as a step-by-step movement towards the end. It underlines the notions that good change can take time.
- **Optional change** – this is the preferred type when key groups of employees initiate the change, rather than having the change mandated by the education department or the school principal.

- **Transactional change** – refers to modification in and redesign of the systems, procedures, processes, tasks and activities that take place between individuals and groups both within and outside the organization. This kind of change is usually handled by setting up a project to manage its implementation. The movement causes a temporary discontinuity to the system, but the activity carries on and at the end settles down to business as usual. It has a distinct beginning and end where success can be relatively measured.
- **Transformational change** – this is the only rational change to be made when a school is working poorly, or when external or internal forces insist on radical changes in instruction or support services. This type of change is dramatic in form and rapid in impact, and will ultimately radically change the entire culture of the school. It is also a type of change which results in entirely new behaviour sets on the part of organizational members and those outside the organization. It is a fundamental change in purpose and strategy that challenges embedded behavioural norms, often related to strategic change.

Then again, in view of the types of organisational change in schools the study will explore the scope of practice school improvement in secondary schools is directing towards the set goals.

3.1.1.5 School Improvement Models

According to Hundson and Louise (2011:1-3) and Stoll (2008:17), the following models are for improving schools:

- **Transformational Model** – it is a process by which there is a replacement of the principal and steps are taken to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness such as institute comprehensive instructional reforms; increase learning time and create community oriented schools; and provide operational flexibility and sustained support.
- **Turnaround Model** – it is a process of replacing the principal, rehiring no more than 50% of the school staff, and granting the principal sufficient operational flexibility to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart Model** - it is the process in which to convert a school into one operated by a charter school operator, a charter management organisation, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

- **School closure Model** - is a process by which a school is closed and enrolls its students in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.

Hudson and Louise (2011:4-5) explain that there are school improvement models that form part of the continuous improvement approach and that each model has a strong focus on enhanced teaching and learning. These are:

- **The External review Model** – it is highly collaborative and involves interaction with students, parents, staff, leadership, board/council and the wider community that provides external endorsement of the school strengths and achievement.
- **Capacity building Model** – it provides schools with tools and processes so that each school builds its own individual preferred future based on a vision that has been developed from a shared purpose and the work of teachers in school wide approach pedagogy.
- **Action research Model** – it combines expert input via attendance at workshops and seminars delivered by local and overseas education experts together with school visits by educationalists from the external environment.
- **Self-assessment and review model** - it is a systematic model which includes an external, centrally administered validation process during the final year designed to provide schools with tools to achieve excellence in teaching and learning and high levels of student achievement through engagement in ongoing self-assessment, evidence informed practice and strategic planning.

At present the self-assessment and review model was selected for the application of school improvement programme implementation in Ethiopia at national level by the Ministry of Education. Thus, the study selected TQM out of the above models as discussed in detail chapter 2 and in chapter of school development plan section as the model for study. The next section describes the school improvement strategies.

3.1.1.6 School Improvement Strategies

As a critical aspect of educational reform, school improvement means linking the school's internal structures, strategies, capacities and processes in a coherent manner to advance a specific goal (Marishane, & Botha, 2011:1). School improvement includes finding ways to strengthen the management and leadership capacities of those working in schools to ensure that learners are

provided with learning of a high quality. As an important component of management, school leadership is pivotal to the success of school improvement (Leithwood, 2002, cited in Marishane, & Botha, 2011:1).

A number of strategies are applied in an attempt to improve schools, but essentially there are perspectives like, first, the school can improve when an outside body determines what standard the school should meet (for example, setting targets and bechmarks); and, second, the school should continually review its progress and performance for service to improve, that is the notion of a learning school. McGilchrist (1997:35) and Senge (2000:32) highlight the significance of a school's continued learning process about itself to bring about improvement performance embedded in the school by clearly articulating its vision, embarking on continued staff development, good leadership, fostring learning on behalf of the school community, and enhancing community networks.

3.1.1.6.1 School Development Plan

Bry (2012:5) argues that a school can learn by continually planning its development. They define school development planning as the process of planning the improvement and then implementing the plans over a specified period that encompasses the performance indicators to make it easy for the progress to be monitored.

School development planning allows the school to: achieve its aims and objectives; provide a comprehensive approach towards improvement; capture its vision, determine the pace of change; develop simultaneous innovation on the part of teachers; improve the quality of staff; strengthen the partnership between staff and the school governing body; and make reporting easier (MacBeath, 2010:7). This idea indicates that school development planning is a collective effort on the part of stakeholders at school and it is a never ending and cyclical process aimed at achieving the vision of the school.

3.1.1.6.2 School Improvement Plan and Total Quality Management (TQM)

Quality management is a systematic management of customer-supplier relationships in an organisation so that quality performance is ensured (Murgatory & Morgan, 1993:59). Collin (2014:196) adds that Total Quality Management is a method of ensuring quality that focuses on

customer needs and expectations by emphasising continuous improvement. MacBeath, (2010:8); and Collin (2014:197) identify the following four elements for the the journey of the school as an organisation:

- **A customer-supplier focus** – the people in the school should be directed towards building partnerships with all the customers and suppliers, both internal and external.
- **Constant dedication to continuous improvement** – every person in the school should dedicate him or herself to continuous improvement at work and at home, as well as in the community.
- **A process system approach** – each school as an organisation should be seen as a system and the work done by people in the school should be viewed as ongoing processes.
- **Consistent quality leadership** – the management should accept responsibility for the success of the quality transformation. This can only be achieved over time through constant dedication to the principles and practice of Total Quality Management.

TQM is a school improvement strategy that is also suggested by Harris (2006:263-268). He explains that improvement takes place in a cyclical process to continuously meet agreed customers' requirements at the lowest cost. TQM, therefore, is a management approach geared towards developing an educational institution in totality and achieving school improvement. According to Harris (2006:268) TQM looks at the operation of the school in its wholeness, and it is related to strategic management. The author suggest that TQM groups employees together, identifies opportunities for improvement, and engages in problem solving. He further explains that it focuses on goal attainment by the school and looks at how well the school is adapted to its routine work; has a clear focus on the internal conditions of the school; makes clear decisions about development and maintainance and external change is adapted for internal purposes; performance data is used to plan future development; and change should be accepted to transform school culture.

As Colin (2014:196) states, TQM is a method of ensuring quality that focus on customer needs and expectations by emphasising continuous improvement. The essence of TQM is the kind of leadership required to ensure that everyone in the school is working in a way that ensures consistently high performance and constant school improvement. Firdissa (2008:28-30) explains that leadership in the quality management context is visionary in that it embraces empowerment,

performance and strategy. Leadership from the total quality perspective has a systematic basis for facilitating the work of others so that they can achieve challenging goals (performance) that meet or exceed the expectations of stakeholders.

From the perspective of TQM in schools, teachers are automatically considered to be empowered in the classroom and considerable professional autonomy is highly recognised to empower the teachers in the sense of decentralising the resourced freedom to set challenging goals for the processes they themselves control (Firdissa, 2008:26; Colin, 2014:197).

As a second school improvement strategy, W. Edwards Deming's framework was also selected in this the study. W. Edwards Deming was an American engineer, statistician, professor, author, lecturer, management consultant and who was lived from October 14, 1900 to December 20, 1993. He was the towering intellect and the leading personality in the TQM revolution (Murgatoyd & Morgan, 1994:59). In this study the 14 points of W. Edwards Deming's framework was elaborated on as follows as one of school improvement strategies in the study.

The 14 points of Dr. W. Edwards Deming form a framework for the implementation of TQM. These 14 points are general enough that an implementation at one school would probably look considerably different from one at another school. The way these 14 points should be used is through reaching consensus on the application of each point in the particular situation at hand (Firdissa, 2008:30; Collin, 2014:197- 200). These points are:

- **Create constancy of purpose** – refers to developing a mission statement as a school corporate purpose or aim to build up knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation of students in the school. Then communicate this message to the school community as to why the school exists there and how they contribute to the mission;
- **Adopt a new philosophy** – insist on quality (for example, classroom instruction, bookstore service, security of the school, restroom cleaning, interactions with legislature etc.) in everything. To achieve this quality in the school, an atmosphere of cooperation as opposed to completion must be instilled;

- **Cease dependence on mass inspection** – focus on the service process or student achievement. Develop processes in which there is less testing but more focus on progress in learning;
- **Constantly improve processes** – are the school’s customers (students and their parents) more satisfied than they were in last year in terms of achievement;
- **Institute training** – everyone in school needs to know their job. Develop the pedagogical skills of teachers through continuous professional development. Teach TQM to everyone in the school because the more everyone knows about the management principles used on a daily basis, the easier it is for everyone to buy into the idea.
- **Institute school leadership** – emphasise the school leadership instead of school management. Everyone at the school has a leadership role of some sort. Each person in a supervisory role, including department heads, unit leaders, home-room teachers, etc., should try to be a coach and a teacher, not a judge and overseer. The school principal should be a designer, a creator of a school environment. Effective school leaders will search for barriers to communication and productivity and remove them. A poorly lit classroom can have a significant effect on student performance. A teacher who is an effective leader will see it that the lighting problems are fixed.
- **Drive out fear** – in a school academic setting, fear is often a big factor in the student and school performance. For students, any steps that can be taken to reduce fear involved in taking a test will have large benefits for student performance and attitude. To reduce students’ fear in school, teachers must balance their roles as educators versus evaluators because fear in the school is a powerful emotion and can have very negative effects on the performance of a school.
- **Break down barriers** – encourage cooperation not competition. Encourage the forming of cross-function teams to address problems and the process of improvements. A team made up of school departments, staff and students will have a broader perspective in addressing issues than a more restricted committee to bringing everyone in on the decision-making process will usually result in a better solution and certainly one that is easier to accept.

- **Avoid obsession with goals and slogans** – just telling someone to do good is meaningless without the means to achieve that goal. School management must improve the processes so that the goals can be achieved.
- **Eliminate numerical quotas** – It is often said that numbers are the crutches of poor supervision. The number one priority should be quality. Only after the process is designed so that quality is assured should the question of quality be addressed.
- **Remove barriers to pride of workmanship** – pride is a strong motivator. In the school academic setting, pride certainly flows from personal and group achievement, but there is also a good deal of pride in the institution as well. For example, if students are included in some of the decision-making processes, they will develop a strong pride of ownership that can have a significant impact on their attitudes.
- **Organisation-wide involvement** – everyone in school must be included in the school improvement process and be aware of and concerned for their immediate customer. School members who learn about TQM are much more likely to endorse the concept and to suggest new ways to implement it in their jobs. One cannot predict just what piece of knowledge will spark the idea that will lead to a significant process improvement.
- **Define management responsibilities to make it happen** – school management at every level but particularly at the very top must take pride in adopting the TQM philosophy.
- **End the practice of conducting business alone** – in all improvement processes teachers are needed, not as a judge and overseer. The school leader should be a designer, a creator of an environment that will search for barriers to communication and productivity to remove them (Winn & Green, 1998 cited in Firdissa, 2009:27-30).

In this study, therefore, the 14 points of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, which form a framework for the implementation of TQM, can be applied as a guideline in the school improvement programme of secondary schools in Ilababor administrative zone. So, in this study it was assumed that the principles of TQM be applied in the secondary school improvement programme in addition to the existing school improvement as a supplementary model. This leads to a discussion of the monitoring and evaluation of school improvement plans.

3.1.1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation of School Improvement Plans

Control remains an essential component for the principal as it has to do with the assessment and evaluation of tasks. The evaluation of tasks is conducted by means of supervising staff to ensure that the set objectives are met (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008:83; Reeves, 2008:81; Marishane, 2013:23). The principal has to ensure that the staffs have sufficient resources and that these resources are monitored. In instances where goals are not met, the principal has to determine the cause for failure and institute corrective action to resolve the problems and challenges. The principal and school management must also agree on control measure to be taken when school goals with respect to school improvement are not met within the prescribed period (Reeves, 2008:82; Marishane, 2013:23).

According to Hudson & Louise (2014:13) it is essential to carefully monitor any strategy or initiative to ensure authenticity of implementation, collect evidence of efficacy, and modify any strategy that is found to be ineffective. Similarly to implementation, evidence must be collected for each student, teacher, and classroom. In addition, more data should be analysed in order to ensure that each student and staff member is receiving the support that he or she needs as a result of the new improvement strategies and initiatives rather than aggregate all students or all teachers that examine only the overall impact on the school population (Hudson & Louise, 2014:31). Therefore, regular monitoring of students' progress is necessary to determine whether the goals are being realised. This information should be used as feedback to inform decision-making.

Schools are expected to plan, to ask questions and to evaluate practices impacting on student outcomes. To make effective school improvement programmes, schools have to systematically gather data from a range of sources, plan for future success of all learners and account for progress through reporting and validating their programmes (Reeves, 2008:82; Garland, 2013:58; ACT, 2009:7; Marishane, 2013:23). In addition, schools have to seek feedback and develop confidence to expose their actions to the external environment. This component is devoted to ensuring effective implementation of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) through efficient coordination mechanisms, proper financial management, and procurement practices and effective monitoring and evaluation of activities at all levels (MOE,

2010:72). In this study the monitoring and evaluation processes in secondary schools (grades 9-10) were examined within the perspectives of the school improvement programme.

The above concepts of school management highlight the importance of school improvement as a process of changing school culture. It views the school as the centre of change and teachers as an intrinsic part of that change process. It suggests that for school improvement to occur teachers need to be committed to the process of change which will involve them in examining and changing their own practice. Likewise, in the management and leadership of the school improvement programme, implementation is the best way to develop a strong teaching force in the school, so as to devise a plan which uses shared leadership, professional development, and ongoing support for teachers to change instructional practices based on frequent assessment of student learning and parental engagement. With regards to management styles, this study sought to identify the prevalent styles in the school environment, and assess school improvement programme effectiveness and determine whether the adopted management styles have any relationship with the effectiveness of secondary school improvement programme implementation.

3.1.2 School Leadership

Leadership is the process of guiding followers in a certain direction in pursuit of a vision or goals (Gold and Evans, 1998, cited in UNESCO, 2009:11). UNESCO further defines leadership as the ability to provide direction to a group of people and influence those people to follow the direction and act accordingly. A central element in many definitions of leadership is that there is a process of influence. It involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one (or a group) over other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation (Ayalew, 2009:3). It is also the ability to bring out the best in everyone. It is a process of getting things done through people. Glover (2003) cited in Gaston (2010:9) defines leadership as a process of influence, leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision.

Bush (2003:5-6) argues that leadership refers to the ability to influence the actions of individuals with personal and professional values based on the character of an individual and associated with vision and the ability to articulate the vision throughout an organisation. In contrast, Ayalew (2009:2) associates leadership with the ability to direct change and with being future-oriented. Bush (2007:14) explains that school leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a vision for the school.

The vision is articulated by school leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders. From these definitions, it can be concluded that leadership in the education context comprises the ability to understand emerging trends in education and to guide a school through various challenges by achieving a vision based on shared values that needs to focus on improving the learning opportunities of every learner in the school (Bush, 2007:14; Ayalew, 2009:2).

The quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. This shows that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students (Bush, 2008:6). Wasseerbeg (2000:158) claims that the primary role of any school leadership is the unification of people around key values. Day, Harris, & Hadfield, (2001:53) stipulate that good leaders are informed by and communicate a clear set of personal and educational values which represent their moral purposes for the school. According to Bush (2008:5), vision is increasingly regarded as an essential component of effective leadership. Bush (2008:5) and Ayalew (2009:23) explain four roles of school leadership as follows: outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisations; vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among members of the organisation; communication of vision requires communication of meaning; attention should be given to institutionalising the vision if leadership is to be successful.

Leadership therefore is about relationships. It is about being able to influence people to behave in a desired manner and is fundamental to change (Gaston 2010:9). School leadership in turn refers to all leadership directed at the school's primary process and its immediate facilitative conditions (Firdisa, 2009:28). Bush (2008:8) and Firdisa (2009:29) state that, as a whole, school

leadership can be seen as a phenomenon that needs to strike a balance between several extremes: path versus giving flexibility to autonomous professionals, monitoring versus counselling and using structures and procedures versus creating a shared (achievement-oriented) culture in the school.

Effective leadership is a key to both continuous improvement and major system transformation (Naidu, 2008:34). Harris (2004:11) adds that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the achievement of students. Harris (2004:11) also indicates that the recognition of a strong relationship between the quality of leadership and school improvement; that is, leadership plays the most crucial role in ensuring school improvement programme implementation. Bush (2008:8) concludes that the extent to which schools are able to make the necessary change will depend largely on the nature and quality of their internal management.

Greer (2011:1) states that each successful school leaders must possess the same key component – influence, i.e. the ability to attract followers. Greer (2011:2) and Viviano (2012:13) also argue that committed school leaders seek out challenging opportunities so that the school and teachers and administrative staff can improve, change and grow in the schools. Then the school leader requires some qualified risk taking and learning from past mistakes. He requires having a defined vision of a positive future and the ability to engage the school community in the vision. Subsequently, the school leader must trust his/her selection and empower and enable followers to do their jobs. As Stevel (2012:11) states, a committed school leader gets the people moving, and then stands behind them for support. Amare (2006:12) further argues that the best school leaders have one quality in common – continuous learning. That is, leaders strive to attain knowledge and skills through mentoring, training and self-discipline.

Recent research on school improvement (Harris, 2001; Spillane & Diamond, 2007 cited in Garland, 2013:17) supports the concept of distributed leadership and collaboration among a team to help drive improvement. Amare (2006:20) note that the school improvement planning process can be a valuable mechanism for creating collaboration within the school and developing a sense of shared purpose and collective reflection. Firdisa (2009:19) further elaborates that a

collaborative environment creates an opportunity for diverse ideas, perspectives and experiences to surface from team members. Therefore, this study aims to assess whether support provided by the school leaders is effective or not in implementing the school improvement programmes at the selected secondary schools. The next section presents key strategies of school leadership.

3.1.2.1 Key Strategies of School Leadership

Marishane and Botha (2011:7) explain that school leadership is about getting things to change. There are about four key strategies that school leaders use to produce future focused change in school improvement programmes. These are presented below as follows:

- Vision to establish direction;
- Strategy planning to achieve the vision;
- Aligning people – marketing and selling the vision and strategy; and
- Motivating and inspiring – creating the energy and commitment to drive the process.

Having a clear vision of what you want for your school is perhaps the single most important contribution that you can make to its future success because it creates direction and purpose (Marishane and Botha, 2011:7). According to Marishane and Botha the vision is described as follows:

The vision for our school does not need to be extravagant or to be lit up in lights. It must, however, be something that we really want for your school and that you feel passionate about. It must be also be something that will challenge you and the school community to stretch a little further than you have done before. Vision is also not something that you can simply make up: you need to have a good understanding of your school and the hope and dreams of the community it serves. A vision is not enough if you do not have a plan which sets out the practical steps that you and your staff will need to take to achieve your vision. This plan and the timetable for its implementation form the basis of the strategy you will use to achieve your vision (Marishane and Botha, 2011:7).

For this reason, in the school we need to make sure that all members of the school communities understand the vision of the school and its values. Accordingly, school leaders have to motivate and inspire the vision and values of the school.

3.1.2.2 Models of Educational Leadership

Bush (2007:10) explain that awareness of alternative approaches to school leadership is essential in order to inform the design and development of school improvement programmes for aspiring and practicing school leaders.

According to Leithwood (1999:11) the best known models of educational leadership are: instructional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, contingency leadership, transactional leadership, shared leadership, and transformational leadership. These are explained below.

- A. Instructional leadership** - with instructional leadership the principal's approach to curriculum and instructional development is strong and directive. He or she focuses on control, coordination and supervision of all teaching and learning activities, with much emphasis being placed on the behaviour of teachers in carrying out activities that affect learners' growth (Leithwood, 1999:8). The principals subscribing to this type of leadership set the tone and others follow in pursuit of high achievement standards for learners (Marishane, 2013:97).
- B. Contingency leadership** - based on Fiedler's contingency theory (1967) cited in Marishane, (2013:97), the contingency leadership concept is based on the premise that each situation is unique and must be viewed and dealt with as such, so the effectiveness of the principal's leadership is contingent on a particular situation. What the theory suggests is that school leadership is contingent on space and time and thus, its success in bringing about school improvement is context bound (Marishane et al., 2013:97).
- C. Laissez-faire leadership** - conceptualised by Bass and Avolio (1997) cited in Marishane (2013:97) it states that laissez-faire leadership is where the leader avoids making decisions and choices, and abdicates responsibilities (Bass and Avolio, 1998:148). The leader assumes that everyone knows their responsibilities, so there is no reason to push them. He or she takes initiatives, expects followers to respond accordingly, and just hopes that things will improve without exerting any effort.
- D. Shared leadership** - In shared leadership – which is also known as collaborative leadership, distributive leadership, parallel leadership (Hargreaves and Fink, (2004) cited in Marishane (2011:98) – it is acknowledged that leadership of an organisation cannot be

the exclusive preserve of a single person, but that it should be team based and thus collaborative. As Marishane (2013:98) argued, central to this type of leadership is moral purpose, which includes sharing intentions, conceptualisations and values which are clearly defined and understood.

- E. Turnaround leadership** - Turnaround leader focuses on turning around a school that persistently performs poorly, as measured by learner achievement in the annual national assessment, to an acceptable performance level (Marishane, 2011:98). The authors further asserted that this is a type of leadership that is able to develop intervention strategies for rapid and sustainable change towards improvement in poorly performing schools. For improvement to occur, leadership combines the intervention strategies with capacity building and accountability (Fullan, 2005, cited in Marishane, 2013:98).
- F. Sustainable leadership** - Sustainable school leadership is concerned with the systematic development and articulation of leadership efforts, capacities and learning process, and their connection to leadership actions and efforts in space and time through effective succession management and successful coordination of improvement efforts (Marishane, 2011:99). It is based on seven leadership principles: succession/continuity, distribution, social justice, resourcefulness, activism, diversity and system support. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2004) cited in Marishane (2013:99), for goals to be achieved, leadership should not be confined to an individual, but should be distributed to others who operate in a system that prioritises sustainability.
- G. System leadership** - it focuses on a broader (systemic) context of educational change. It is rooted in the belief that for a school to improve and achieve 'greatness', its leadership should look beyond its borders to the broader system to pursue the success in other schools as well as its own (Marishane, 2013:99).
- H. Multifaceted leadership** - is constituency based and emanates from the belief that different stakeholders (governing body, teachers, and community) see one leader (the school principal) from different viewpoints (Marishane, 2012:99). As Marishane (2012:99) states, this type of leadership has four strong pillars, namely, perspectives, practices, approaches and vision. School improvement depends on the strength of the link between these pillars and the context in which the school operates (Marishane, 2012:99).

- I. Facilitative school leadership in schools** - David and Goldman (1994:20) define facilitative leadership as the behaviours that enhance the collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems, and improve performance. It is also defined as the ability of principals to lead without controlling, while making it easier for all members of school communities to achieve agreed upon goals (David and Goldman, 1994, cited in Firdisa, 2009:19). The authors also explain that facilitative leadership is particularly important to effective group processes, teamwork, workplace culture, and change management in the work place. Dunlap and Goldman (1994) cited in Firdisa (2009:30) state that the school leader's role here is to foster the involvement of employees at all levels using several key strategies like: overcoming resource constraints; building teams; providing feedback, coordination and conflict management; creating communication networks and modelling the school's vision. It needs for school leaders to spend much of their time negotiating decisions they could unilaterally make; encourage competitive views from subordinates; and make decisions on the fly, in corridors and classrooms. Conley and Goldman emphasise the importance of trust, "a letting go of control and increasing belief that others can and will function independently and successfully within a common framework of expectations and accountability" (David & Paul Goldman, 1994:16-20; Ayalew, 2009:5).
- J. Transformational leadership** - is an ability to inspire employees to look beyond self-interest and focus on organisational goals. It occurs when leaders and followers join hands "in pursuit of higher order common goals" (Barnette, 2003:2). These leaders build unity with their followers around a clear collective vision, a commonly understood and accepted mission and purpose (Marishane, 2013:99). As Marishane (2013:99) further explain, such leaders behave as role models and strive to communicate effectively with and inspire their followers to be committed to the goals of the organisation. Their followers are stimulated to be creative and develop the courage to take risks for the sake of organisational improvement without reservation.

Consequently, giving emphasis to the bottom up approach is crucial to help schools build a trusting and collaborative climate; shared and monitored mission; taking initiatives and risks; and to facilitate adequate time provided for professional development. A people-centred transformational school leadership model has to be established to make systems and structures in

the school support bottom up approaches and allow the top down approach to succeed. Townsend (2007:56) explain that a transformational school leadership model is needed in the school to make a paradigm shift away from power control to an ability to act with others and to enable others to act. Workneh, & Tassew (2013:20) also indicated that the closer the principal's practices are to being described as transformational, the more interest school leaders demonstrate in teaching and learning, the more distributed school leadership is throughout the school community, in particular to teachers, and the better the performance of that school is in terms of student outcomes.

In Ethiopia, educational reform is currently focussed on decentralised system of power and resources to schools; however, reviews of school-based management systems overwhelmingly report failure to fulfil the promise of enhancing student outcomes (Abebe, 2012:5). In this case, giving attention to school leadership, making a school an organisation of learning provides strong support to refocus on school based management strategies in Ethiopia. Townsend et al. (2007:66) & Bryk (2010:11) recommended that school leaders need to establish systems and environments that promote improved teaching and learning by involving teachers and the school community in shared decision-making, increasing participation of students in school activities and then creating a culture of collaboration and trust where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community.

3.1.2.3 The Role of School Principals in School Improvement

Within the complex operation of schools in the 21st century, the school principal plays a vital role in bringing about school improvement and effectiveness. Increased interest, school leadership preparation and development are based on the fact that school leaders can make a difference in both the effectiveness and efficiency of schooling (Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2008, cited in Ibrahim, 2011:2). The role of school principals is central in the success or failure of the school system at school level, and it plays an important role in school improvement programmes in the areas of managing resources, support staff and teachers for improving student achievement (Mpoksa and Ndaruhutse, 2008:11, cited in Abebe, 2012:6). School leaders, together with teachers, have the most influence in the learning of students (UNESCO, 2013:9). Effective and efficient instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement school

improvement programme processes (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:22). The above ideas indicate that a school principal is a leader who facilitates the development and implementation of the school improvement programme to enhance teachers' competencies and effectiveness and the school plan focusing on improving students' performances.

The important elements in school principals' managerial skills include a good education background, ability to create a good work environment, public relation skills and the ability to communicate well with stakeholders (Abebe, 2012:10). The elements can be considered as the essence of school management which leads to improved performance and productivity (Luck 2011; Naidoo 2005:26, cited in Abebe, 2012:7). In view of this information, school principals can make a key contribution to the creation of attractive school environments for the staff to achieve good teaching and learning processes. The next section presents the nature of the teaching and learning process with respect to the school improvement programme.

3.1.3 The Teaching and Learning Process in the Perspectives of School Improvement

In the teaching and learning process, a continuous professional student centred approach and continuous assessments for learning are the first priorities to promote learning and are the key means for initiating school improvement. Strong national policies that make quality teaching and learning a priority are essential to ensure that all children in school actually obtain the skills and knowledge they are meant to acquire (UNESCO, 2014:217). Sound education planning, undertaken in consultation with teachers, is an important basis for successful implementation of strategies aimed at improving the quality of education. Such planning needs to take into account the costs of quality reforms and ensure that resources are available to meet these costs (UNESCO, 2014:229).

UNESCO further underscores that for a school improvement programme to be effective, schools should be known through their quality of teaching that teachers are one of the key elements in any school, and effective teaching is one of the key propellers for school improvement. A quality teacher is one who has a positive effect on student learning and development through a combination of content mastery and command of a broad set of pedagogical skills. Quality teachers are life-long learners in their subject areas, teach with commitment, and are reflective

practitioners (Hightower, 2011:4). They transfer knowledge of their subject matter and learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills, understanding different learning styles and cultural influences, knowledge about child development and the ability to marshal a broad array of techniques to meet student needs (Hightower, 2011:5).

In the above concepts if teachers set high expectations and support students in providing and establishing an environment conducive to learning and leverage available resources outside as well as inside the classroom, then a positive learning environment will prevail for an effective teaching and learning process. What also needs consideration is continuous professional development in the school.

3.1.3.1 Continuous Professional Development in the School

Continuous professional development (CPD) emphasises that a school is a place for learning for staff as well as students (MacBeath and Mortimore, 2010:4). The school has to find ways to build a school wide professional team of highly able teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom. Strong procedures are needed in place to encourage a school wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements (Kelley and Salisbury 2009:20, cited in Ministry of Education, MOE, 2010:13). As the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:45) states, the domain of teachers' professional development includes consideration of the extent to which schools place a priority on attracting, retaining and developing the best possible teachers. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:47) further proclaims that the school leadership team has to have strategies in place to assist teachers to continue to develop and share deep understandings of how students learn subject/content, including prerequisite skills and knowledge, common student misunderstanding and errors, learning difficulties and effective interventions.

Teachers in the school are experts in the field in which they teach, have high levels of confidence in teaching in those fields and are eager to expand their subject knowledge to learn to improve on their current teaching practices (MOE, 2008:48). The school as system expects all teachers to be highly committed to continuous improvement of their own teaching and to focus on the

development of knowledge and skills required for improving student learning; and the principal and other school leaders have the accountability to lead and model professional learning in the school (MOE, 2008:55). To influence the whole school, staff development has to be school wide, rather than specific to individual teachers' needs, and closely related to the curriculum. An effective school development plan is needed which integrates staff development, instructional development and curriculum development. Staff development activities are needed to be phased throughout the school improvement process, and not just used at the pre-implementing stage (MOE, 2008:57). In view of the above literature as a sub-element of the teaching and learning process this research has weighed up continuous professional development in the secondary schools under study. The focus moves now to active learning methods.

3.1.3.2 Use of Teaching Methods in the Classroom

Research has found that the traditional teaching method is extremely inefficient as all students must be taught with the same materials at the same time. Also, the students who do not learn quickly enough with this method can quickly fall behind. To address the limitations with the traditional teaching method the Ministry of Education strongly encourages all teachers to use a range of active learning methods in the classroom. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:12-13) the main active learning methods identified in the school improvement programme are as follows:

- **Class discussion** – this learning method can be used with any class size, although it is typically more effective in a small group setting. It requires the learners to think critically on the subject being discussed and to use logic to evaluate their and others' positions.
- **Think pair share** – this learning method is when students take a time to think about what has just been presented by the teacher (i.e. think) and then discuss it with one or more of the students they are sitting next to (i.e. pair). This is followed by a class discussion (share).
- **Learning cell** – this learning method is when a pair of students study and learn together by asking and answering questions on common reading materials. First students will prepare by reading a section of a textbook and then writing down questions that they have about the reading. At the next class meeting, the teacher will randomly put students in pairs, where one student will ask a question and they will both discuss it. Then it will be

the turn of the 2nd student to ask his or her question to be discussed. During this time, the teacher goes around the class from group to group giving feedback and answering questions.

- **Collaborative learning group** – in this learning method the teachers assign students into groups of 3-6 people and then give each group an assignment or task to work on together. A collaborative learning group is good example of active learning because it causes students to actively participate together in learning.

Class game – this learning method is considered as an energetic way to learn because it not only helps the students to learn the course material but it helps them to enjoy learning about a topic.

In view of the above active learning methods as a sub-element of the teaching and learning process the study will evaluate active learning methods practices in grades 9-10 secondary schools. The next section looks at learning and evaluation in the schools.

3.1.3.3 Learning and Evaluation

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:14) states that for teachers to achieve measurable improvements in students, results are one of the most important standards used to measure the overall goal of the school improvement programme. Student results are defined as what students of different ages know, understand and can do in the subjects of the curriculum. In this case the curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in school or the courses offered by the school (MOE, 2010:7-8). A range of assessment methods are also used in each grade to assess student learning and, based on the results, teachers provide extra teaching support to underperforming students. This is a common understanding among teachers and learning experts that a range of assessment methods should be used to fully understand what students are learning in the classroom. Examples of assessment methods are group assignments, individual projects, quizzes and tests (Chalchisa, 2012:34).

Additionally teachers have to understand the curriculum in terms of age, relevance, and integration and develop and use supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning. That is, one of the key responsibilities of teachers is to study the curriculum and develop supplementary materials for use in the curriculum. It is important for the school to

provide the time and support that teachers need to develop these supplementary materials. In view of the above literature learning and evaluation as a sub-element of the teaching and learning process this study has undertaken to identify practices in the secondary schools being researched. The school learning environment in the context of school improvement programme is described next.

3.1.4 The School Learning Environment in the Context of the School Improvement Programme

Ministry of Education of (MOE, 2010:15) state that the domain of learning environment focuses on empowering and supporting the students. The domain stresses that to be successful the students need to learn in a safe environment, conducive to learning. One of the standards stated to achieve attractive learning is the students develop a habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined. Further the Ministry recognized that when the students start to take the responsibility for their own learning, their results will be better. They have to engage in various activities of the school such as participating in decision making concerning their learning and related issues, helping other students, and handling problems related to students discipline in the school (MOE, 2010:16-17).

3.1.4.1 School Climate

According to Owens (2001:138), school climate is a relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by teachers, affects their behaviour, and is based on their collective perceptions of behaviour in schools. He also explains that climate tends to focus on shared perceptions in the school while school culture is shared assumptions, values, and norms. Hoy (2008:471) states that school culture is a set of shared orientations that hold a unit together and give distinctive identity for the school. Hoy points out that a school climate emerges through the interactions of school communities and exchanges of sentiments among them, that is, the climate of school is its personality. Hoy further explains that two different conceptualisations of climate can be described and analysed, and these are: an open school climate in which the principals act authentically and a closed climate where everyone simply goes through the motions of education without decision and commitment.

Buffie (1989:11) cited in Zengele (2013:29) affirms that good teacher moral and learner accomplishment go hand in hand. That is, teamwork and collaboration are the pillars of a sound school climate. Buffie confirms that the school principal becomes the key player in bringing about a climate that is conducive to quality teaching and learning. Mentz (2002:148) and Basson (1991:631) describe the two facets of school climate as: organisational climate which is related to the teachers' experiences and their conception of the management aspects that influence the school's climate. It relates to how teachers and learners perceive the conditions at the school as either being conducive or not conducive to quality teaching and learning. The second facet is educational climate that is related to the learners' experience of the school climate, especially as a result of their interactions with their teachers. It is what tells learners whether or not the school is worth attending and what engages them in learning activities (Mentz, 2002:248). Thus, in the view of the above authors, the educational climate informs learners about whether that particular school is able to serve its purpose or not.

Naidu (2008:187) state that the school climate or the characteristics of the total environment at school is composed of four dimensions, that is, buildings and physical facilities; human factors, - everything relating to people in the school; organisation and administrative structure; and school culture (values, beliefs, norms and ways of thinking). Buffie (1989:11) sums up the concept of school climate by asserting that good teacher moral and high learner achievement go hand in hand, and that the two must be created through teamwork and collaborative efforts. Buffie (1989:12) cited in Ministry of Education (MOE, 2009:24) further elaborates that since the creation of positive school climate is the main task of a school principal, the following characteristics ought to prevail in a learning school climate and environment:

- **Management determinants** – is a school where management provides support for the learners by ensuring the support material is properly selected by responsible teachers and is ordered and delivered on time so that the school climate is a positive one.
- **Teacher determinants** - a healthy school is characterised by friendly and enthusiastic teachers who are always available when help is needed and easy to talk to. Teachers in a healthy school environment work harder because they get acknowledged by management and parents, who provide them with rewards and recognition.

- **Learner determinants** – learners at a school with a healthy climate are able to do their school work independently and maintain high levels of commitment when it comes to the completion of school projects. Daily school attendance and punctuality are good. The learners are disciplined and neat in appearance at all times.
- **Facility determinants** – in a positive climate, school grounds are kept clean and are well maintained at all times. The school buildings are well maintained and have a neat appearance for effective learning and teaching to take place. The school facilities are used for the purpose for which they are intended. The school principal ensures that there is no overcrowding in classrooms and the school has sufficient ablution facilities and electricity supply.

Baker (1994:40) and Wethuizen (2003:186) offer the following advice for principals to facilitate a sound educational climate in a school, that is, the principal should demonstrate personal integrity, honesty and commitment to the achievement of educational goals in order to gain teachers' trust and show a caring attitude towards staff members. He/she should show an interest in the work of both staff and learners. The authors also stress that the school principal has to have a caring attitude towards the private affairs of staff members without making them feel uncomfortable. Availability and accessibility of the school principal to all staff members is also essential when they need intervention or support in the course of carrying out their duties. Baker (1994:41) and Westhuizen (2003:187) add that all members of staff should be treated equally. Staff should be made to feel comfortable in expressing their dissenting views about how the school is managed without any fear of reprisal and rebuke by the principal. The authors further explain that during meetings the principal must show support and good listening skills through appropriate body language and being warm and sincere when responding to staff members' comments. They argue that the school principal should avoid negative behaviour like unnecessary taking sides and blaming the group instead of the person responsible for an incident (Baker, 1994:42; Wethuizen, 2003:188).

Barth (2006:11) identifies strategies to encourage teachers to develop a pleasant and collegial school climate, and these are: teachers should adapt the habit of discussing their work and educationally directed matters with fellow teachers and spend their quality time at school

discussing what they have learnt in workshops and ways of implementing the new knowledge that has been acquired. He adds that teachers should begin to appreciate and understand each other's work by conducting reciprocal class visits where they provide feedback during their school time. Thus, in view of the above literature this study examined the school climate as a means towards improving the learning environment of the secondary schools. The school culture concept is related to school climate and this also merits consideration.

3.1.4.2 School Culture

There are varying descriptions of organisational culture by different authors. Atkinson (1990:6) describes organisational cultures as reflecting the underlying assumptions about the way work is performed. School cultures and identities lay the foundation for the process of leading and managing school improvement. According to Holy (1994:3) cited in Firdisa (2009:26), organisational culture is a vehicle for understanding the character of an institution, because it embodies the beliefs, values, traditions, practices, policies and norms held by individuals within that institution. This is also true of schools. Holy further elaborates that the culture and identity of a school are informed by the values and norms of the society within which that school exists. In addition, Briggs (2000:187) argues that learners need an environment where they feel respected and where learning is relevant within the wider culture. A safe, varied and stimulating environment is therefore essential to the learning process.

The following are associated with positive school cultures: the individual success of teachers and students are recognised and celebrated; relationships and interactions are characterised by openness, trust, respect and appreciation; staff relationships are collegial, collaborative and productive and staff members are held to high professional standards; school policies and facilities promote student safety; criticism, when voiced, is constructive and well-intentioned and not antagonistic or self-serving; leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from staff members, students and parents; and educational resources and learning opportunities are equitably distributed (Harbison & Rex, 2010:269). Firdisa (2009:27) also explains that effective processes for improving a school culture include empowering diverse stakeholders to build relationships that will instil staff's commitment to support student success in highly challenged school communities.

The role of the principal as a school manager is a key in determining both the climate and school culture (Naidu, 2008:44). According to Zengle (2013:41), in order to change the culture of the school, there must be a thorough understanding of the history of the school's operational ethos. Zengle also asserts that the school principal must know and understand the reason for and nature of the school culture that prevails and this implies studying and assessing the relationship patterns that exist within the school. Consequently, this study evaluated the secondary school principals' roles in realising attractive learning environments within the perspective of implementing school improvement programmes with set targets in terms of school culture. The next section discusses the nature of student empowerment, student support and school facilities.

3.1.4.3 Student Empowerment, Student Support and School Facilities

Student empowerment means students have to develop a habit of taking responsibility and leading a discipline life at home and at school, while student support is the process whereby students are motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons of life (MOE, SIP, 2010:20). If students are not motivated to learn, then they will not learn. There should be collaborative work at school community levels to support inclusive education for students with special abilities. Support therefore is an important aspect of improving students' results (MOE, SIP, 2010:22).

With regards to school facilities, schools have to provide quality school facilities that enable staff to work well and all children to learn; that is, with all necessary facilities like a teachers' room with desks and storage, a fence around the school grounds, reference materials, adequate teaching materials, a playing area for students, tea rooms, desks and chairs per child, sufficient number of toilet for teachers, students (girls and boys), pedagogical centres, clean safe water for drinking and washing, good management and maintenance of facilities (buildings, water and sanitation), laboratory (for biological, chemistry and physics sciences), library, and information technology (computers, plasma, internet, etc) centres (MOE, SIP, 2010:23). In view of the above literature the study examined the existing student empowerment, student support and school facilities in the study in the secondary schools selected for the study.

Regarding students' discipline in the schools, Charles (2011:56) and DiGuillio (2010:27) suggest that schools that need to build foundations for good students' behaviour in school have to do the following:

- **Think about the approach** – take some time to think about the strategies the school can use to encourage positive classroom behaviour. Clarify school strategies that will make it easier for school teachers to lead the classes confidently and effectively.
- **Visualise possible challenges in the school** – imagine possible classroom challenges and review school strategies for dealing with them and having clear cut strategies that will help keep the school grounded when these challenges do arise.
- **Make the school expectations clear from the beginning** – make sure that students know what the schools expect of them. The school/classroom rules should be positive, specific and concise. Schools may wish to post them in the classrooms or distribute them for students to sign. Schools should also spell out what will happen if students do not meet expectations.
- **Model positive behaviour** – occasionally schools may have to remind themselves to follow their own rules.
- **Encourage, encourage, and encourage** – when schools praise students who are excelling, do not forget to encourage those who are trying, but struggling. These students often lack confidence and need more positive reinforcement.
- **Show respect** – in the school be sure to address student behaviour in a consistent manner. Be wary of shifting strategies when misbehaviour occurs. To students, this may show a lack of decisiveness. Find a strategy the school likes and stick with it.
- **Keep students busy and challenged** - busy students are far less likely to exhibit disruptive behaviour. Be sure that students are working at appropriate levels; boredom and frustration often lead to students acting out.
- **School should listen to student suggestions** – when building school foundations, schools may be able to draw from students and other teachers' past classroom experiences. Schools should ask students to make suggestions about what should be expected of them and how misbehaviour should be addressed because students are often more responsive to rules they helped create. Thus, creating an environment in which students know and follow the rules is challenging, but not impossible. With a little

patience and perseverance, you can lay a foundation for respect and positive behaviour in classroom that lasts all year (Charles, 2009:56; DiGuillio, 2010:27).

In view of the above strategies to build a foundation for good students' behaviour the study aimed to identify the rules and regulations currently prevailing in the secondary schools selected for the study. The nature of sanitation and hygiene in secondary schools is discussed next.

3.1.4.4 Sanitation and Hygiene in Secondary Schools

According to UNICEF (2013:1-2), school led total sanitation (SLTS) is the process of empowering children to be agents of change within their school community, encouraging families, teachers and other stakeholders to construct latrines and end the practices of open defecation. UNICEF believes that working with school children is one of the most effective methods of promoting good hygiene and sanitation practices across school communities. School sanitation and hygiene's major objective is to improve the quality of primary and secondary education by creating conducive school environments through hygiene and sanitation intervention. It includes latrine utilization, solid waste management, personal hygiene, hand washing, food hygiene, and safe water management in the schools (UNICEF, 2013:4-5). As UNICEF (2013:6) explains, student led total sanitation strategy works mainly through students' leadership, ownership capacity building, a child friendly approach, gender inclusiveness, and strengthening existing school sanitation and hygiene structures.

The guiding principles of student led sanitation and hygiene are to give the chance fully for the students to lead and to allow the students to monitor and follow the progress (UNICEF, 2013:8). Furthermore, UNICEF (2013:12) described the techniques of school hygiene and sanitation initiatives as follows:

- make agreement with school administration and parent teacher association leaders on the day of student led sanitation and hygiene triggering;
- prepare necessary materials (colourful powders, cards, ropes, leaves, etc) for sanitation mapping;
- School student led sanitation and hygiene facilitators identify a wide space in the school where triggering will take place.

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:23) for hygiene and sanitation implementation divide students, teachers and other community members into three groups to trigger each group at a time in one day. In view of the above concepts about sanitation and hygiene in the schools this study assessed the existing practices of hygiene and sanitation process in the chosen secondary schools in bringing about an attractive learning environment. The next section presents the role of the community in the school improvement programme.

3.1.5 Community Involvement in the School Improvement Programme

According to the Ministry Of Education (MOE, 2010:23) communities can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race. Shaeffer (1992 cited in Ministry of Education, 2010:24) argues that some communities are homogeneous while others are heterogeneous; and some are united while others are conflictive. Some communities are governed and managed by leaders chosen democratically who act relatively autonomously from other levels of government, and some are governed by leaders imposed from above by central authorities. Zenter (1994:1) points out that a community is a group structure, whether formally or informally organised, in which members play roles which are integrated around goals associated with problems from collective occupation to utilisation of habitual space. A community is also where members of a community have some degree of collective identification with the occupied space. Lastly, the community has a degree of local autonomy and responsibility.

Bray (1996:2) presents three different types of communities in his study on community financing of education. The first is a geographical community, which is defined according to its members' place of residence, such as a village or district. The second type are ethnic, racial, and religious communities, in which membership is based on ethnic, racial, or religious identification, and acts across members based in a particular geographical location. The third one is communities based on shared family or educational concerns, which include parents' associations and similar bodies that are based on families' shared concern for the welfare of students. Shaeffer (1994:2) cited in Ministry of Education (2010:25) also clarifies different degrees or levels of participation, and provides seven possible definitions of the term:

- Involvement through mere use of a service (such as enrolling children in school or using a primary health care facility);
- Involvement through the contribution or extraction of money, materials, and labour;
- Involvement through attendance (e.g. at parents' meeting at school), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;
- Involvement through consultation on a particular issue;
- Participation in the delivery of service, often as a partner with other actors;
- Participation as implementers of delegated powers; and
- Participation in real decision-making at every stage, including identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:24) stresses that the first four definitions use the word 'involvement' which connotes largely passive collaboration, where the last three items use the word 'participation' instead, implying a much more active role. The Ministry of Education further provides some specific activities that involve a high degree of participation in a wider development context, which can be applied in the school improvement programme:

- Collecting and analysing information;
- Defining priorities and strategic goals;
- Assessing available resources;
- Deciding on and planning of the school improvement programmes;
- Designing strategies to implement school improvement programmes and dividing responsibilities among participants;
- Managing school improvement programmes;
- Monitoring progress of the school improvement programmes; and
- Evaluating results and impacts.

School improvement takes place not only in schools but also within families and communities. Parents and families cannot be the only group of people involved in secondary school improvement programmes as long as the students interact with and learn from the world outside their families. Communities and other partners must support parents in the upbringing, socialising, and educating of their children because secondary schools are institutions that can prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate by equipping them with skills important in society (MOE, 2010:25).

Parents of students who attend school meetings play an important role in terms of school governance. The principal should ensure that parents are regularly updated on school improvement and needs by organising parents' meetings where matters concerning school finances, fundraising, and school security (Marishane, 2013:24). Parents can play a crucial role in providing financial support and security to the school, provided the principal knows how to work cooperatively with them. When parents are made to feel a part of the school's processes and operations in a controlled and supported manner, the school becomes better equipped to meet its school improvement goals (UNICEF, 2010:32; Marishane, 2013:24). However, the principal has to guard against the over involvement of parents in the school based activities to allow teachers time to interact freely and professionally with learners (Marishane, 2011:25).

In school improvement programmes, parents and communities can contribute to educational planning and implementation in the following ways: advocating enrolment and education benefits; boosting morale of teachers; raising money for schools; constructing, repairing and improving school facilities; support teachers; monitoring and following up on teacher performance; forming village education communities to manage schools; actively attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress; providing skills instruction and local culture information; helping students studying; garnering more resources from and solving problems through education; providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them; identifying factors contributing to education problems (Cole, 2007:23; Aref, 2010:3; UNICEF, 2010:33; Marishane, 2013:25). Likewise, to be successful in the school improvement programme implementation, family and community partnerships should include administrative leadership and support for family school community partnerships that provide well-designed, goal oriented, and culturally responsive activities developed by teachers, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders which are geared to the diverse needs of families and their children and to the particular conditions of each school (UNESCO/IIEP, 2008:3; Aref, 2010:3; UNICEF, 2010:33; Marishane, 2013:25).

According to UNESCO/IIEP (2008:4), participatory and community based approaches will also help to increase school improvement programmes and can help to increase community ownership. Parents can also see that the education their children receive is relevant. This implies

that the development of parent teacher associations in schools can have significant implications for resources available to the school as well as for improved monitoring of quality, relevance and such critically important supporting elements as school improvement programmes. This study evaluated to what extent community participation improved as a result of the implementation of the school improvement programme. The next section reviews literature on the context of the Ethiopian education and training policy in the light of school improvement programme implementation.

3.2. The Context of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy

3.2.1 Introduction

This section presents a general description of the context of the Ethiopian Training and Education Policy of 1994 within the perspectives of school management and leadership, the teaching and learning process, the learning environment and community involvement in Ethiopia. The School Improvement Program (SIP) and its implementation are discussed in detail. Also, it outlines the context of public secondary school education within the context of school improvement programme implementation in the Iluababor Administrative zone. Challenges and opportunities in implementing the school improvement programme in secondary school education are also discussed. The next section presents the context of the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy within the perspectives of the school improvement programme implementation.

3.2.2 The Education System in Ethiopia

An education system with high education quality is needed for development, industrialisation, and democratisation and security for today and tomorrow. It is a very important factor for human development (Townsend, 2007:23). It is of high priority in all development endeavours of the government, which means there is need for an appropriate direction to set a new process in motion and change the current alarming situation in Ethiopia (MOE, 2010:1). Before 1994, the education system of Ethiopia was knotted with complex problems of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity. The objectives of education did not take cognisance of society's needs and did not adequately indicate a future direction. The absence of interrelated content and mode of presentation that can develop students' knowledge, cognitive abilities and behavioural change

by level, to adequately enrich problem solving ability and attitudes for students were some of the major problems of Ethiopian education system (ETP, 1994:1).

During the Dergi regime, the situation of the education sector intertwined with inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers, over-crowded classes, shortage of books and other teaching materials, all indicated the low quality of the education being provided. Thus, the Education and Training Policy document of 1994 was designed to achieve the future economic development goals that identified clear strategies for the education system to achieve the mission and goals entrusted to it (ETP, 1994:2).

According to the Education and Training Policy of 1994 in Ethiopia, primary education lasts for eight years and is divided into grades 1-4 (primary first cycle) and grades (5-8) second primary education cycle. Secondary education is also divided into two cycles, each with its own specific goals. The structures of the education system for secondary school are as follows: grades 9-10 (secondary first cycle) and grades 11-12 (secondary second cycle). The first secondary cycle provide general secondary education and, upon completion of grade 10, students are then streamed based on their performance in the secondary education completion certificate examination, and enter either into grades 11-12 preparatory as preparation for university, or into technical and vocational education and training (TVET). In this case, this study deals with studying the challenges of and opportunities for implementing a school improvement programme in grades 9-10 public secondary schools in Iluababor administrative zone in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Education and Training policy decentralised power, authority and the management of services to schools, where the provision of education is the concurrent responsibility of federal, regional, and local governments. This is explained by the Education and Training Policy that the federal government plays a dominant role in the provision of post-secondary education, while also setting standards and providing overall policy guidance, monitoring and evaluation, and support for the entire sector (MOE, 1994:4). This means that each of the nine regional governments and two city administration councils are responsible for formulating regional policy (including decisions about the languages of instruction); managing the work of colleges of teacher education which supply primary teachers; adapting the

curriculum to the region; examining students at the end of primary school; and overall supervision and monitoring (MOE, 2010:6). Districts are largely responsible for the implementation of all educational activities and are responsible for recruiting personnel and paying the salaries of primary and secondary school teachers, visiting schools to supervise teachers and delivering non-salary inputs (either in cash or in kind) to schools (MOE, 2008:9). In this case, the study aimed to identify whether district education offices are implementing their roles and responsibilities in the perspective school improvement programme. After the implementation of the new Education and Training Policy, the Ethiopian government dedicated its resources to education, resulting in a dramatic increase in school enrolment at all levels (MOE, 2009:15). However, the road to progress of the school improvement programme has been uneven, as the country faces several challenges in her efforts to improve the educational system (Lasser, 2012:1). The next section presents a brief history of the Ethiopian education sector development programme.

3.2.3 The Ethiopian Education Sector Development Programme (1996 – 2014)

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is a programme of action for the realisation of the goals of the Education Training Policy. The Education Sector Development Program was introduced in 1997 as a vehicle for implementing the 1994 Education and Training policy, which envisaged to improve education quality, relevance, efficiency, equity and expand access to education, with special emphasis on primary education in rural and disadvantage areas, as well as the promotion of education for girls as a first step to achieve universal primary education by 2015 (MOE, ESDP I, 1997:3-5).

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP I) (1997-2002) was designed to address the very poor conditions and performance of the education system in the context of widespread poverty. The primary school enrolment rate (30%) was the lowest in the world. It fell as low as 19% during the later years of the Derg regime (MOE, 1999:5). Change was necessary to address chronic problems, particularly in rural areas, where less than 30% of boys and 20% of girls attended primary school. Inadequate facilities, lack of textbooks, under qualified teachers, and inappropriate curricula and examinations were the main causes. Planning and management capacities in the education sector were very weak at all levels. ESDP I attempted to put into

action the 1994 education policy which included a sector plan designed to enhance enrolment, particularly in primary schools, decentralisation, and community empowerment.

Ethiopia reviewed the Dakar Frame of Action (2000) and made Education for All (EFA) the major component of the education sector development sector of Ethiopia. Therefore, EFA goals were treated within ESDP II in an integrated manner through a sector wide approach. The six major components of the EFA were given prominence and considerable attention throughout the proposed programme of action for achieving ESDP II goals. In ESDP II, increasing primary enrolment, with quality and equity, was the basic theme of primary education. However, programmes for achieving quality and equity were not only confined to primary education alone, but they also influenced the programmes and investment in secondary education. ESDP II paid special attention to the question of equity. Strategies were designed to improve gender equity, access to education for children of highly marginalised and pastoralist communities and narrowing the urban and rural gap in access to education, and reducing regional disparities (MoE, ESDP II, 2005:4-5). As with primary education, a substantial expansion of secondary education also took place under ESDP I and ESDP II.

In the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP II) in secondary schools, in order to enhance the quality of education at secondary level, ICT infrastructure were provided to schools to receive satellite education transmission with the objective of improving the quality of education and supporting teachers. The process also started to make use of school net services for schools. The objective of the school net programme was to support the country's education system, ICT, which involved providing personal computers to schools to set up internet laboratories, organizing training for teachers, digitalisation of existing video-based educational contents for web access and eventually facilitating community access to ICT (ESDP II, 2005:15). Additionally, during ESDP II, in order to enhance the quality of educational delivery in schools, the internet facility was provided through the school net which enabled teachers to develop their personal qualifications. It also allowed students to access the internet and other online resources as well as access global knowledge services and also display and download the content broadcast through the satellite television from Educational Media Broadcasting Agency (EMBA) to schools' local area networks (ESDP II, 2005:16-17).

Ministry of Education (2005:24) as explained in ESDP II made efforts to deepen decentralisation at school level. As a result, decision-making was shifted from regions and zones to districts and municipalities and further to the school level to improve direct response and service delivery. During this period, the Ministry of Education developed guidelines for the organisation of education management, community participation, and school management of finance. However, in the Education Sector Development II in secondary schools the most prominent and persistent challenges facing the education system were lack of quality education; lack of a sufficient number of qualified teachers; weak programme management and implementation capacity which has contributed to lower budget utilisation in civil works and procurement; and inadequate planning and management capacity at lower levels of the organizational structures (ESDP II, 2005:29).

In the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III), the main challenges in the education sector were the failure of schools in addressing students' right to quality education. In these cases, the key factors that contributed to low student achievement in secondary schools include: poor school organisation and management, inadequate training on subject mastery and pedagogical skills for teachers, inadequate school facilities, insufficient curricular and instructional materials, and large class size (ESDP: 2008:23). Nonetheless, under the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III), Ethiopia made significant progress in education. Access at all levels of the education system increased at a rapid rate in line with a sharp increase in the number of teachers, schools and institutions. There were important improvements in the availability of trained teachers and some other inputs which are indispensable for a high quality education system (ESDP III, 2008:6).

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV) was designed to address and to build strong improvement in student achievement through a consistent focus on the enhancement of teaching and learning processes and the transformation of schools into motivational and child friendly learning environments. This included the development of programmes which helped attract unreached students and ensure that children would complete primary and secondary education; strengthening the capacity for knowledge creation, in particular in the domain of

science and technology through an expansion of access to technical vocational education and higher education; and effectiveness of the educational administration at all levels, through capacity development and the creation of motivation work environments (ESDP IV, 2010:6).

The main goals of the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV) in secondary schools were to improve access to quality education in order to make that all youngsters, with particular emphasis on females, acquire the competencies, skills, values and attitudes enabling them to participate fully in the social, economic and political development of the country and to sustain equitable access to quality secondary education services as the basis and bridge to the demand of the economy for middle level and higher level human resources (ESDP IV, 2010:7). The Ministry of Education (ESDP IV, 2010:12-13) stated that the gains in access are of little meaning if they are not accompanied by improved student learning. If students do not acquire significant knowledge and skills, Ethiopia will not be able to compete in a global economy.

The General Education Quality improvement package (GEQIP), which was launched in 2008 aimed to improve quality of education at all levels, as an integral part of the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV), so that attention will be given to the education quality of facilities under ESDP IV. This study, therefore, was designed to assess the current state of secondary education with respect to challenges and opportunities of implementing school improvement in public secondary schools of the Iluababor zone, with the aim of identifying some major barriers that hinder school improvement programmes in secondary schools. The next section presents the status of the general quality the education improvement programme (GEQIP) in Ethiopia.

3.2.3.1 The General Quality Education Improvement Program (GEQIP)

The General Quality Education Improvement Program (GEQIP) as a government education strategy was started during the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III) to give high priority to quality improvement at all levels of the education system (GEQIP, 2008:2-3). The General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) concentrates on quality reforms such as the new curriculum implementation, text book development and provision, school grants to enhance school-based development reforms, as well as institutional development at the federal,

regional and district levels. The overall purpose of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) is to improve the quality of general education (grades 1-12) throughout the country in the areas of teaching and learning conditions in primary and secondary education; and to improve the management, planning and budget capacity of the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus (GEQIP, 2008:5).

Education quality is a multifaceted concept defined differently depending on a country's education policy goals and the underlying philosophies. UNESCO (2005:32-55) defines education quality as:

- **A humanist approach** which focuses on student construction of knowledge, active learning, and social action;
- **A behaviourist approach** which assumes that students must be led by incremental steps to specific, and pre-defined ends;
- **A critical approach** which focuses on understanding and correcting inequities;
- **An indigenous approach** which rejects mainstream education imported from the centres of power (Amare et al., 2009:4). Then, the next paragraphs present the national goals of the Education and Training policy of Ethiopia.

The National Education and Training Policy (NETP) of 1994 and the new curriculum of Ethiopia define education quality as knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable students to develop the familiar cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor domains. In this case cognitive learning includes: relevant knowledge, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills (NETP, 1994:1-2). This policy further states that knowledge and skills are developed through student-centred, active learning, as the ability to apply knowledge practically. Additionally, affective learning includes the development of social commitment, democratic attitudes, self-knowledge, and appropriate interpersonal skills. In relation to UNESCO's framework outlined above, Ethiopia's education policies and programmes most closely correspond to the humanist approach, although elements of behaviourism are evident in many aspects of the system – the curriculum, text books, examinations, and teachers' practice (Amare, 2006:5).

Thus, in Ethiopia the National Education and Training policy (NETP, 1994:1-3) provided the bases for the specific goals and objectives of the country's education system. To achieve that it:

- Prepares individuals for the world of work;
- Prepares individuals for social and political participation in the context of a rapidly changing and dynamic global economy and society; and
- Is learner-centred and non-authoritarian.

The new reform package consists of six core areas for intervention. Within the General Education Quality Improvement Program framework, the school improvement programme is designed to promote the four key dimensions of school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, a conducive and attractive learning environment, and enhanced school community relations (GEQIP, 2008:5-6).

In 2008 the school improvement programme that launched in Ethiopia has got high priority as a reform agenda in the country education system at all levels in the schools. It is mainly concerned with changing the quality of teachers and schools without automatically looking at the consequences for student outcomes. It is about to find out how schools can change in order to improve (MOE, 2008:20-23). This study, therefore, aims to create stronger ways of thinking by creating a framework for effective school improvement that helps to explain why improvement efforts succeed or fail and which factors promote or hinder effective school improvement. The study conducted an extensive analysis of 12 secondary school (grades 9-10) school improvement programmes in twelve districts. The next section discusses the status of the school improvement programme implementation in Ethiopia.

3.2.3.2 School Improvement Programme (SIP) Implementation in the Education System of Ethiopia

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (GEQIP, 2008:34-41), the school improvement programme in secondary schools was designed to ensure the following outcomes:

- Students make successful transition from school to work and further study and all students are engaged in and benefit from schooling;
- Students in schools are exceeding the national standard;

- Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of students in secondary school;
- Provide physical inputs such as teachers, text books, school health and other services necessary if quality of education is to be improved;
- Create incentives that lead to better instruction and learning.

Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) cited in (GEQIP, 2008:42) identify key factors that enhance the quality of education and these are choice and competition between schools, school autonomy, school accountability, increased school resources and local management to improve teaching and learning. The school improvement approach starts with schools and their stakeholders undertaking a self-assessment to identify their goals, followed by the development and implementation of a school improvement plan. The schools are also required to maintain information/data on the effectiveness of their plans (GQEIP, 2008:12). The improvement methodology is critical in strengthening the planning and utilisation of the school grant and other recourses, which in turn will realise measurable gains in school performance and the quality of education (MOE, 2008:44). In line with above ideas, the purpose of the school assessment is to review where the school is currently at and to identify the areas that are most in need of development, and identify school improvement domains like school leadership and management, the learning and teaching process, learning environment, and parents and community involvement.

Within each domain, focus areas have to be highlighted and standards of performance have to be indicated. Indicators of practice have to be provided for the school to evaluate its performance in relation to each standard. The schools have to rate themselves by all stakeholders in the assessment (i.e., teachers, students, parents and community) to know its strengths and weaknesses for each standard (GEQIP, 2008:47). Therefore, if weaknesses are noted then priority will be given in terms of importance for the purpose of the school development plan.

According to the Ministry of Education (2008), training and materials in school improvement methodology were provided to the Regional Education Bureau's district education offices and

schools. In particular, schools were instructed on how to use the self-assessment instruments and how to apply the findings to develop a school improvement plan.

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:42) also states that the school improvement programme (SIP) component of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) will be implemented through following two mutually reinforcing priority programmes. That is, the school improvement programme was designed to assist schools to identify priority needs through a process of self-assessment, develop an effective and practical school improvement plan to address those needs, and then monitor and assess implementation. The school grants programme entails the provision of additional resources to schools to support implementation of the school improvement programme (SIP), as well as realize measurable improvements in the quality of education service provision (MOE, 2008:6-10).

According to the Ministry of Education (GEQIP, 2008:48), the management of the school improvement programme implementation will adhere to the following steps: after receiving training, schools will conduct a self-assessment identifying areas where improvements may be made. A school improvement committee will be created and provided with data from the self-assessment exercise including prioritised needs. The school improvement committee and key stakeholders will create a school improvement plan which contains possible solutions to and budgets for the problems identified. Then, throughout the school year, each school is expected to monitor and evaluate operations. The Ministry of Education (ESDP IV, 2010:12-17) also outlines that the standards of framework for the school improvement programme implementation strategies include the following:

- Teachers have to have professional competency, and participate in continuous professional development (CPD) in order to learn new knowledge to apply in the classroom;
- Teachers have use active learning methods in the classroom to realise improved learning results;
- Teachers have to achieve measurable improvements in student results;
- A range of assessment methods must be used in each grade to assess student learning,
- Teachers have to provide extra teaching support to underperforming students;

- Teachers have to understand the curriculum (in terms of age, relevance, and integration) and develop and use supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning.

Then again, students have to develop a habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined life and being motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons; and there is collaborative work at the school and community levels to support inclusive education for children and teachers with special needs (MOE, 2008:19). Secondary schools have to provide quality school facilities that enable all staff to work well and all students to learn; and structures and processes that exist to support shared leadership in which everyone has collective responsibility for student learning. In line with this direction, this study aimed to identify facilities in selected secondary schools of the Iluabaor administrative zone. Besides, school policies, regulations and procedures have to be effectively communicated and followed; the schools decision-making and administrative processes (including data collection and analysis, and communicating with parents) have to be carried out effectively; and teachers have to meet with parents when necessary, and at a minimum twice per semester, to provide quality reports and to discuss their children's learning achievements (GQEIP, 2008:6; ESDP IV, 2010:19).

Eventually, secondary schools have to successfully mobilise the community to provide resources to support the implementation of the school improvement plan; and be active in communicating and promoting the importance of education in the community (ESDP IV, 2010:45). Therefore, the outcomes expected from public secondary schools in the school improvement programme framework are: to get transformed school leadership and management; to get high expectations for learning to challenge and engage their students to achieve; have a strong focus on quality teaching in every classroom and commitment of professional learning and deliver a curriculum that provides all students with solid foundation in core knowledge, understanding, skills and values while being responsive to individual needs (GQEIP, 2008:10; ESDP IV, 2010: 47).

Additionally, in relation to leading and managing of secondary schools the following outcomes are expected:

- To establish and publish a shared and clear vision of school values, goals, priorities and directions;
- Demonstrate strategic, purposeful and participative leadership, with a strong focus on student achievement through quality teaching;
- Manage resources and risks in ways that support the school's vision and maintain operational integrity (MOE, 2010: 48).

The study, therefore, assesses the challenges of and opportunities for implementing the school improvement programme with respect to the standards set by Federal Ministry of Education in public secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone. The next section explores curriculum, textbooks and assessment in the context of the school improvement programme implementation.

3.2.3.3 Curriculum, Textbooks and Assessment in the Context of School Improvement Programme Implementation

Under this component the government is working to implement the new curriculum; provide text books and give technical guides to develop the curriculum; and align student assessment and examinations with the new curriculum and reform (GEQIP, 2008:10). With respect to curriculum delivery in the school programme, the school has to have a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels (ESDP IV, 2010:20). The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has to develop with reference to school curriculum to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice; and teaching and learning process in line with curriculum has to be shared with parents and communities (ESDP IV, 2010:45).

The curriculum reform has the aim of further addressing issues overlapping and sequencing of the content, with additional focus on more active learning methodologies. It is also designed to be responsive to international economic realities, national democracy and gender equity (GEQIP, 2008:11; ESDP, 2010:23). Thus, the school improvement programme as a component supports the government's initiatives to build up and improve the capacity of schools to prioritise needs

and develop a school improvement plan; to enhance school and community participation in resource utilisation, decisions and resource generation; to improve capacity to deliver specified amounts of school grants at district level, and to improve the learning environment by providing basic operational resources to schools (MOE, 2010:34). The quality and availability of textbooks and other materials have represented a challenge to effective learning. The content in the text books is also widely seen as not being conducive to learning (MOE, 2008:12).

The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:25), outlined that monitoring the academic achievement of students is a critical component of an effective education system to answer important questions about students, the classroom, the school and the education system as a whole. Each school is required to carry out self assessment on the basis of a form that involves performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness of school management, teachers' performance and student achievement. Consequently, in the study focus is on curriculum, textbooks and assessment, that is, on how effective the school improvement programmes is in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools. The next section presents the stages of the school improvement programme.

3.2.3.4 Stages of the School Improvement Programme in Practice

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:18-19), currently the following are the stages of the school improvement programme in practice:

- **School self-assessment** – this is undertaken to collect information that will inform the planning activities. The overall aim of self-assessment is to collect information on the situation of the school improvement programme standards framework. The information will then be used to develop a three year school improvement strategic plan and a one year school improvement action plan. Self-assessment provides an important baseline of information that will be measured against annually over the next three years. This is undertaken by a school improvement committee.
- **Planning** – the overall aim of school improvement planning is to: analyse information collected during the self-assessment stage, to identify priority areas for improvement in the school each year for the next three years, and then to list information in a three year

school improvement strategic plan and one year annual action plan which will be undertaken by the school improvement committee.

- **Implementation** - the overall aim of the implementation stage in the school improvement programme is to successfully implement the strategic plan and annual action plan. The school improvement committee is responsible for ensuring that the annual action plan is implemented successfully.
- **Monitoring** – the overall aim of monitoring of school improvement is to monitor the implementation of the annual action plan. District staff, as well as school cluster supervisors, and school improvement committee members will be expected to monitor the implementation of the annual action plan.

In line with the stages of the school improvement programme currently in practice this study evaluated the existing practices of the school improvement programme implementation in relation to the set targets. The next section presents the secondary education school improvement programme implementation in Iluababor administrative zone.

3.2.3.6 Public Secondary School Improvement Programme Implementation in Iluababor Administrative Zone

This topic introduces secondary school leadership and management commitment, the teaching and learning process in secondary schools, the learning environment, parents and community participation, the strategic planning of the school improvement programme and the overall service delivery of the secondary school (grades 9-10) education sector.

Improving persistently low performing schools is the core goal of the education system in Ethiopia, the most recent agenda for reauthorisation of secondary schools in the school improvement programme (MOE, 2010:4-5). Thus, the Ministry of Education has sought ways to address the increasing large number of schools identified as low performing. The pressure to meet quality education for all in 2015 has motivated many policy makers in Ethiopia to seek ways to accelerate the process of improving schools (MOE, 2010:14-15).

School improvement activities cannot be successful in any school without the commitment of the school leadership and management teams. This commitment facilitates the allocation of resources and provides daily leadership support for school improvement throughout the system (GQEIP, 2008:26). GQIP further explains that if commitment is obtained, it can lead to real quality of school improvement and the implementation of adequate measures to bring about ongoing school improvement.

Hopkins (2005:32) also states that quality school improvement requires a cultural change, that is, the schools do things differently and overcome resistance to change. School improvement aims to improve school leadership and management, develop education in classrooms, create attractive school learning environments and enhance community involvement (GEQIP, 2008:6). The first step of the school improvement effort is based on the assumption that it is important to start with a clear understanding of your destination and how the school going to reach improvement of quality in education. It could be considered as a purposeful task analysis which suggests a planning sequence and commitment to collaborative work needs to be established (ESDP IV, 210:45).

In Iluababor administrative zone, emphasis was placed on the secondary school leadership and management system and roles in school quality improvement in the five year strategic plan of the zone education office (Strategic Plan of the Zone Education Office, 2010:6-7). In the strategic plan, following an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the education zone, the document states that the office was also committed to create an environment conducive to efficient teamwork to implement school improvement initiatives successfully (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:17-19).

In the strategic plan, following an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the education of the zone, the document stated that the office was also committed to create an environment conducive to efficient teamwork to implement school improvement initiatives successfully (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:17-19). Thus, the strategic planning of the five year school improvement stated the following points:

The strategic plan of the education zone states that, with regard to the duties and responsibilities of school principals in secondary schools of the administrative zone, they have to share duties and resources in an efficient manner; ensure that resources are allocated in a manner consistent with school improvement programme needs; be responsive to and supportive of the needs of teachers; be concerned with her/his own professional development; encourage staff involvement in professional development programmes and make use of skills teachers acquire in these programmes; have a high level of awareness of what is happening in the school; establish effective relationships with the department, community, teachers and students; have a flexible administrative style; be willing to take risks; and ensure that continual review of the school programme occurs and that progress towards goals is evaluated (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:25-26).

Besides, every school must have in place strong governance and management systems; should have sufficient powers to assure school autonomy and integrity, and the management team must have delegated responsibilities to enable actions consistent with the vision, mission and goals of secondary school leadership and management in the administrative zone education system (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:27-29). The strategy also stressed that, in every secondary school, there should be motivated staff and capable teachers, and adequate resources in the school to enable staff to teach effectively.

Additionally, the strategic plan explains that there should be a high degree of staff involvement in the development of school improvement goals, together with teachers' involvement in decision making at school and high levels of community involvement in decision making at the school. As to the curriculum, the strategic plan states that secondary schools have to have clearly stated school improvement goals; a well planned, balanced and organised programme which meets the needs of the students; and a teaching and learning process which provides students with required skills (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:30-33). In view of this direction the study identified the challenges and opportunities the strategic plan brought when implemented in terms of the set targets. With respect to secondary schools in the zone the strategic planning with regards to school improvement states:

The strategy also outlines that every secondary school has to have a set of values which are considered important; a climate of respect and mutual trust among teachers and students; open communication in the school; a strong commitment to learning; a high morale among students in the school; a low absentee rate among students; a low student repetition and dropout rate; a low delinquency rate among students; a provision for students to take on responsibility in the school; and good discipline in the school. As far as school culture is concerned, the following points were outlined in the document: clear explicit, shared goals for judging performance; positive school atmosphere, friendliness of staff, disciplinary climate; sense of community and collaborative culture; safe school environment; high expectations for students and a climate of achievement and perceived meaning fullness of the school work (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:36-40).

Besides, every school must have in place strong governance and management systems; should have sufficient powers to assure school autonomy and integrity, and the management team must have delegated responsibilities to enable actions consistent with the vision, mission and goals of secondary schools leadership and management in the administrative zone education system (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:27-29). The strategy also stressed that in every secondary school there should be motivated staff and capable teachers; and adequate resources in the school to enable staff to teach effectively.

Additionally, the strategy further explained that there should be a high degree of staff involvement in the development of school improvement goals; teachers' involvement in decision making at school and high levels of community involvement in decision making at the school. As to the curriculum the strategic plan stated that secondary schools have to have clearly stated school improvement goals; a well-planned, balanced and organised programme which meets the needs of the students; and a teaching and learning process which provides students with required skills (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:30-31).

Moreover, the strategy also outlined that every secondary school has to have a set of values which are considered important; a climate of respect and mutual trust among teachers and students; open communication in the school; a strong commitment to learning; a high morale among students in the school; a low absentee rate among students; a low student repetition and

dropout rate; a low delinquency rate among students; provision for students to take on responsibility in the school; and good discipline in the school. As far as school culture is concerned, the following points were outlined in the documents: clear explicit, shared goals for judging performance; positive school atmosphere, friendliness of staff, disciplinary climate; sense of community and collaborative culture; safe school environment; high expectations for students and a climate of achievement and perceived meaningfulness of the school work.

The structure of the secondary schools should also facilitate: time to allow for both preparation and collaboration; opportunity to work in teams; opportunities for on-going professional learning; participation in decision making; quality physical facilities; institutional integrity (effective, stable programme); and community support and relationship with parents. School operation procedures should be with quality of communication within the school; fit of school improvement programme plan with teachers' view of school needs; regular performance feedback to school working groups; and flexible enforcement of rules (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:43-44).

Ultimately, the strategy also outlined that district education offices have to: nurture school professional networks; provide support for instruction; allocate necessary budgets and struggle over priorities; and pressure for change with respect to the school improvement programme. Lastly, in the SWOT analysis of the zone education office, it was noted that in secondary schools there was poor delegation of powers, a mismatch between plan and budget allocation, poor use of resources available, non-systematic control, poor collaboration among the staff, resource budget scarcity, lack of consistent service delivery, low staff commitment and sometimes ethical problems among teachers and students, absence of school facilities, absence of student teachers in some schools, high teacher turnover due to lack of incentives, poor purchasing and procurement system, etc (Zone Education Office Strategic Plan, 2010:30-31). The strategic planning of the 2010 zone education office stated that, secondary schools have to find better ways and processes of doing things by enhancing leadership and management commitment. In line with the strategic planning of the Iluababor Education Office this study aimed to identify the challenges and opportunities in relation to the set targets for grades 9-10 secondary schools. The next section presents education service delivery in the Iluababor administrative zone.

3.2.3.6.1 Education Service Delivery in Iluababor Administrative Zone

One of the educational inputs that contribute remarkably to ensure successful school improvement programme implementation is the availability of sufficient and qualified teachers. According to the national standard, secondary school teachers should be university graduates in their respective fields of specialisation and should possess adequate pedagogical knowledge and skills (MOE, 2010:23). In this direction in the 24 secondary schools of the administrative zone a total of 917 (male = 886; female = 131) teachers were embarked on the teaching and learning process (Zone Education Office Annual Report, 2014:21). For example, the number of students per teacher ratio of 40:1 is frequently used as a quality signal, though its impact on learning outcomes remains a subject of concern in schools.

Smaller classes are widely believed to benefit all students because of individual attention from teachers, and low attaining students are seen to benefit more at secondary school level, where the content level is more challenging. Students in large classes drift off tasks because of too much instruction from the teacher to the whole class, instead of individual attention, and low attaining students are most affected. In Ethiopia, the standard for the pupil teacher ratio is 1:40. However, currently in Iluababor secondary schools (grades 9-10) the student teacher ratio is 1:60 in some secondary schools in the urban areas (Zone Education Annual Report, 2013:12).

Having fewer students in a class is attractive to both parents and teachers and would result in a big improvement in public schools. Teachers feel that smaller class sizes encourage increased student teacher interaction, allow for more systematic evaluation of students, and promote greater teaching flexibility. Nonetheless, in the public secondary schools of Iluababor zone, currently the student teacher ratio is 1:57. Concerning efficiency, that is dropout rate, the male dropout rate is 15.02% and the female one is 10.39% which makes a total of 12.71%. Concomitantly the repeating rate is 15.6% for male students and 15.6% for female students with a total of 15.6% in public secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone (Zone Education Annual Report, 2014:13).

In relation to access, equity, dropout rate and repeating rates of learners the effect of per pupil expenditure on academic outcomes depends on how the money is spent, not how much money is spent. Therefore, school improvement reform in each secondary school should incorporate an assessment of the current relation between inputs and outcomes in order to determine how to best allocate resources in specific contexts of each secondary school. Thus, currently the public expenditure per student is 50.00 Ethiopian birr (ESDP IV 2010:35). Furthermore, educational facilities which refer to non-human and non-financial resources which include movable and immovable materials, which are used for teaching and learning and other school activities, play a pivotal role in the effectiveness and efficiency in school improvement programme implementation (Garland, 2013:6). As a result, the availability of the facilities in adequate quality and quantity is capable of enhancing the school improvement process. For that reason, educational facilities have to be properly managed in order to be able to contribute positively to school improvement programme implementation (Garland, 2013:14).

Garland further (2013:17) stipulates that for effective school improvement process to occur, within the school academic environment there must be provision of required learning aids such as attractive school physical environment, well painted classrooms, adequate chairs, laboratory, library, pedagogical centres, electric power, internet access, water sources, toilets and moderate distance from an industrial area to prevent unwanted noise. Thus, the government should set aside substantial amounts of recurrent and capital budget for the provision of educational facilities.

Additionally, district education office staff should actively participate in school improvement efforts in their districts in order to generate both practical and cultural improvement (MOE, 2010:54). That is, if district level staffs understand school level goals across the district, they can pinpoint areas where applying resources across the district helps and regular participation can develop a relationship. Besides, district can support schools to achieve their goals and meet national education requirements (Garland, 2013:20). By and large, continuous school improvement in secondary school education is indispensable in creating a bright future for better student outcomes. As such, the school improvement reform is needed in the areas of rehabilitation of physical facilities, management and leadership, good governance and

accountability system. This study therefore explores factors that hamper service delivery in secondary school education. The next section will examine challenges and opportunities in implementing school improvement programmes in secondary schools.

3. 2.4 Challenges of and Opportunities for Implementing School Improvement Programmes in Secondary Schools

Based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) goals, the Ethiopian government has prepared a growth and transformation of the education sector development plan through which the quality education improvement programme is enhanced. This plan is in line with the variables under discussion in this study, such as school leadership and management, teaching learning process, ways of improving attractive learning environment, parents and community involvement in the school improvement programme.

3. 2.4.1 Challenges of Implementing the School Improvement Programme in the Secondary School System

The increased competition between schools at global and national levels creates the need for continuous school improvement to help schools to compete. As stated by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2008:5-6), improving education quality could enable schools to become effective, focused for sustained school improvement in every aspect of schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:12-13) states that the needs of the government and society can be met more adequately if schools diversify, adopt new ways of implementing school improvement and deepen education reform to improve the quality of education. Thus, secondary schools require changes to the existing situation of the school improvement programme which encompasses school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, creating attractive learning environments and enhanced community involvement.

Secondary education in Ethiopia is considered an important subsector in the education system as well as for the development of the country's economy and social development. Inputs into higher education and the labour force in Ethiopia depend on qualified outputs from secondary schools (MOE, 2008:8). The importance of secondary school education as a subsector in Ethiopia is raising demand for secondary school education and for secondary schools to accommodate the children completing primary education. As the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:45) explains,

improving the quality of secondary schools through school improvement programmes is considered important for educating the needed work force for different sectors in the country. As a result, secondary education has recently been raised in the consciousness of the Ethiopian people and the demand to access this education has grown. The growth in demand has created the need to improve and build more schools and classrooms in order to expand access opportunities in the country.

Nevertheless, there are many challenges that exist in the effort to provide quality education and in implementing school improvement programmes in secondary schools. These challenges include leadership and management capacities at institutional level which still remain very weak; insufficient and well qualified teachers and continuous professional development have not been given attention by school leaders and teachers (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:21).

Derbessa (2006:1) states that empirical evidence suggests that educational investment has been one of the most important factors that contribute to socio-economic growth in both developed and developing countries. Mitchell (2013:10) argued that Ethiopia has recently experienced massive improvement in access to education. Primary school enrolment has increased five-fold since 1994, and there are now more than 20 million children in school compared to five million in 2000. Secondary school enrolment has also shown a modest improvement, with a 3.2% increase in the net enrolment rate between 2006 and 2015 years. According to Mitchell (2013:13) there was an achievement in terms of increasing enrolment, but education quality still remains a daunting challenge. Pigozz (2008) cited in Derbessa (2006:3) explains that poor quality of education frustrates efforts to use education as an effective device for economic growth and development in this age of accelerating globalisation. Within this understanding, it is clear that school improvement as a tool to augment quality education is a prominent agenda across the world, and countries are looking for various school improvement initiatives.

Concerning infrastructure, some schools were constructed using nondurable materials and in the absence of support of school construction through government funds and this has obliged poor communities to invest in facilities. Despite significant investment in quality inputs like teachers, books, buildings and related infrastructures, the national assessment shows deteriorating trends

in student achievement (ESDP IV, 2010:23). The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP IV, 2009:22; Nega, 2012:11) emphasises that in secondary schools the enrolment rate remains very low, data on community participation is not properly reported, communities are overburdened and/or stressed by contributions; there is the risk of community fatigue and participation and policies about community contributions are not clearly articulated and community members are not well informed about them. The capacities of secondary schools to implement school improvement at school and district level were very low and the school improvement programme monitoring and evaluation system was not well established. The next section discusses opportunities for school improvement programmes in secondary schools.

3.2.4.2 Opportunities for Implementing the School Improvement Programme in the Secondary School System

There are a lot of factors to consider when assessing opportunities for school improvement programme implementation mainly for the public secondary school education system in Ethiopia. Such a focus is essential for making gradual, but cumulative, large or small investments and an opportunity for secondary school staff, students and others to develop relationships with key actors without whose cooperation nothing can be accomplished. At national, regional, district and school level, the Ethiopian government is currently engaged in developing and implementing the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) and the Education Sector Development (ESDP IV) which is designed to address key coverage of quality education and student achievement issues (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:21).

In order for the school improvement programme of the secondary education system to be successful, there should be focus on a small number of predetermined goals: connection capacity building to results; sharing of experiences among those involved in the improvement process; develop the improvement strategy; pursue education reform through partnerships among the school and the state; set high standards and measure if the targets are achieved; work toward deep pedagogic change; have knowledgeable and skilled teachers; and encourage a strong political and cultural commitment to education among participating schools in the reform programme (OCED, 2010:45, MOE, 2010:14).

The government of Ethiopia has attached great importance to the expansion of secondary education (grades 9-10), where the adoption of scientific concepts of development has created favourable conditions for preparatory and vocational education (ESDP IV, 2009:23; Nega, 2012:14). Currently, there is great demand for skilled human resources in the labour market. The curriculum matter also relates more to real life contexts when compared with the old education system. It is more of practical hands-on experience and inquiry learning that leaves room for the local contexts of the schools which offer more choices for the students. Secondary school education enrolment is increasing and the schools have also relatively favourable educational resources.

According to the Ministry of Education (ESDP IV, 2010:34-35), there are opportunities like the political environment, that is, the presence of a decentralized education management system, favourable government policies and strategies, government special attention towards capacity building in education, and political stability in the country. In the economic and social sectors there are also opportunities like the national economic growth strategy, free market policy, expansion of infrastructure and investment policy and presence of favourable condition to generate income in schools and the existence of a strategy to build a positive attitude of communities toward schools activities, access to schools and the community participation framework respectively. With respect to technologies, government is paying special attention towards technology transfer and expansion of information communication technologies in secondary schools (Workneh and Tassew, 2013:21; Nega, 2012:14).

Derbessa (2006:3) enlightens that the poor quality of education frustrates efforts to use education as an effective device for economic growth and development in this age of accelerating globalisation. Within this understanding, we can learn that school improvement is necessary to augment quality education as a prominent agenda across the world, and countries are looking for various school improvement initiatives. The National Education and Training Policy (NETP), supported by articles in the Ethiopian constitution, also seek to decentralise educational authority to the regional states and called for new paradigms of education based on relevant, active, and a student-centred teaching and learning process (Chalchisa, 2012:2). The following section

summarises the literature review related to school improvement and the Ethiopian education system within the perspective of school improvement programme implementation.

3.3. Summary

This review of related literature discusses in detail the major components of school improvements and the implementation process. School management in the chapter is described as the organisation and coordination of school activities to achieve the stated objectives of the school improvement programme. School leadership is also discussed as the ability to influence school communities for the attainment of school improvement programme vision, objectives and strategies.

In the teaching and learning process, curriculum, continuous teacher professional development, active learning strategies and continuous assessments for learning were discussed in detail as the first priorities to promote learning and key means for initiating school improvement. Besides, when there is an attractive school learning environment, students are more likely to achieve high results because they feel physically and emotionally safe and supported.

In addition, parents and local communities' involvement played an important role in terms of school governance bodies by contributing to school development planning and implementation in school improvement programme activities. A school improvement plan that promotes school policies to encourage learning in an atmosphere of connectedness and caring when an eye-catching learning environment has been secured was discussed and commended.

In the chapter, it was revealed that modern education in Ethiopia has a history of 100 years where the historical objective of the education system was to create small educated elite and where the majority of Ethiopian people were not beneficiaries. Access to education therefore was very low, and inequity in the provision of primary and secondary education was highly visible. The education system was also characterised by low quality and efficiency (MOE, 2011:1-2).

Change in the educational system of Ethiopia depended on national and global requirements and school improvement initiatives to secure education quality. In a major initiative to address problems related to access, equity, and quality of educational provision, the Transitional

Government of Ethiopia (TGE) introduced the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1994 (Chalchisa, 2012:1). The Education and Training Policy (ETP), supported by articles in the Ethiopian constitution, sought to decentralise educational authority to the regional states and called for new paradigms of education based on relevant, active, and student centred teaching and learning (Chalchisa, 2012:2). Besides, national challenges and opportunities in school improvement programme implementation in secondary school education system were also highlighted. Finally, from the strategic planning of 2010 and the annual reports concerning school improvement programme in Public Secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone, a detailed discussion was made in the chapter. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Design

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the Iluababor Administrative zone system of education, research cites, research paradigm, research methods, the research design, the population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments and procedures, and data analysis methods and then follows ethical considerations, validity, reliability and summary.

4.2 Short Description of the Research Site of Iluababor Administrative Education Zone

Iluababor is a province in the south-western part of Ethiopia in the regional state of Oromiya. It covers the western part of the region and lies between $34^{\circ} 52' 12''$ E to $41^{\circ} 34' 55''$ E longitudes and $7^{\circ} 27' 40''$ N to $9^{\circ} 02' 10''$ N latitude (Iluababor Finance and Economic Development, 2014:1). The zone is surrounded by two regional states and three zones of Oromia National Regional State. An estimated area of Iluababor based on the current border delimitation is $16,884.4 \text{ km}^2$, which is 4.8% of Oromia region. The administrative of Iluababor zone of Iluababor is divided into 22 rural and two (2) urban districts with 518 administrative sub divisions, 493 rural localities and 30 urban localities respectively. These administrative sub divisions consist of two (2) major towns with 20 district capital towns and 10 small towns or localities and 493 peasant associations at small local levels. The population of the zone is about 1,425,657 with a sex ratio of 1:1 (Iluababor Finance and Economic Development, 2014:1-5).

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education is the highest governing and regulatory body of all education systems. Besides this, there are regional educational bureaus, zone education offices, district education offices and municipal education offices which are responsible for administering primary schools, secondary schools and technical vocational education and training schools. The education system of the country as currently structured consists of the first primary cycle (1-4); the second primary cycle (5-8); lower secondary schools (9-10); the preparatory school cycle (11-12); technical and vocational education and training (10+1, 10+2, 10+3); and higher education institutions that provide undergraduate and post-graduate studies (TGE, 1994:2-6).

As the administrative zone, the community expects schools to prepare people for employment in a rapidly changing environment. The education office in the zone therefore is concerned with human resource development through education. According to the Zone Education Office (2012: 2-4) access to education and its level of progress is one of the important indicators to measure the general level of development of a society. Thus, teachers and school leaders and other stakeholders are striving to deliver higher educational standards through the school improvement programme to enhance students' achievement. The education policy also emphasises the provision of basic primary education to all citizens freely and equitably.

Improving the quality of schooling is vital for ensuring the Iluababor Administrative Education Office succeeds in the education sector. This is the reason why the Ethiopian government and the Iluababor Zone Education Office in particular invest heavily in the education of its citizens. It is for this reason that the significance of secondary education for the development of Ethiopia is clearly spelt out in the large body of Education Sector Development Program literature (MOE, 2008:5; MOE, ESDP, IV, 2010:6-8; Iluababor Zone Education Office, 2012:1-6). All efforts are geared to ensure that education at all levels is relevant and responsible to the socio-economic and cultural development needs of the people.

The education of the administrative zone coverage/enrolment/rate of students in grades 9-10 was 25195 in the year 2013 (Ilababor Finance and Economic Development 2013:42). At national level for grades 9 and 10 from 2008-2014, the target set was to upgrade the gross enrolment ratio from 39.7% to 62% in 2014. But performance remained at 39.7% in 2014 without any change. At zone administrative level, the gross enrolments ratio was 36.5% while the net enrolment ratio was 17.3%, for grades 9-10. These indicators when compared to the targets set for the school improvement programme with respect to gross enrolment was 56.5% while for net enrolments the target set was 45.1%. This shows that in both cases the targets were not met. According to the recent statistical data, the number of teachers from grades 9-10 with a diploma is 85 male 74 and female 11 while teachers with BA/BSC are 832 (male 812, female 120) (Zone Education Office, 2014:23). Figure 5 below presents the research site.



Source: Iluababor Administrative zone Finance and Economic Development Office (IFED, 2013:2-3)

4.3 Research Paradigm

The research in this study was conducted within the framework of a scientific and systematic process to investigate the challenges of and the opportunities for school improvement programme implementation through data collection and data analysis to gain complete understanding of a situation in grades 9-10 secondary schools. Its main purpose was to identify and to locate the knowledge gap in the school improvement programme implementation. In this study, the mixed methods research paradigm was selected to assist in closing the gap/in bridging the knowledge gap in the school improvement programme implementation in the secondary

schools of Iluababor administrative zone. The reason for doing this study was for improvement of leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the learning environment, and parents and community participation in grades 9-10 secondary schools.

The word 'paradigm' denotes the researcher's world view (ways of thinking about and seeing the world), conceptual framework or theoretical framework orientation that informs the choice of the research problem investigated, the framing of the research objectives, research designs, instrument for collecting data, data analysis and reporting of the research findings (Chalisa and Julia, 2005:4, 21; Strains and Singleton, 2010:67). Chalisa & Kawulich (2012:55) further explained that the research paradigm helps to determine our methodology and design or processes which encompass the researcher's world view.

The research methods paradigm guides how we make decisions and carry out research. Thus, every researcher has his/her own view of what constitutes truth and knowledge. These truths and knowledge frame how we view the world around us which is what social scientists call a paradigm (Schwand, 2001:4). A paradigm is informed by philosophical assumptions about three things: the nature of reality (ontology); ways of knowing (epistemology); and ethics and values systems (axiology) (Patton, 2002:6).

In the research paradigm there are four types of paradigms as follows: positivism/post positivist is the term coined by Auguste Comte to reflect a strict empirical approach using numbers. The constructivist/interpretive paradigm aim to understand and describe human nature. On the other hand, the transformative/emancipator paradigm aims to destroy myths and empower people to change society radically. Finally, the post-colonial/indigenous research paradigm is to challenge deficit thinking and pathological descriptions of the former colonised and reconstruct a body of knowledge that carries hope and promotes transformation and social change among the historically oppressed (Chalisa & Kawulich, 2012:56). Mainly positivist researchers prefer precise quantitative data and often use experiments, surveys and statistics that adopt instrumental orientation. The interpretive research approach often uses participant observation and field research that requires researchers to spend many hours in direct personal contact with those

being studied that adopts a practical orientation (Neuman, 2000: 64 -71; Chalisa & Kawulich, 2012:56).

The practical activities of the researcher are guided by a research theory as a set of unified concepts. Research can contribute to the development of theory or help to test existing theories. Philosophers have identified two modes of inquiry, namely, deductive and inductive reasoning (Murnanne and Willett, 2011:17; Lodico, 2006:5). Inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach to knowledge where the researcher depends on particular observations to develop an abstraction or to make generalisations. Inductive reasoning mostly helps the researcher to collect data from systematically observed phenomena under investigation; the researcher looks for central themes pertaining to observation and develops a generalisation from the analysis of those central themes (Lodico, 2006:6).

In contrast, deductive reasoning involves the development of specific hypotheses from general theoretical principles in a top down approach to knowing (Murnanne and Willett, 2011:17; Lodico, 2006:5). As the authors above explain, this shows that in inductive reasoning the researcher begins by observing an unexpected pattern and tries to explain what has been observed to make generalisations based on these particular observations. At the same time, deductive reasoning begins with a hypothesis, a tentative explanation formulated to be tested by collecting data. Deductive theory is used in quantitative research and inductive theory is used in qualitative research (Shulman, 1988:7; Creswell, 2007:66; Creswell, 2012:5).

Quantitative research emanates from the objectivist position which holds that reality exists independent of the researcher; that is, the truth is 'out there', while qualitative research is more closely linked to the constructivist paradigm, which sees truth and meanings as constructed and interpreted by individuals. In quantitative research perspectives, however, the researchers aim to keep themselves at a distance from those they are researching. Then, the qualitative research perspective usually involves direct contact between the researcher and those they are reaching, sometimes for a long period of time (Murnanne and Willett, 2011:18; Lodico, 2006:7).

The research focus for the quantitative approach is that it concentrates on the gathering of facts in order that truth claims can be established, whilst qualitative research contends that truth and

meaning do not exist in some external world, but are constructed through peoples' interactions with the world (Creswell, 2007:67). The scope of the findings for quantitative methods are regarded as dealing with abstract concepts which attempt to establish law – like findings that hold irrespective of time. The qualitative research scopes of findings are ideographic, which locates its findings in specific time periods and localities and is much more concerned with depth and intensity of findings rather than breadth. Thus, theory development may be a main outcome of the analysis of qualitative research (Kezar & Dee, 2011:269; Murnane & Willett, 2011:18).

The nature of data with respect to quantitative studies is in the form of numbers, often depicted positively as reliable and rigorous, probably because of their association with science; whereas, qualitative research generates what is claimed to be rich or deep data, usually in the form of text but sometimes in photographs, maps or other visual media (Murnanne and Willett, 2011:17; Lodico, 2006:6). In brief, the quantitative research method uses objective measurements and statistical analysis of numeric data to understand and explain phenomena while qualitative research focuses on understanding and phenomena from the perspective of the human participants in the study (Cohen and Morrison, 2008:391).

Mixed method designs have been advocated by a number of researchers including those writing about and discussing paradigms (Creswell & Clark, 2007:4). Onwuegbuzie (2004:2) defines the term 'mixed methods research' as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative with qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts, or language into a single study. On the other hand, Cresswell and Clark (2007:5) defined mixed research as:

It is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Therefore, the researcher made use of mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative) approach where the study was guided by pragmatist paradigm. In this case, pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates “the use of mixed method in research, sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality” (Feilzer 2010:8), and “focuses instead on ‘what works’ as a truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Tashakkori & Taddlie 2003:713). Lodico, (2006:9) showed that pragmatist does not see the world as an absolute. It is a philosophical paradigm that has been developed by Americans and is concerned with identifying what works practically. As Creswell (2007:22) explains researchers holding this worldview mostly focus on the outcomes of their research, that is, they depended on the knowledge that arises from examining problems and determining what works in a particular situation. Furthermore, pragmatists argue that if a theory accomplishes a specific goal or reduces our doubt about the outcome of a given action, it is considered a good theory (Lodico, 2006:10). As Biesta and Burbules (2003:107) also explained that pragmatism provides an understanding of knowledge of human actions, interactions and communication in practical ways consequently they those educational problems can be studied by using different methods that describe or solve problems appropriately. Thus, with regards to pragmatist paradigm the above concepts make clear that pragmatist paradigm enable the researcher to obtain a clear picture of relationships between knowledge and actions that provide the possibility of refining the problem.

Therefore, the researcher made use of pragmatic paradigm because it allows the researcher to think differently about the theory of school improvement and its practices. This research is intended to assess challenge faced and opportunities ahead about school improvement programme implementations of public secondary schools in Iluababor administrative zone. In order to assess the prevailing practices of school improvement programme in secondary schools (9 -10) the pragmatist paradigm was considered to be the best choice for the study.

Besides, the study was designed to address the research questions and a theoretical perspective at different levels, resulting in variation in data collection that leads to greater validity. Accordingly, the researcher closed the inductive and deductive approaches of the mixed methods pragmatic research paradigm approach that stress the priority of actions, experiences and the achieved results. Consequently, due to the nature of my research questions which assess the

challenges and opportunities of school improvement the researcher selected pragmatic paradigm because the study emphasizes the practical application of school improvement in secondary schools so as to assess the challenges faced and opportunities ahead. The following section outlines in detail the research methods that were used in the study.

4.4 Research Methods

In the mixed method approach, the quantitative approach asks specific, narrow questions, and collects quantitative data from a large number of participants; analyses these results using statistics; and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased and objective manner. It attempts to quantify variables of interest where questions must be measurable (Creswell, 2012:3; Gibbs, 2007:3, and Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009:251). It involves collecting numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. The data collection methodologies are performance tests, personality measures, questionnaires, and content analysis. It is a post-positivism approach with a singular reality, objective and deductive in nature (Creswell, 2012:4; Sparatt, 2004:6).

Quite the opposite, the qualitative approach in mixed research methods is a type of research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words or text from participants; describes and analyses these words and theme; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2003:20; Creswell, 2012:3).

Thus, the mixed research method design is used when both quantitative and qualitative data together provide a better understanding of our research problem than either type by itself. It is also used when one type of research (quantitative or qualitative) is not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012:7-9). Gibbs (2007:3) further explains that the mixed research method design is a pragmatic paradigm with practicality; multiple view points; biased and unbiased; subjective and objective in nature. It is also used to incorporate a qualitative component into an otherwise quantitative study. Then again, it is to build from one phase of study to another to explore qualitatively then develop an instrument; and to follow-up a quantitative study qualitatively to obtain more detailed information (Creswell, 2012:10-12).

Mixed research methods is used in this study to take advantages of using quantitative and qualitative data collection approach to assess challenges faced and opportunities ahead for the basic research questions raised with regard to school improvement programme implementation in the secondary schools. The study, therefore, utilised the mixed method research approach because the quantitative data was not enough to address the basic research questions raised in the study. In the study, quantitative data collection of questionnaires carried more weight than qualitative data collection instruments like interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis. Accordingly, quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation. While qualitative data in a second phase as a follows to answer new questions emerged from the quantitative results that required the researcher to use exploratory design to fill the information gap in the study. In this study the data collection process can be carried out by the following steps shown in figure 7 below.

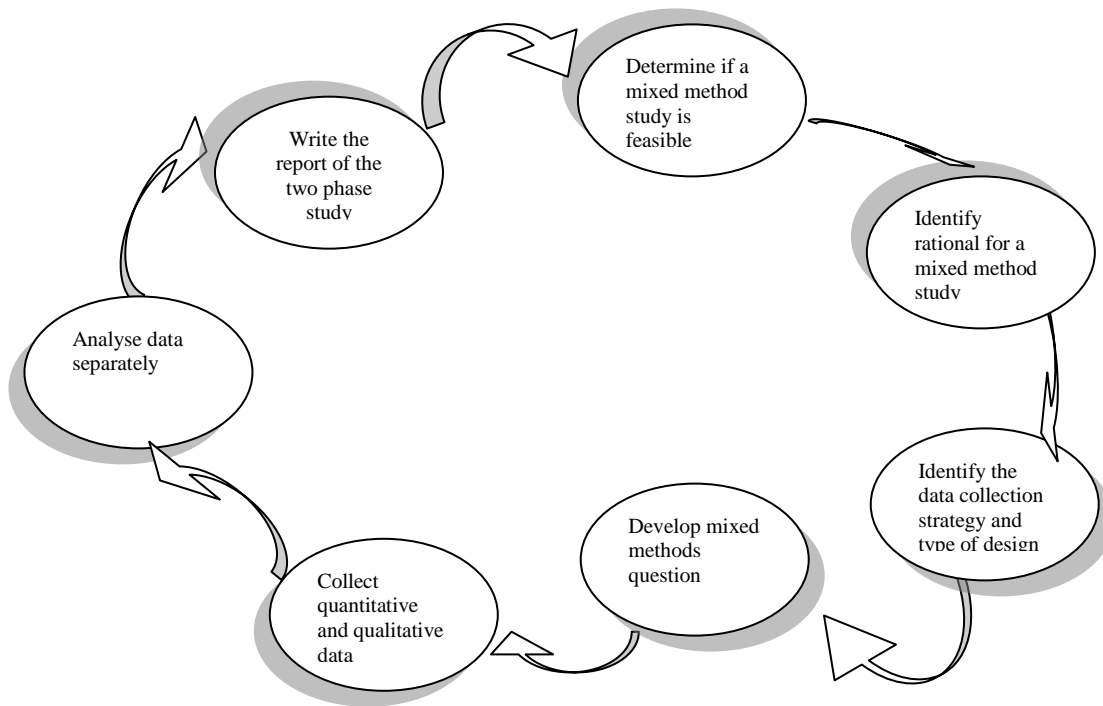


Figure 6: Steps to be followed for conducting the research study adapted from Creswell (2012:15)

The findings of the study together with the broad information acquired from the quantitative and qualitative data was used to inform educators at national level, teachers, school principals,

secondary school supervisors, zone education experts, district education office experts, parents and local community on how to maximise the school improvement programme implementation in the secondary (grades 9-10) education sector. The next section presents the research design of the study.

4.4.1 Research Design

A research design is an integrated system and justification for technical decisions in planning a research project created with the purpose of carrying out systematic and rigorous enquiry to address a particular problem arising from a gap in knowledge (Cresswell & Blaikie, 2003:15). In this study, a mixed research method was chosen to conduct the study because the nature of the study dictated the use of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The mixed methods research paradigm is an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research. It is accepted as the third research paradigm and offers a powerful choice that often provides the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results (Johnson, 2007:112). Johnson (2007:113) state that this research paradigm can be adopted in a study at different phases in optimising the strengths of each approach and counteracting their limitations. In the quantitative research approach, researchers generalise from a sample to a population and in the qualitative research approach the researchers gain a richer, contextual understanding of the phenomenon being researched.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:85) there are six categories of mixed method research designs: sequential explanatory design, sequential exploratory design, sequential transformative design, concurrent triangulation design, concurrent nested design and concurrent transformative design. These categories are explained as follows:

Sequential explanatory design – it deals with collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection of and analysis of qualitative data. Priority is usually given to quantitative data. Integration of quantitative and qualitative data usually occurs in the interpretation phase of the study. The purpose is usually to use qualitative results to help explain the quantitative data results.

Sequential exploratory design – can be conducted in two phases where priority is given to the first phase of qualitative data collection. The second phase involves quantitative data collection where the overall priority is given to qualitative data collection. In this design the findings are integrated in the interpretation phase. Its most basic purpose is to use quantitative data to help interpret the results of the qualitative data results.

Sequential transformative design - it has two distinct data collection phases. A theoretical perspective is used to guide the study. Its purpose is to use methods that will best fit to serve the theoretical perspectives of the researcher.

Concurrent triangulation design - this is probably the most familiar mixed method design. The quantitative and qualitative data collections are concurrent, and happen during one data collection phase. Here priority is given to either quantitative or qualitative methods, but ideally the priority between the two methods would be equal. The two methods are integrated in the interpretation phase. The integration focuses on how the results from both methods are similar or different with the primary purpose to support each other.

Concurrent transformative design – it is guided by a specific theoretical perspective. The quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase. The integration of data could occur in the interpretation phase. Again, the purpose is to use methods that will best serve the theoretical perspective of the researcher.

Concurrent embedded/nested design – this design gathers both qualitative and quantitative data during the same phase. Two methods are integrated in the interpretation phase side by side. The qualitative data is used to help explain or better understand the quantitative data. In this case continuous collection of both sorts of data may focus on similar themes or on different themes.

Out of the above mixed method research designs the explanatory sequential design was selected to get qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of the quantitative study. This design is explained in detail below.

4.4.2. The Explanatory Sequential Design

Table 2: Sequential explanatory design approaches in the school improvement programme implementation

Timing	Priority/weight/	Mixing	Theorizing
Sequential explanatory quantitative	Quantitative (high priority)	Embedding	Implicit
Sequential qualitative exploratory	Qualitative (less priority)	Connecting	Explicit

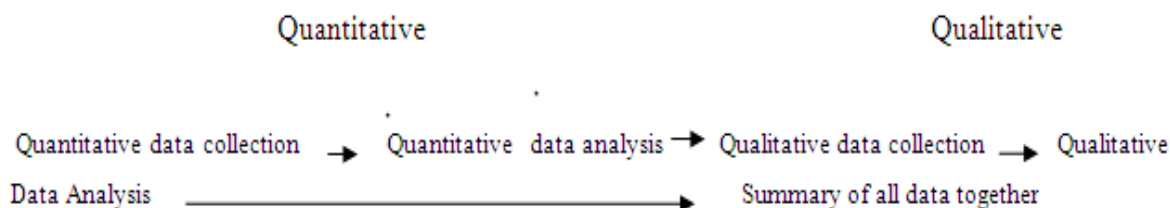
Source: Adapted from Creswell (2007:207)

The explanatory sequential design involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the analysis of qualitative data. The priority is given to the quantitative data, and the findings are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study (Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:86). The main aim of explanatory research is to identify any causal links between the factors or variables that pertain to the research problem. One of the fundamental purposes of research design in explanatory research is to avoid invalid inferences (Creswell, 2007:208). It connects the phases to shape the qualitative research questions, sampling, and data collection (Creswell, 2009:209). It helps to use qualitative data to help explain quantitative results that need further exploration and to use quantitative results to purposefully select best participants for qualitative study. Based on the concepts of the explanatory sequential design during the research study, the researcher started collecting and analysing quantitative data and collects and analyses qualitative data in a second phase as a follow up to the quantitative results. The researcher chose this design because the research problems were more quantitative in nature. Additionally, during the study, after the collection of quantitative data, a lot of new questions emerged from the quantitative results that required the researcher to use exploratory design to fill the information gap in the study. The researcher used the qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of quantitative study through interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis in the study.

The study used the explanatory research design because it helps the researcher to use it straight forward to implement for the reason that the final output of the study can be summarised and concluded in quantitative and qualitative phases separately. Its philosophical assumptions begin

with the post positivism for the quantitative phase and shift to constructivism for the qualitative phase. As the school improvement programme implementation is a policy study, the researcher followed a sequential explanatory and exploratory mixed methods strategy respectively. Therefore, in this study priority was given to quantitative data followed by qualitative data collection and analysis where the purpose was to use qualitative results to help explain the quantitative data results. Then, the figure below shows the nature of the explanatory and exploratory design approaches:

Figure 7 - Sequential explanatory design with high priority quantitative data analysis and sequential exploratory design with less priority qualitative data analysis approach



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009:209) and Collins (2006:88)

In this study, the sequential explanatory design helped the researcher to gain reliable data independently from quantitative and qualitative research respectively. So, the researcher has chosen this design because it provided quantitative data which was collected from zone education supervisors, school principals (principals & vice principals), secondary schools supervisors and teachers. The supplementary qualitative data was collected from school principals (principals & vice principals), secondary school supervisors, zone education office experts, districts education office experts, parent teacher association members (PTAs) and student council members. The next section presents the population and the sample population.

4.5 Population and Sample Population

Population refers to the large group of people to which a researcher wants to generalise the sample results; and the complete set of cases (Johanson, & Christensen, 2012:257). Before data collection takes place, it is imperative to be clear on what the study population is. The population for this study comprised zone education supervisors, districts education experts, teachers, school principals, vice school principals, supervisors, parent teachers' association members and student council members. Because of the large size of the study population, a sampling method was used, the cluster sampling technique. Out of a total of 24 secondary schools (grades 9-10) in the administrative zone in 24 district education offices, 12 secondary schools were selected by random sampling/lottery methods from the clustered geographical location.

To fill the questionnaire a 540 population were considered to get a sampled population of 287 (male 220, female 67) which was selected by random sampling/lottery method and the sampling size in percent was 53.14%. Interviews were also used to collect data. Four zone education supervisors, 12 principals and vice principals, 12 districts education experts, and six secondary supervisors were selected by the purposive sampling technique and interviewed. For the focus group discussions 21 parent teacher association (PTA) members and 21 members of student councils were also selected by the purposeful sampling technique. Therefore, in the study the total participants were 363 and these participated in filling in questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from available documents and these included zones education office annual reports.

4.5.1 The Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Custer sampling is a form of sampling in which clusters rather than single units of elements are randomly selected (Johanson & Christensen, 2012:228). In this study, the type of sampling used was cluster sampling with two stages of sampling. Johanson & Christensen (2012:229) state that in two stage cluster sampling, a set of clusters is randomly selected, and then a random sample of elements is drawn from each of the clusters selected in stage one. Thus, in the study the population was divided into clusters of homogeneous units based on geographical location. In the study sampling units were groups rather than individuals. Samples of such clusters were then selected. All units from the selected clusters were studied. This approach was selected because it

cuts down on the cost of preparing a sampling frame. This can reduce travel and other administrative costs.

Mixed method of research methods quantitative and qualitative are conducted by using sample selected through the use simple random sampling for quantitative and purposeful for quantitative sampling techniques (LOdico, Spaulding & Voegtle 2006:266).

The total number of secondary school teachers in Illuababor during 2013/14 academic year in the administrative zone in 24 (9-10) secondary schools was 917 teachers. In the study, during the first stage, 24 secondary schools were clustered into six clusters based on their geographical location in the administrative zone. Then 12 public secondary schools were randomly selected by the cluster sampling method according to their geographical location. The zone education supervisors, district education office experts, principals, vice principals, and secondary school supervisors were also selected for questionnaire purposes. In this case, the number of school principals from the schools were 12 principals, 12 vice principals, 12 supervisors, four zone education officers and 251 teachers were selected to participate in the study making a total of 287 (53.00%) out of 540 participants. These were selected by the simple random sampling technique, especially by the lottery method to fill survey questionnaires from secondary schools (grades 9-10) clustered in six geographical locations as shown in the table.

Table 3: Sample population of the study

Number of high schools (9-10) clustered in 6 geographical location		Randomly selected high schools from the clusters by simple random sampling technique	Total number of teachers in randomly selected schools	Sample respondents selected	Sampling by %	Sampling technique used
Cluster one	Bure, Sibbo, Uka, Birbirsa, Didu	Sibbo	24	12	50	Lottery method
		Uka	34	17	50	Lottery method
Cluster two	Bacho, Mettu, Gore	Mettu	38	19	50	Lottery method
		Goree	49	24	49.98	Lottery method
Cluster three	Nopha Darimu Alge ,	Darimu	58	28	48.28	Lottery method
		Nopha	24	12	50	Lottery method
Cluster four	Hurumu, Yayo, Dorani	Hurumu	42	21	50	Lottery method
		Yayo	43	21	48.84	Lottery method
Cluster five	Dega Dabo- Temo Mako Cewaka, Cora	Cora	54	26	48.15	Lottery method
		Dega	38	19	50	Lottery method
Cluster six	Gachi, Borecha, Danbi Bedele	Gachi	42	21	50	Lottery method
		Bedele	54	27	50	Lottery method
From each cluster	From 12 secondary schools	Principals	24	12	50	Cluster sampling method
From each cluster	From 12 secondary schools	Vice principals	24	12	50	Cluster sampling method
Out of the clusters	Zone education Department	Supervisors	4	4	100	Purposive sampling
From each cluster	District education department	supervisors	24	12	50	Purposive sampling
Total	Total number of teachers = 917 (Male =886; F = 131)		540	287	53.14%	

Again, I made use of purposeful sampling techniques to select the participants of the study for interviews and focus group discussions. In this case convenience sampling is used in which the study units (principals, experts, supervisors, parent teachers' associations and students' council members) that happen to be available at the time of qualitative data collection are selected in the sample. I collected data from 12 principals (principals and vice principals), 12 distinct education experts, six secondary school supervisors and four zone education office supervisors and that were selected by purposeful sampling technique for interview from 6 clusters of secondary schools geographical locations. Again 21 parent teacher association members (PTAs) and 21 student council members were selected by purposeful sampling technique from 3 clusters of geographical locations of the secondary schools for focus group discussions. Therefore, the total number of respondents was 363.

4.6 Data Collection Techniques

This part explains the diverse instruments that were used to collect data in this study. The selection of data collection techniques was based on the scope of the study and to attain a complete picture of the problem under study. This research used questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and documents from zone education offices as data collection tools. Then raw data is used as an input for processing that was collected from questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussion as a primary data and secondary data was collected from documents for data analysis and interpretation.

4.6.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument filled by research participants as part of the research study. It helps to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions and behavioural intentions of research participants (Cohen & Morrison, 2007:370-371). According to Deliln & Brown (1993:15), a good rating scale should fulfil the following criteria: minimum response bias and high discriminating power ease of administration and simplicity of the scale for the respondent to answer. In this study, respondents were asked to rate the level of performance attributed to each of the school improvement programme components related to secondary school performance in terms of set targets using the 5 point Likert scale of agreement.

Cohen & Morrison (2007:375-378) proclaim that the Likert scale is very quick to grade, and allows the researcher to look at a wide sample of respondents; remove subjective factors from the assessment; measure objectively and get rid of bias and permits more reliable comparison of outcomes across all descriptive statements. By calculating the perceived results from the expected, the net satisfaction can be estimated from the total for each respondent. The questionnaires were adapted from nationally prepared framework of school improvement guide for all schools grades 1-12 by Ministry of Education in June 30, 2010, pp 6-18, as a source.

As stated above, questionnaires were used to collect data from zone education office supervisors, principals, vice principals, teachers and secondary school supervisors. The questionnaires were prepared in English. The questionnaire had the following parts: part 1 of the questionnaire dealt with demographic information of the respondents; part 2 contained six component parts to measure school improvement programme implementation and part 3 contained open ended questions.

The cut-off point used for the five point Likert scale was below 2.50 very low performances, between 2.50-3.00 average performances, between 3.00-3.50 good performance while 3.50-5.00 was considered as very good performance in the interpretation of the data analysis process.

4.6.1.1 Piloting the Questionnaire

Cohen (2005:260-263) state that piloting the questionnaire is significant because it: checks the clarity of the instruction and layout of the questionnaire; checks the validity of the questionnaire items; eliminates ambiguities or difficulties of wording; gains feedback on the attractiveness of appearance of the questionnaire; gains on the layout of sectioning, numbering, and itemisation of the questionnaire; checks whether the questionnaire is too long or too short or too easy, or too difficult, or too threatening, or too intrusive, or offensive and tries to help the coding/classification system easier for data analysis.

Shukala (2008:92) also advises that the questionnaire should not be used in the research field without adequate piloting. He further defines pilot testing as the process of testing data collection of instruments in a small sample of respondents to identify and eliminate potential problems. Piloting questionnaires provides testing of content, wording, order, form and the layout of the

questionnaire (Shukala, 2008:93). In other words, piloting the questionnaire helps the researcher to evaluate whether the research instrument is appropriate for the study.

The questionnaire in this study was pilot tested using subjects who were not part of the final sample. These respondents were high school teachers, supervisors, and principals so as to determine whether the school improvement programme performance rate measures used in the questionnaire were clear and formulated correctly. In order to determine the effectiveness of the questionnaire, the student researcher tested it on 50 participants (three principals, 44 teachers and three school supervisors) in Dapo, Borecha and Danbi secondary schools. From 107 items of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items, the results of the reliability statistics value was 0.954. Due to lack of responses from the participants eight items were discarded.

From the results of piloting the questionnaire, a good balance was achieved between the objectives of the study and the needs of the participants in terms of difficulty level and length of the questionnaire. After the necessary corrections were made, the final version was prepared and administered to the zone education supervisors, school principals (principals & vice principals), secondary school supervisors and teachers.

4.6.2 Interviews

Interviews are an interchange of ideas among two or more individuals on a topic of common interest that are based on certainty of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasise the social situation of research data (Creswell, 2007:118). Creswell adds that interviews are an important step in the process of data collection to find the right people and places, and to gain access to establish a rapport with subjects so that they can provide valuable information (Koul, 2009:260).

Johnson & Christensen (2008:203) concur that in an interview it is important that we establish rapport with the person we are interviewing and through interviews you will gather information we need in order to support our research and also it will serve as a base line. Within the limited time and resources, it will help to collect information by interviewing collectively individuals

who share a common factor, in groups in a comfortable environment at a convenient venue rather than from a series of individual interviews (Koul, 2009:262).

In the light of the data presented above, interviews in the study were used to collect primary data about the school improvement programme. They helped to extract deep information. 12 (6 principals, 6 vice-principals); six secondary school supervisors, 12 district education office experts, four zone education experts were selected from six clustered geographical locations of secondary schools and interviewed. The logic and power of the purposeful sampling technique lies in selecting information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Koul, 2009:263; Johnson & Christensen (2008:205). Interview enabled me to get in-depth information concerning the school improvement practices with regard to the outcomes of the school improvement on the school improvement in the selected schools. From the main types of interviews, I used semi - structured interviews. The interviews were made with zone education supervisors, district education experts, school principals, vice principals and secondary school supervisors. The interview questions asked were based on their experience and length of service in leading and managing school improvement programmes at their respective secondary schools. All the interviews were conducted in affan oromo/ Amharic language to avoid communication barriers which might occur using English language.

The interviews for the respondents were conducted separately in six clustered secondary schools, where each interview session was 1:30 to 2:00 hours long. Six secondary schools were randomly selected from six clustered areas namely Gachi, Hurumu, Gore, Nopa, Uka, Mattu secondary schools. Except from Gachi secondary school principals and supervisors the rest of the participants in the interviews were willing to be recorded. All appointments with interviewees were honoured and conducted in the office of school principal at each secondary school, as well as in the zone education office and districts education offices at times convenient for all participants and the researcher. The interview questions for the participants in the interview sessions were asked per question with similar content. Subsequently, qualitative data generated from interviews was transcribed, coded and interpreted thematically.

4.6.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group interviews are types of interviews that provide qualitative and descriptive data in the assessment of educational programmes (Rikard & Beacham, 1996:248). Focus group interviews have certain advantages such as the fact that they are appropriate and easily applicable for those people who cannot read and write and they build confidence in those who are unwilling and afraid to be interviewed alone (Owen, 2001:653). Owen further states that focus group interviews entail a high degree of interaction to motivate the participants to respect opposing views among the group members create a friendly environment in the group and promote a feeling of enjoyment among group members (Owen, 2001:654).

I used focus group discussions to triangulate the data I obtained through questionnaire and to make the questionnaire and interviews data rich for supplementary insights. Besides, I guided the respondents carefully in a way that enable me to get information concerning challenges of school improvement programme and its outcomes. This method helped me to bring together parents' teachers' associations and students' council members to get their experiences regarding the outcomes of the school improvement programme.

In study, focus group discussions were carried out with student council members and parent teacher associations (PTAs) from three clustered geographical areas of secondary schools which were selected by the purposive sampling technique. The numbers of the participants were 21 parent teacher association members (PTAs) and 21 student council members from six clustered geographical locations of secondary schools. The points of discussion were similar with other tools, in that they focused on the challenges of and opportunities for implementing the school improvement programme.

Both groups of focus group discussions interviews were conducted separately in three clustered secondary schools where each of the focus group discussion interviews took between 1 to 1½ hours. These three focus group discussions in secondary schools were randomly selected from six clustered areas, namely Gachi, Mattu and Sibbo secondary schools. The focus group discussions made with 42 (21 parent teachers association and 21 student councils members) were done by asking similar questions to both groups of participants separately. In addition, except from Gachi secondary school parents and student council members the rest of the participants in

the focus group discussion were willing to be recorded. Appointments with the participants were honoured and all the focus group interviews were conducted in a small meeting hall at each secondary school at the times convenient for both groups of participants and the researcher. As the moderator of the focus group discussion, I tried to control those who wanted to dominate the discussion. Then, qualitative data that was generated from focus group discussions was transcribed, coded and interpreted thematically.

4.6.4 Document Analysis

School improvement programme documents were obtained from the zone education office and were analysed to show the challenges of implementing the school improvement programme. The documents included school improvement policies, strategies and practices; with particular reference to recent updated in SIP (2010) and other documents from the 2006 – 2014 as well as school improvement programme guidelines prepared at the national level was used recognising the significant changes made in the system of secondary education sector development programme.

The initial document analysis was intended to obtain a base line understanding of the factors related to challenges, opportunities and driving changes in the school improvement programme implementation. The value of document analysis in this study was to provide an objective rationale for policy and strategy formulation activities beyond the biases of the participants. Document analysis therefore augmented data collected from questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. School strategic plans, reports, and students drop out rate and students examination results were analysed as they reflect issues related to the outcomes of school improvement programme on the secondary schools effectiveness. Then, secondary data collected from the Iluababor zone education office after analysing the documents were proved or disproved data obtained from questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions via triangulation.

4.6.5 Data Collection Procedures

Since the design of the study was explanatory, data was collected in three phases separately. The first phase dealt with the pilot study that was administered to test the appropriateness and validity and reliability of the questionnaire for the school improvement programme implementation. The

piloted questionnaire was meant to balance the difficulty level, length of the questionnaire and to modify the questionnaire where necessary. The second phase involved administering the questionnaire to 12 secondary schools principals (principals & vice principals), secondary school supervisors, teachers and zone education office supervisors. The questionnaire was administered face to face to respondents at the beginning of March 2015 by the researcher and one research assistant. Following this, the collected data was analysed using SPSS Software version 21 and then a descriptive statistical analysis including frequencies, mean, standard deviation and General Linear Model with repeated measures was used to test the interaction within domains, elements of domains of SIP and between geographical location of schools to describe their statistical significance and insignificance concerning the nature of the collected data under study. In the third phase qualitative data generated from interviews sessions and focus group discussions was collected, transcribed, coded and interpreted thematically. The advantage of the qualitative data results is that they helped to extract deep information. Furthermore, the study used the qualitative results to help explain the quantitative data results. Qualitative data (interview and focus group discussion) was analysed using content analysis.

4.6.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data which was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. With regards to questionnaire data, it was presented in tables. The respondents were mainly grouped into the following categories, i.e. zone education office supervisors, teachers, principals, secondary school supervisors, district education office experts, student council members and parent teacher association members (PTAs). The purpose of these groupings was to make comparisons between responses from different groups of respondents on the status of the school improvement programme implementation. The data was organised, analysed and interpreted by grouping similar items in one table, and by scrutinising information collected from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, documents and related literature.

In this study, explanatory sequential design was employed. First quantitative data and the qualitative data were analysed and interpreted. The data which was collected through questionnaires was analysed using statistical software SPSS version 21 (statistical software packages for social sciences) in terms of descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentile,

mean values and standard deviation. The General Linear Model with repeated measures was used to test the interaction within domains, elements of domains of SIP and between geographical location of schools to describe their statistical significance and insignificance concerning the nature of collected data under study.

For the interviews and focus group sections, I coded the responses and identified according to the major categories of the study namely leadership and management, teaching and learning process, community participation, challenges faced and opportunities ahead. Then I presented the data under the major themes and sub – themes. I have organised the data from interviews and focus group discussion sessions, first data was coded, categorised in the form of diaries and was analysed qualitatively, and themes were developed to present this data.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

In any research study, validity and reliability are aspects of research that need to be addressed to ensure that the collected data is trustworthy and reliable. The following sections discuss issues of validity and reliability of the current study.

4.7.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a concept, conclusion, or measurement is well founded and corresponds accurately with the real world. According to Bailey (2007:180), validity means checking the accuracy of the findings by employing different procedures, that is, the credibility and trustworthiness of the data would be checked to address validity. Bailey further states that trustworthiness would be achieved when the researcher shows the procedures used to make exhaustive decisions all the way through the research process (Bailey, 2007:183).

It is essential to keep in mind validity in any research work. Low validity in a research work has a great impact on the study and the results could be worthless (Cohen et al., 2005:105). For Cohen et al. (2005:105) and Best and Kahn (2005:208), validity presupposes that an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and that validity supports the researcher to decide on the scale measuring what it is meant to measure. In line with the above authors Shukala (2008:832) defines validity as the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect the true differences among objects on the characteristics being measured. Cohen et al. (2005:105)

states that validity in quantitative research might be ensured through different means, such as sampling, appropriate instrument and proper statistical treatment of the data.

The concepts that are included in the instrument help to achieve content validity. Receiving clarification and judgments from an age group is an alternative way of seeking validity, specifically face validity (Muijs, 2004:66). Moreover, validity is checked by reviewing data collection instruments in terms of clarity, wording and sequences of questions. Thus, in the current study, the draft questionnaire was initially administered to 50 participants (principals 3, teachers 44, and school supervisors 3) in Bedele, Borecha and Danbi secondary schools to pilot test the questionnaire. After pilot testing, the results were scrutinised to check for distortions and blurred statements and items.

To assess the validity of the school improvement programme, the validity of the instrument was analysed to get the difference between the performance gap scores and participants' ratings on the measures by using a 5 point Likert scale which ranges between strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The pilot study results were not included in the main results of the study. As a result of outcomes of the pilot study, some questions were modified and some removed. After the necessary corrections were made, the final version was prepared and administered to sampled respondents. Finally, a research assistant was used during interviews and focus group discussions to check the significance of the data collected.

4.7.2 Reliability

According to Olary (2004:59), reliability refers to the “extent to which a measure, procedure or instrument provides the same results on repeated trials.” Similarly, Best and Kahan (2005:285) define reliability as the extent to which the instrument measures whatever it is measuring consistently. If the instrument/measure is reliable, similar results will be found when carried out on similar groups of participants in research in a similar milieu (Cohen et al., 2005:117; Bailey, 2007:184). From 107 items of the questionnaire, the collected data accuracy was checked by Cronbach's alpha coefficient statistically calculated was 0.954. Ethical issues were addressed during data collection and writing of this thesis and these are discussed below.

4.8 Ethical Issues

This section discusses ethical issues that were observed in the study and these include informed consent, privacy, self-determination and confidentiality, among others.

Privacy refers to controlling other people's access to information about a person. As Johanson & Christensen (2012:116) state, privacy involves a person's freedom to identify the time and circumstances under which information is shared with or withheld from others and a person's right to decline receiving information that he or she does not want.

4.8.1 Informed Consent

Participants in any research study have to be informed of the possible risk and procedures before they become involved in the study (Scott, 1997:41; Lodico et al., 2006:147; Bailey, 2007:17). Therefore, after getting clear understanding about the procedures the respondents have given voluntarily the raw data needed for the study.

4.8.2 Self Determination

Self determination is the right of the respondents to refuse to take part in research work or to withdraw at any time when giving information (Cohen et al. (2005:51). In the study, the researcher ensured the right of self determination through asking participants to sign a consent form where it was stated implicitly that participants had the right to withdraw at any given point of the research. It was stated clearly that partaking in the research was a voluntary exercise.

4.8.3 Confidentiality

Bailey (2007:24), states that confidentiality refers to informing the participant in the research whether the research is anonymous and confidential. Supporting this idea, Scott, (1997:44) contends that confidentiality is dealt with in relation to data collection and storage systems in which it is not possible to identify the research respondents. That is, no information is revealed that can identify the participant. Instead, codes can be used so that confidentiality is guaranteed (Scott, 1997:45). In this study, the personal data of the interviewee and focus group discussions participants have been presented in anonymous ways. Respondents' right to privacy was maintained through the promise of confidentiality.

An ethical clearance certificate was obtained by fulfilling the required procedure from UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee before collecting data. Then, upon the acquisition of the ethical clearance certificate the researcher also obtained a permission letter from the Iluababor zone Education office to enter the research sites (see appendix IV). For respondents in the study, orientation was carried out in 12 secondary schools. The researcher avoided asking leading questions which could direct principals, supervisors, teachers and others in a particular way when responding to the questionnaires.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data that covers information that was not included in the questionnaire for zone education supervisors, district education experts, high school supervisors, principals, PTAs and student council members to know the status and practices of school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the learning environment, parents and community involvement effectiveness in the school improvement programme. After the interview sessions were over, transcripts were provided to the interviewees for confirmation. Some of the participants in the interviews and focus groups were unwilling to be recorded during the interview sessions and to solve the setback the researcher instead simply took notes. Necessary documents were consulted and included with permission from respective individuals. Respect was given to PTAs and student councils during the data collection process to ensure dignity. Moreover, care was taken not to plagiarise other people's work.

Therefore, acknowledgements and credit were given where appropriate and necessary. The next section presents a summary of the chapter.

4.8 Summary

This chapter paid attention to the research paradigm, research methods and research design used in the study. The chapter also focused on the Iluababor administrative zone education system issues and research site with sampled secondary schools in the study.

The researcher combined quantitative and qualitative research approaches and techniques in the study to get complete, balanced, and useful research data results. The sequential explanatory design with high priority on quantitative data and the sequential exploratory design with less

priority on qualitative data research design approaches were used in the study. The sampled population for this study comprised zone education office supervisors, teachers, and school principals, vice principals, secondary school supervisors, district education office experts, parent teachers association (PTA) members and student council members. Because of the large size of the population, the sampling method used was the cluster sampling technique. Out of a total of 24 secondary schools (grades 9-10) in the administrative zone, 12 secondary schools were selected by the simple random sampling technique.

The sample size of participants comprised of 12 principals, 12 vice principals, 12 supervisors, four zone education office supervisors and 251 teachers, selected by simple random sampling to participate in the study. In total there were 287 (53.14%) out of 540 participants who filled in the questionnaires from 12 secondary schools (grades 9-10) clustered in six geographical locations.

Interview sessions were carried out with 12 principals (principals and vice principals), 12 distinct education experts, six secondary school supervisors and four zone education office supervisors. In addition, 21 parent teacher association members (PTAs) and 21 student council members were selected by the simple random sampling technique for focus group discussions. Therefore, the total number of respondents was 363.

In the chapter diverse instruments were used to collect data - questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and raw documents from the zone education office. Both validity and reliability were addressed with respect to both qualitative and quantitative data selection, analysis and interpretation. Under ethical issues, discussions were held concerning issues related to informed consent, privacy, self determination, and confidentiality. The next chapter analyses and interprets the collected data.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets data in line with the research questions, aims and objectives of the research study. The interpretation and analysis of data were both quantitative and qualitative. That is, the sequential explanatory design with high priority on quantitative data and the sequential exploratory design with less priority on qualitative data were used as research designs. Qualitative data results were used to help explain the quantitative data results.

The collected data was analysed using SPSS Software version 21. To analyse the data of the questionnaire output, descriptive statistical analysis like frequencies, percentile, mean values, and standard deviation were used to analyse the result of elements in the domains of the school improvement programme. In addition, the General Linear Model with Repeated Measures was also used to test the interaction within the school improvement domains, the interaction within elements of the domains of school improvement and interactions between school geographical locations of school improvement programme implementation to describe their statistical significance.

Documents such as annual reports of the Iluababor education office were also used to enrich the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the questionnaire, interviews and focused group discussions. Besides, 287 questionnaires were designed and distributed to the participants in the study area and the questionnaire consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions. All the distributed questionnaires were properly filled and returned with a 100% retention rate. The next section presents the findings of the study in thematic form, tables and figures.

5.2. The Analysis and Interpretation of Demographic Data

The following sections outline the analysis and interpretation of demographic data derived from the study.

5.2.1. The General Characteristics of the Sample Population

The following sections outline the general characteristics of the sample population that were used in the study. Then next table presents the sex of the respondents.

Table 4: Sex of the respondents

Respondents' sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	220	76.7
Female	67	23.3
Total	287	100.0

From Table 4 above, 220 (76.7%) male and 67 (23.3%) female participants took part in the research resulting in a total of 287 (100%) participants. The next section presents the respondents' age.

Table 5: Respondents' age

Respondents' age ranges	Frequency	Percent
20-30	164	57.1
31-40	84	29.3
41-50	31	10.8
51 and above	8	2.8
	287	100.0

Table 5 above shows that 164 (57.1%) of the respondents were between 20-30 years of age, 84 (29.3%) were between 31-40 years of age, while 31 (10.8%) were 41-50 years and in the above 51 age category were 8 respondents (2.8%). Age is an important characteristic in teaching and learning, and in this study the majority of the respondents represented active and productive trained manpower in the school. In this regard, the population included in the study was believed to have some inputs to make in the realisation and support of the effectiveness of school improvement programmes in secondary schools. The following section presents the respondents' education levels.

Table 6: Respondents' educational levels

Respondents' Educational Levels	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	29	10.2
BA/BSc/B.Edu	257	89.5
MA	1	0.3
Total	287	100.0

In Table 6 above, 29 (10.2 %) were diploma holders, while 257 (89.5%) were BA/BSc/B.Edu., holders and only 1 (0.3%) had an MA/MSc. The collected data indicates that only 258 (89.8%) of the interviewed high school teachers had the appropriate formal training in various fields. These qualifications, knowledge and skills are significant in enhancing school improvement activities. The next section presents the respondents' positions in the workplace.

Table 7: Respondents' position

Respondents' position	Frequency	Percent
School principals	12	4.5
School vice principals	12	4.5
Teachers	247	85.7
Secondary school supervisors	12	4.5
Zone education office supervisors	4	0.8
Total	278	100

As shown in the Table 7 above, with regard to the respondents who filled in the questionnaires, 12 (4.5%) were principals, 12 (4.5%), vice principals; 247 (85.7%) teachers, 12 (4.5%) were secondary school supervisors, and 4 (0.8%) were zone education office supervisors, and the total sampled population was 287 (100%). The next section presents the respondents' years of service.

Table 8: Respondents' service years

Respondents' ranges of service years	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	90	31.4
6-10 years	102	35.5
11-15 years	42	14.6
16-20 years	15	5.2
21 years and above	38	13.2
Total	287	100.0

Table 8 above shows that 90 (31.4) respondents had 0-5 years of experiences, 102 (35.5%) had 6-10 years of experience, 42 (14.6%) had between 11-15 years of experience, 15 (5.2%) had between 16-20 years of experience and lastly 38 (13.2%) had 21 years and more experience. As

shown in Table 8 most teachers have little experience, which is likely to be an obstacle in facilitating proper instructional activities. Frequent trainings, therefore, are needed so that teachers can contribute to school improvement programmes and maintain improved teaching and learning activities. The subsequent section analyses and interprets data on the role played by school leadership and management in implementing the school improvement programme. The next sections present the analysis and interpretations of data from questionnaires.

5.3 The Analysis and Interpretation of Data from Questionnaires

5.3.1 The Role Played by School Leadership and Management in Implementing the School Improvement programme

Leadership and management in the school improvement programme is seen in next of kin to the planning and involvement of the school community and other stakeholders significant to decision making and school improvement programme activities to support the school community, monitoring and evaluation of school activities. Thus, this section analyses the extent to which school leadership and management improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme. Then the next section presents administrative policies, practices and the staff structure.

5.3.1.1 Administrative Policies, Practices and Staff Structure

With regards to administrative policies, practices and staff structure, secondary schools have a basic framework that shows the relationships and responsibilities, tasks and people in the school. The structure also shows the lines of communication and responsibilities, and the information flow in the school, including the regulations that stipulate how the various structures relate to one another from the school to the national level. The schools' structure focuses on the strategic aspect of school management and the delegation of the supervisory aspects to principals, vice principals, the heads of departments and learning area coordinators, together with the class teachers (MOE, 1994:29). The next paragraphs present the analysis of administrative policies, practices and staff structure.

Table 9: Administrative policies, practices and staff structure

Variables related to administrative policies, practices and staff structure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school has adopted practices that clearly identify responsibilities.	287	3.36	1.150
The school has an effective staff structure that supports the delivery of the school's vision and mission and its strategic priorities in which everyone has collective responsibility for student learning	287	3.35	1.321

Based upon the Ministry of Education agenda presented in Table 9 above the administrative policies, practices, and staff structure in practice currently in selected secondary schools, the schools adopted policies and practices that clearly identify delegation, responsibilities and accountability. In response to the question, the respondents revealed that the mean value and standard deviation was 287 (M = 3.36; SD = 1.150) which confirmed that there was good performance. The data is reliable since its standard deviation is smaller.

Similarly, in Table 9, in response to the question whether the school has an effective staff structure that supports the delivery of the school's vision and mission and its strategic priorities in which everyone has collective responsibility for student learning, the respondents' responses disclosed the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (M = 3.35; SD = 1.321) which verified that the schools have effective structures that support the delivery of schools' improvement programmes, in which everyone in the schools has collective responsibility for student learning. From the two indicators of practice, we understand that there are clear guidelines in secondary schools starting from the rights and duties of all stakeholders involved in secondary school education. These are issued to ensure participatory and proper professional relations in school improvement activities, as outlined by the Ministry of Education in the Bluebook. The results in Table 9 above with regards to administrative policies, practices and staff structure, coincide with the rules and regulations framed by the Ministry of Education. These results illustrate that there are well developed procedures for administrative activities in secondary schools to implement

school improvement programmes. The next section presents the respondents' responses to strategic directions of the school improvement programme.

5.3.1.2 Strategic Directions of the SIP in the Schools

In this context a strategic direction refers to a process of ensuring a high quality road map for school improvement, where the school has key strategies that support reform and innovation in the school for further sustainable school improvement programmes (MOE, 2010:24). Then Table 10 below presents the strategic direction of school improvement in secondary schools.

Table 10: Strategic directions of the SIP in the schools

Variables related to strategic directions of the SIP	N	Mean	Standard deviation
The school builds up and articulates the school improvement vision, guided by the values, beliefs and common aspirations of the school community	287	3.03	1.135
The school decision-making and administrative processes (including data collection and analysis, and communicating with parents) are carried out effectively.	287	2.71	1.276
The leadership team of the school is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed for school improvement.	287	2.31	1.105
There is leadership readiness and commitment to radically change the school system to achieve targets of the school improvement programme	287	2.40	1.135
Leadership of the school aligns and communicates with support staff, teachers, students and other stakeholders to market and sell the vision and strategy of the school	287	2.56	1.145
There is a collaborative and purposeful professional learning across the school community to improve outcomes for all students.	287	2.79	1.332
There are reliable learning opportunities for students to provide learning within safe and orderly learning environments.	287	2.84	1.244

In Table 10 above the respondents were asked whether the schools build up and articulate the school improvement vision, guided by the values, beliefs and common aspirations of the school community. The mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.03; SD = 1.14) showed that

the schools encouraged an environment of setting up the school's vision, values, beliefs and goals to shape the strategic direction and then to share them with the stakeholders.

Concerning the school decision-making and administrative processes (including data collection and analysis, and communicating with parents), whether these are carried out effectively, the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.71; SD = 1.28) revealed that the involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process, and the manner in which school leadership and school governing bodies communicate with each other was above average. This shows that immense efforts are needed to change the current situation in the schools.

With regards to the status of leadership, where support was needed for school improvement, the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.31; SD = 1.11) revealed that the indicator's performance was below average. This requires intense work from each school leader to change the present weakness.

Concerning leadership readiness and commitment to radically change the school system to achieve targets of school improvement programme practices, the responses revealed that the 287 (Mean = 2.40; SD = 1.135) which was very poor. Concerted efforts are needed from schools to reverse the current situation. Similarly, responses from the questionnaires of 46 (16.02%) confirmed that there was lack of school leadership commitment especially on the part of the school management team in the implementation of the school improvement programme. The following section presents the respondents' responses to strategic planning of the school improvement programme.

5.3.1.3 Schools' Strategic Planning

This task has to do with organising a strategic planning session for the staff where the vision and mission statement, scanning of the environment and setting up of the organisational goals of the school are shaped and shared by all stakeholders (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:). It involves the prioritisation of school goals and the formation of the action plan that will be followed. Planning involves determining the financial resources needed for the school to meet its educational goals. It involves identifying staff to monitor and control the budget under the ever watchful eye of the

principal. It has to be quantified in terms of time frames for the completion of set school improvement (MOE, 2010:17; Nega, 2012: 18). Then again, collaborative planning has helped schools improvement one and three to become more successful. This is in line with the suggestion reported by Makoello (2011:266) and Huff & Goldring (2012:162) made clear that the plans for school improvement produced based on needs assessment are taken as requirements that can help the schools to meet their improvement targets. Then, Table 11 presents the analysis of secondary school strategic planning.

Table 11: Schools' strategic planning

Variables related to schools' strategic planning	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
School leadership keeps the improvement goals in the forefront of the school's activities.	287	2.98	1.089
The annual school improvement plan identifies the key improvement goals for the year, based on the school's strategic plan.	287	3.12	1.222
Key actions and strategies to achieve the improvement goals are implemented.	287	2.66	1.123
Quantitative and qualitative data is identified for collection and analysis to assess progress on achievement of the improvement goals.	287	2.68	1.106
Adequate resourcing is allocated to each of the improvement goals.	287	2.34	1.107
Improvement goals are communicated to students, parents and the wider school community.	287	2.77	1.275

In Table 11 above, the question whether school leadership keeps the improvement goals in the forefront of the school's activities was answered in terms of the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.98; SD =1.089). The indicator practice was above middling performance but it needs immense efforts on the parts of the school leadership to achieve incredibly good performance. In this case, Gordon (2004:166) argued that the principals can add to their trust – building ability by making use of collaboratively intended improvement plans.

Additionally, the question whether the annual school improvement plan identifies the key improvement goals for the year, based on the school's strategic plan, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.12; SD = 1.22) verified that identification of the key school

improvement goals in schools was at the good performance stage but more effort is required to improve the current performance to bring about the best results.

On the question whether key actions and strategies to achieve the improvement goals are implemented, the mean value and standard deviations 287 (Mean = 2.66; SD = 1.123) revealed that the indicator's practice was above middling. This needs consideration to improve school improvement initiatives. In connection with whether the quantitative and qualitative data identification for collection and analysis to assess progress on achievement of the improvement goals, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.68; SD = 1.11) illustrates that indicator's practice was above the average, which points to a need for great concentration to improve the current performance.

Still on Table 11 above, with respect to resource allocation practices of the schools, the mean value and standard deviation results 287 (Mean = 2.34; SD = 1.107) revealed that the result was below average. This means that that there was no fair resource allocation to each of the improvement goals. The open ended questionnaire results from 32 (11.14%) respondents disclosed that there was lack of good preparation in the planning process of the school improvement programme due to lack of knowledge and skill in school development planning. The following table presents the respondents' responses to school leadership consultations and communication.

5.3.1.4 School Leadership Consultations and Communication

In this regard effective communication from the school leadership and management team ensures that school communities stay engaged in their work. Thus, internal communication by the school principal as one of the soft skills has now been proved to have a solid impact (Diana, 2008:1). This shows that effective communication is one critical characteristic of an effective and successful school principal. The principals and school management teams' awareness of the need for keeping an open climate and good communication with their teachers and staff are vital (Halawah, I, 2009:1).

Table 12 presents building the leadership capacity of secondary schools as follows:

Table 12: School Leadership Consultations and Communication

Variables related to leadership consultation and communication	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
School polices, regulations and procedures are effectively communicated and followed.	287	2.63	0.988
The school vision and improvement goals provoke broad stakeholder commitment.	287	2.91	1.069
The school consults with the community, reflects on its data, and reviews improvement planning processes.	287	2.83	1.163
Progress towards improvement is formally communicated to staff, students and families on a regular basis.	287	2.98	1.299

In Table 12 above, concerning the question whether school polices, regulations and procedures are effectively communicated and followed, the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.63; SD = 0.99) disclosed that results were above the middling point. This indicated that there was a need to enhance the performance indicator of practice. With regards to whether the school vision and improvement goals provoke broad stakeholder commitment, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.91; SD = 1.06) verified that the indicator practice was above average but, still, more effort is needed to reverse the current situation. Concerning the school consultation with the community, and reviews on the improvement planning processes, the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.83; SD = 1.163) revealed that the indicator practice was above middling performance, but still needs great attention to improve the current performance. On whether the progress towards improvement is formally communicated to staff, students and families on a regular basis, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.98; SD = 1.30) showed that the indicator practice was above the middling performance but still requires more effort to move it forward.

Results from open ended questionnaire from 52 (18.12%) respondents confirmed that there was non-attendance of stakeholders in the real decision making process at every stage of the school improvement programme. Additionally, there was lack of self confidence in the decision making process in connection to school principals. The next table presents the respondents’ responses to financial management of the schools.

5.3.1.5 Financial Management of the Schools

The school as an organisation can have excellent educational goals, but without sufficient finances those goals can never be met. Even when the school has sufficient funds to sustain its educational activities, if those funds are not properly managed the school will not sustain its efforts. The principal has to ensure that school funds are raised and properly managed. If the financial management of the school is well structured and monitored, it will be in a position to deliver on its objectives (MOE, 2010:21). Table 13 presents the analysis of financial management in secondary schools.

Table 13: Financial management of the schools

Variables related to financial management of the schools	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school has highly effective processes that lead to enhanced financial management.	287	2.72	1.078
The school budget aligns to the school’s improvement goals.	287	2.75	1.100
The school demonstrates effective administration of finances, resources and facilities focused on meeting identified needs and future demands.	287	2.73	1.097
Financial management is comfortable and financial reserves are effectively maintained.	287	2.45	1.073
The school board regularly reviews and monitors the school’s budget and financial performance.	287	2.14	1.091
Departments/units have adequate resources to support the school learning and teaching processes.	287	2.21	1.170

Table 13 above shows whether the school has highly effective processes that lead to enhanced financial management. The mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.72; SD = 1.07) means that the indicator's practice was above the middling point. This necessitates concrete efforts to improve the current practices. With regards to the school budget aligning to the school's improvement goals, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.75; SD = 1.10) indicated that the result was above the middling point. The results necessitate more effort to reverse the current performance.

In terms of whether the school board regularly reviews and monitors the school's budget and financial performance, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.14, SD = 1.09) verified that the indicator's practice was below the middling point in terms of its performance. The results point to a need for awareness creation for school boards to increase their involvement. In addition, about whether or not departments/units have adequate resources to support the school learning and teaching processes, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean 2.21; SD = 1.17) indicated that the indicator's practice was also below the average point, necessitating awareness creation in the school to reverse the current practices.

The results from open ended questionnaires from 76 (26.48 %) respondents reveal that there was a lack of adequate budget allocation for school improvement implementation. The next section presents the respondents' responses to management of infrastructure and physical resources.

5.3.1.6 Management of Infrastructure and Physical Resources

The physical appearance of the school determines the nature and quality of the management of school as an organisation. It informs those who visit the school whether it is well or poorly managed. The state of the school's physical facilities should create an inviting climate for potential learners and provide a safe haven for existing staff and learners (Nega, 2012:17). Thus, they have to be managed by the principal together with designated staff at school. The learners should also have sufficient and well maintained school grounds for all their sporting and recreational activities. Recreational activities give learners an opportunity to refresh their minds after spending considerable time in the classroom as well as providing vital interaction with fellow learners. School grounds should be regularly maintained so that they are in a usable and

secure state (Workneh & Tassew, 2013:13). Then Table 14 presents the analysis of management of infrastructure and physical resources in secondary schools.

Table 14: Management of Infrastructure and Physical Resources

Variables related to management of infrastructure and physical resources	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school uses its physical environment and facilities to inspire and maximize learning.	287	3.10	1.104
The school provides a well-maintained safe, secure, stimulating and welcoming environment.	287	2.79	1.089
The school plans effectively for future infrastructure needs which support student learning and stewardship of the school site.	287	2.84	1.176

In table 14 above, in response to the question whether the school uses its physical environment and facilities to inspire and maximise learning, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.10; SD = 1.104) indicated that practice was at a level of good performance. On whether the school provides a well-maintained safe, secure, stimulating and welcoming environment, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean 2.79, SD = 1.089) showed that the practice was above middling, so concerted efforts are required for stakeholders to improve the current performance. Lastly, on whether the school plans effectively for future infrastructure needs which support student learning and stewardship of the school site, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.84; SD = 1.18) verified that the indicator practice of performance was above the middling point. This shows that strong hard work is required to improve the current practices in the schools. All the results in Table 11 indicated that there was somewhat an average achievement in the management of infrastructure and physical resources. With reference to management of infrastructure and physical resources, responses from the open-ended questionnaire of 31 (10.80%) respondents, confirmed that in their respective schools there were challenges of sanitation and hygiene facilities in secondary schools, and these were still at their worst juncture. The next section focused on human resource management.

5.3.1.7 Human Resource Management

In relation to this concern, Ayalew (2009:109) states that human resources, along with material, financial and time resources, should efficiently be utilised if schools want to attain their goals effectively. Table 15 below present's human resource management in secondary schools as follows:

Table 15: Human resource management

Variables related to human resource management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is adequate and appropriate support of human resources in quantity and quality for the smooth running of the school functions and the annual action plan.	287	2.82	1.123
There is support and staff and teacher commitment in discharging responsibilities of engagement in their work towards effective outcomes.	287	3.07	1.160
Staff expertise is utilised to address the identified learning needs of all students.	287	3.13	1.146
The school board actively monitors and reviews work health and safety practices and procedures.	287	2.44	1.114
The school has strategies and practices in place to ensure that staff, students and families understand the implementation of the school improvement programme.	287	3.11	1.275
Teachers' attendance at school is well-managed to take responsibility for serving all students' high expectations for learning	287	3.81	1.233

The efficiency of any school could be realised through the proper use of the skills and talents of its existing resources. In school systems, teachers are crucial in achieving school objectives and the strength of an education system is, for the most part, determined by the quality of its teachers (Ayalew, 2009:110). In relation to this idea in Table 15 above, in response to whether there is adequate and appropriate support of human resources in quantity and quality for the smooth running of the school functions and the implementation of the annual action plan, the mean values and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.82; SD =1.12) showed that this practice was above the middling point. This indicated that immense effort is needed to transform the current

performance. Concerning the support staff and teachers' commitment in discharging responsibilities of engagement in their work towards effective outcomes, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.07; SD = 1.16) verified that the practice was relatively in a status of good performance but, still, there is a need for particular consideration to improve the performance of the indicator practice.

On staff expertise utilisation to address the identified learning needs of all students, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.13; SD = 1.15) illustrates that the indicator practice was somewhat at the status of the good performance stage, but also calls for more efforts to scale up the current performance. Concerning school strategies and practices in place to ensure that staff, students and families understand the implementation of the school improvement programme, the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 3.11; SD = 1.28) correspondingly verified that the indicator practice was at the level of good performance, but it requires more efforts to improve the current practice. Moreover, whether teachers' attendance at school is well-managed to take responsibility for serving all students' high expectations for learning, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.81; SD = 1.23) indicated that the indicator's practice was at a status of an incredibly good performance level.

On whether the school board actively monitors and reviews work, health and safety practices and procedures, the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.44; SD= 1.114) confirmed that the indicator's practice was unachieved in secondary schools. This coincides with the school boards' involvement as indicated in Table 13. These results give us a thought about why the school boards did not actively monitor and review the activities of school improvement in secondary schools. The next section presents building the leadership capacity of the school community.

5.3.1.8 Building the Leadership Capacity of the School Community

Capacity development is a process that involves the creation, enhancement and maintenance of the capacity of people as individuals, groups or organisations in a given time (Caillods & De Grauwe, 2006:45). A successful school improvement programme requires strong and sustained capacity building for school level actors if meaningful change is to occur in a school. This

demands a leadership personality has to prepare effectively for the sake of others' development – the development that is critical for effective teaching and learning, school governance and management (MOE, 2010:56). Table 15 below presents building the leadership capacity of the school community in secondary schools as follows:

Table 16: Building the leadership capacity of the school community

Variables related to building the leadership capacity of the school community	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership of the school motivate and inspire staff, teachers, students and other stakeholders to create the energy and commitment to drive school improvement.	287	2.79	1.072
A positive learning environment across the school community is built and sustained through contemporary leadership structures.	287	2.75	0.972
In the school there is a process of organising and staffing to make sure that everyone knows about school improvement and what is expected of him/her.	287	2.91	1.147
The school leadership provides support for teachers' interaction and provides moral support by making teachers feel appreciated for their contribution in the school.	287	2.62	1.087
There are effective strategies for staff development; staff induction and performance review are developed and implemented.	287	2.72	1.026
Relationships are fostered and promoted so as to nurture mutual respect and the wellbeing of all staff, students, parents and the wider school community.	287	2.87	1.044

In table 16 above on whether the leadership of the school motivates and inspires staff, teachers students and other stakeholders to create the energy and commitment to drive school improvement, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.79; SD = 1.07) indicates that the practice was above the middling point, meaning that strong effort is required from the school leadership to motivate and inspire the school community and the other stakeholders to reverse the current performances. Concerning the creation of a positive learning environment across the school community, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.75; SD = 0.92) verified that the indicator's practice was above the middling point, but to get attractive results extra effort is required from the school leadership and management. Similarly, on whether in the school there was a process of organising and staffing to make sure that everyone

knows about school improvement and what is expected of him/her, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean 2.91; SD = 1.14) shows that the practice is above the middling point; however, it needs extra effort from the school leadership to reverse the current situation in the schools.

With regards to whether the school leadership provides support for teachers' interaction and provides moral support by making teachers feel appreciated for their contribution in the school, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.62; SD = 1.087) reveals that the indicator's practice is above average, but to get extra results additional efforts are required from the school leadership and school governing bodies. Concerning the existence of effective strategies for staff development, staff induction and performance review, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.72; SD = 1.02) verified that the practice was above the middling point, but it necessitates additional effort from the school principals and school governing bodies. In relation to whether the relationships were fostered and promoted so as to nurture mutual respect and the wellbeing of all staff, students, parents and the wider school community, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.87; SD = 1.04) reflected that the indicator's practice was above average, but this also requires extra tasks by school leadership and school governing bodies to reverse the current practices.

In addition, the open ended questionnaire results from 67 respondents (23.34%) verified that there was lack of training for school principals as instructional leaders and there was lack of knowledge and skill in school leadership and management. The next section discusses establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices.

5.3.1.9 Establishing a Positive Relationship to Sustain Good Practices

Relationships are the building blocks for organising school improvement programme activities because the relationships we have with teachers, administrative staff, students, parents and local communities are a means for achieving school improvement goals (MOE, 2009:34). This indicates that the school principal does not work in isolation: he needs to be working together! It is his relationships all added together that are the foundation of an organised effort for school improvement. That is the principal in the school needs lots of people to contribute their ideas, take a stand, and get the school improvement work done (Nega, 2012:23; Workneh & Tassew,

2013:27). Table 17 presents ways of establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices as follows:

Table 17: Establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices

Variables related to the process of establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resources are prioritised and aligned to the school improvement goals to maximise the impact on teaching and learning.	287	3.63	1.008
Effective organisational and administrative structures are in place to ensure sound management of the school.	287	3.48	1.173
Improvement goals are monitored, reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis to measure the effectiveness of the planned strategies.	287	3.03	1.154

In Table 17 above on whether resources are prioritised and aligned to the school improvement goals to maximise the impact on teaching and learning, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.63; SD = 1.00) revealed that the indicator's practice status was performing well at this stage. With regards to whether effective organisational and administrative structures were put in place to ensure sound management of the school, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.48; SD = 1.17) disclosed that the indicator's practice status was at a good performance juncture. On whether improvement goals are monitored, reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis to measure the effectiveness of the planned strategies, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.33, SD = 1.15) showed that the indicator's practice position was at a good performance level.

The results in Table 17 above proved that the school improvement assets are well managed and school accounts are properly administered and relatively there was good control and monitoring in the schools. Comparatively, the results showed there was organized management and administration that impacted positively on teaching and learning services. The next section presents the schools' monitoring and evaluation system.

5.3.1.10 Schools' Monitoring and Evaluation System

The school improvement programme's monitoring and evaluation system will provide the following information and insights on: learners' progress and achievement of the desired learning; status and effectiveness of school improvement programme implementation; school stakeholders' requirements and expectations; and difficulties, problem issues or risks that hinder efficient implementation of the school improvement programme (Nega, 2012:23; Workneh, & Tassew, 2013:27; MOE, 2014:11). Table 18 presents the school monitoring and evaluation in secondary schools as follows:

Table 18: Schools' monitoring and evaluation system

Variables related to schools' monitoring and evaluation system	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school collects and analyses the identified performance data to measure progress and to plan future actions.	287	3.12	1.222
The school reports regularly to the school community on its progress.	287	2.89	1.201
The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated through observation, feedback, analysis and use of relevant data.	287	3.07	1.206
There is school self-assessment that provides an important base line of information measured annually against the next year's plans undertaken by the school improvement committee.	287	3.30	1.146
Zone education office, district staff, as well as school cluster supervisors, and school improvement committee members monitor and evaluate the implementation of the annual action plan.	287	3.36	1.319

In table 18 on whether the school collects and analyses the identified performance data to measure progress and to plan future actions, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.12; SD = 1.22) disclosed that the indicator's practice status was at a good performance level. In relation to whether the school reports regularly to the school community on its progress, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.89; SD = 1.20) revealed that the indicator's practice was above the middling point but requires extra effort from school principals to change the existing situation. Concerning whether the effectiveness of teaching and learning was monitored and evaluated through observation, feedback, analysis and use of relevant data, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.27; SD = 1.20) showed the indicator's

practice significance was at a good performance stage. Furthermore, on whether there was self-assessment at school that provided an important baseline of information measured annually against the next year’s plans undertaken by the school improvement committee, the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 3.30; SD = 1.15) revealed that the practice was at a good status. But it needs additional effort from the school principals and school governing bodies to produce better results in schools.

Lastly, with reference to zone education office, district education office staff, as well as school cluster supervisors, and school improvement committee members, their practice of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the annual action plan 287 (Mean = 3.36; SD = 1.32) showed that the practice was also at good level of performance, but it necessitates additional effort from the school leadership, school governing bodies and other stakeholders. The results in Table 18 show that the mean values and standard deviations comparatively verified that the practices in the schools’ monitoring and evaluation systems undertakings were said to be in a good status of practice.

Similarly, from the open ended questionnaires, qualitative results of the written data responses collected from 89 respondents (31.01 %) confirmed that there was continuous monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement programme. The next section presents a summary of the results of elements of school leadership and management in descriptive statistics.

5.3.1.11 Summary Results of Elements of School Leadership and Management in Descriptive Statistics (Q1 – Q48)

There are 10 major elements reviewed under school leadership and management. Then, the next Table 19 shows the summary results of the elements in the school improvement programme implementation.

Table 19: Summary results of elements of school leadership and management in descriptive Statistics (Q1 – Q48)

Summary results of elements of school leadership and management in descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership and management elements mean values and standard deviation summary results	287	2.8663	0.62945

Studies indicated that the leadership capacity of schools to manage change affects improvement initiative of the schools (Cravens & Hallinger 2012:159). In schools where leadership was participatory, the school community was engaged in planning process. This created a better understanding among those concerned with the business of schools, and facilitated the achievement of the planning goals (Harris 2005:61). In Table 19 above, with regards to the summary of the results of all indicators of practices in the school leadership and management process, the cumulative mean values and standard deviations 287 (Mean = 2.87; SD = 0.63) were above the middling point. In this case, the standard deviations values were more tightly clustered / bunched together around the mean, which suggests that the respondents' responses were more in agreement with one another. The low standard deviation (SD = 0.63) showed an incredibly reliable result. The results from questionnaires disclosed that school leadership and management performance was low during the past five years. This indicates that there were insufficient supplies of inputs and processes that contributed to school leadership and management lagging behind the set target. Therefore, building the capacity of school principals and teachers of secondary schools should be given high priority to enhance school improvement programmes in secondary schools, which is extremely important for its significance in improving quality education in secondary schools.

The results from closed and open ended questionnaires also disclosed that when we weigh up against the results gained up to now to the set targets of school leadership and management, even though there were a lot of efforts made to improve the school leadership and management, the present practices were not vigorously focused on transformation of the whole school system and student achievement. Consequently, results from the respondents validated that school leadership and management was not improved during the implementation phase of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone.

The qualitative responses from open ended questionnaires recommended that the Ministry of Education should revise the current school improvement programme model based on research studies. But they did not indicate precise possible solutions to the existing practices of school improvement programme challenges.

Consequently, in this study as indicated in the conceptual framework and literature review, the Total Quality Management (TQM) model is suggested as a possible model that will offer solutions to the existing challenges of school improvement models. For example, this model will strengthen the existing school improvement model as an additional approach to build up the existing school improvement model. Total Quality Management is a school management tool that centres on quality, based on the participation of all school community members and other stakeholders, with the aim of long run success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the school. It encompasses the school improvement perspectives of both external and internal stakeholders in an integrated manner, and thereby enables a comprehensive approach to quality management that will assure quality as well as facilitate change innovation in the school system (Westhuizen, 2010:298).

Thus, from the open system models, the total quality management model can help as a supplementary model in secondary schools for school improvement programmes to apply its four important elements of employee involvement, customer focus, continuous improvement and benchmarking system in the schools. In other words, on top of the existing school improvement programme models, the TQM model approach is proposed as a supplementary tool in the study to overcome the prevailing challenges in secondary schools. The next pages present the sub-basic research question about the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools.

5.3.2 The School Improvement Programme in Improving Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

In this sub-basic research question the purpose was to identify problems related to the teaching and learning process in the school improvement programme implementation. Data collected from participants by means of the questionnaire was analysed in line with the above basic research question: to what extent does the school improvement programme improving teaching and learning in secondary schools? The results are discussed in the following segments, starting with curriculum.

5.3.2.1 The School Curriculum

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education sets the education standards for secondary education prescribed with learning outcomes with the expectations for what students should know and be able to do at each grade and within each subject area (ESDP IV, 2010:15). This curriculum is about the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, presentations, and readings used in course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate students' learning (ESDP IV, 2010:15 - 17). The next paragraphs discuss the curriculum from Table 20.

Table 20: The school curriculum

Variables related to the school curriculum	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school's mission and vision informs and inspires the curriculum.	287	3.55	1.117
The curriculum provides for breadth and depth of learning with adjustments to ensure access for all.	287	3.59	1.187
There are clear curriculum/learning standards and goals at class and school level.	287	3.48	1.173
The curriculum is designed and sequenced to develop successful learners, creative individuals and responsible citizens.	287	3.66	1.242
Teachers understand the curriculum (in terms of age, relevance and integration) and develop and use supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning.	287	3.49	1.170
Co-curricular activities are offered for students to achieve success outside of the classroom.	287	3.65	1.292

Based on the outcomes in Table 20, the respondents' responses to the secondary school curriculum whether the school's mission and vision informs and inspires the curriculum, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.55; SD = 1.11) revealed the indicator's practice was very good in terms of its performance.

On whether the curriculum provides breadth and depth of learning with adjustments to ensure access for all learners, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.48; SD=1.17) confirmed that there was learning access for learners because the cut-off point of the indicator's practice was at the range of good performance. With regards to provision of clear curriculum/learning standards and goals at class and school level, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.48; SD= 1.17) verified that currently there are clear standards and goals of the curriculum at all class levels.

In connection with whether the curriculum was designed and sequenced to develop successful learners, creative individuals and responsible citizens, the 287 (Mean = 3.66; SD = 1.24) reflects that the existing curriculum in secondary schools was designed and sequenced to develop successful learners. Concerning teachers' understanding of the curriculum (in terms of age, relevance, and integration) and developing and using supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning, the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.17) revealed that teachers in secondary schools do have this understanding in terms of learners' age, relevance and integration of the curriculum.

Lastly, on whether curricular activities are offered for students to achieve success outside of the classroom, the 287 (Mean = 3.65; SD = 1.29) result disclosed that extra-curricular activities broaden learners' interests and experience to expand their opportunities to succeed and help to build good relationships within the school. All results about the curriculum from the respondents' responses disclosed that there is good performance in the areas of curriculum implementation where the mean values and standard deviation uniformly showed reliable outcomes.

With regard to the respondents' responses from written qualitative data collected through questionnaires, 48 (16.72%) proposed that a strong curriculum committee within the department has to be established for assessments and active learning strategies application. The results also showed that to build up the current practices of the curriculum for implementation in secondary schools, principals have to motivate teachers to understand the content of the learning areas related to the learners' everyday lives, that the classroom should be comfortable and conducive

to learning, and stimulate learners' desire to learn. In addition, the school principals should work hard to ensure that learners are continuously assessed on their progress toward achieving the outcomes and motivate teachers to have assessment guidelines that adhere to the school course of action on assessment.

The results in table 20 coincide with the Ministry of Education's framework that states that curriculum delivery in the school improvement programme implementation in the school has a coherent and sequenced plan that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear direction for monitoring learning across the year levels. The next section examines the use of teaching methods in the classroom.

5.3.2.2 Use of Teaching Methods in the Classroom

Effective teaching and learning requires the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of learners. The use of effective teaching methods engages students in the learning process and helps them develop critical thinking skills (MOE, 2010:24). Table 21 presents the use of teaching methods in the classroom as follows:

Table 21: Use of teaching methods in the classroom

Variable related to the use of teaching methods in the classroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lecture method - passively listening to teachers lecture using a highly teacher-centred method of teaching.	287	3.66	1.24
Class discussion learning method can be used with a reasonable class size to make the learners to think critically on the subject being discussed and to use logic to evaluate their and others' positions.	287	2.45	1.248
Think/pair/share learning method is undertaken for students to take time to think about what has just been presented by the teacher and then discuss it with one or more of the students who are sitting next to them followed by a class discussion (share).	287	2.47	1.182
Learning cell method is used where a pair of students study and learn together by asking and answering questions on common reading materials.	287	2.33	1.151

Collaborative learning group method is used when the teacher assigns students into groups of 3-6 people and then gives each group an assignment or task to work on together.	287	2.59	1.284
Class game learning method is used as an energetic way to learn for students and helps them to enjoy learning about a topic.	287	2.37	1.244

The curriculum reform aims to address overlapping issues and sequencing of the content, with additional focus on more active learning methodologies. Teachers should use active learning methods in the classroom to realise improved learning results. It is also designed to be responsive to international economic realities, national democracy and gender equity (GEQIP, 2008:11; ESDP, 2010:23).

Concerning the use of teaching methods in the classroom, in Table 21 the results confirm that the values related to mean and standard deviation are as follows: the first is in connection with the lecture method, that is, passively listening to teachers' lectures using high teacher-centred methods of teaching, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.66; SD = 1.24) respectively confirmed that teachers in the secondary schools precisely determine the aims, content, organisation, pace and direction of presentation of the teaching process. This places students in a passive rather than an active role which hinders learning and encourages one way communication.

Secondly, on whether the class discussion learning method can be used with a certain class size to make the learners to think critically on the subject being discussed and to use logic to evaluate their and others' positions, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.45; SD = 1.25) correspondingly verified that students' understanding was not enhanced. Thirdly, with regards to the think/pair/share learning method with one or more of the students who are sitting next to you followed by a class discussion (share), the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.47; SD = 1.18) disclosed that this indicator of practice was also at its lowest stage of performance.

Fourth, the learning cell teaching method, where a pair of students study and learn together by asking and answering questions on common reading materials, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.33; SD = 1.51) revealed that the learning cell method in secondary schools was at a very poor juncture of performance. Fifth, with regards to collaborative learning/group method, that the teacher assigns students into groups of 3-6 people and then gives each group an assignment or task to work on together, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.59; SD = 1.284) verified that the result was above the middling cut-off point, but still needs immense effort to change the current performance. Sixth, with regards to the class game learning method as an energetic way to learn for students and help them to enjoy learning about a topic, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.37; SD = 1.24) was below the average cut-off point, calling for concerted efforts to change the present performance.

Additionally, consistent with the above ideas, results from the qualitative written open ended questionnaires show that 68 (23.69%) principals, supervisor, teachers, zone education supervisors revealed that teachers were very weak in eliciting responses from the students; in checking and follow up students' participation; in giving constructive feedback to students; and lack interest to support learners with low academic performance. They also disclosed that student's lack of interest in participating in active learning greatly affected classrooms size and by shortage of time and lack of resources." Teachers are to use active learning methods in the classroom to realise improved learning results (MOE, 2010:12). This standard assumes that the students learn better if they engaged in group work, individual assignments, games, questions and answer instead of heavily relying on rote memorisation (MOE, 2010:13). Teachers achieve measurable improvements in the students result (MOE, 2010:14).

Thus, for the secondary schools under study, except for the lecture methods and the collaborative learning strategy, the performances of all the learning method strategies were below the average standard which confirmed that teachers in secondary schools were practicing the use of highly teacher-centred methods of teaching. Paradoxically, the closed ended questionnaire and open ended questionnaire results were not in line with the Ministry of Education framework which states that effective teaching and learning require the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of the learners. The traditional 'chalk and talk' approach with the

students as recipients of knowledge may not be suitable for today's generation (MOE, 2010:78). Once of the concerns the participants in the questionnaire dealt with were issues related to teaching and learning. Osula & Ideboen (2010:30) confirmed that implementation of active learning methods helps to make the classroom participatory, and it is one of the ways to ensure the most advantageous learning of all the students. Therefore, to overcome the current problems in secondary schools, the researcher suggests that schools should prepare standardised manuals/modules as a handbook for school principals and teachers for continuous learning on active learning strategies. The next section discusses teachers' continuous professional development.

5.3.2.3 Teachers' Continuous Professional Development

Continuing teachers' professional development in education is the means by which teachers maintain their knowledge and skills related to their professional lives. In this case the changes expected in the school are an improvement in the quality of education through: improved student achievement; improved classroom practice; and teachers becoming better teachers by improving their professional competencies (Nega, 2012:23; Workneh & Tassew, 2013:27). Table 22 presents the status of teachers' continuous professional development in secondary schools as follows:

Table 22: Teachers' continuous professional development

Variables related to teachers' professional development	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers participate in continuous professional development (CPD) in order to learn new knowledge to apply in the classroom.	287	3.37	1.228
There are formal training courses, full-time or part-time training, for teachers to experience sharing and meetings with other teachers/supervisors.	287	2.83	1.303
There is action research or study groups or mentoring, or similar activities in the school.	287	2.87	1.163
There is on-going continuous professional development undertaken by teachers that will have a positive impact on student results.	287	3.30	1.146

Adequacy of ICT awareness, utilisation, access, and support for teaching staff is promising.	287	2.35	1.220
All teachers participate in some form of professional development during a ten month period.	287	2.84	1.229

Concerning teachers' professional development, Table 22 shows the mean and standard deviation as follows: first, on whether teachers participate in continuous professional development (CPD) in order to learn new knowledge to apply in the classroom, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.37; SD = 1.22) showed that there were good practices with the trend of experience sharing and meetings with other teachers in study groups in secondary schools. Second, with regards to formal training courses, such as full-time or part-time training for teachers, experience sharing and meetings with other teachers/supervisors, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.83; SD = 1.303) confirmed that there was above average performance in terms of formal trainings.

Third, with regards to the action research or study groups or mentoring, or similar activities in the school, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.87; SD = 1.16) was also above average. Fourth, concerning on-going continuous professional development undertaken by teachers that will have a positive impact on student results, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.30; SD = 1.146) showed that there was relatively good performance. Fifth, with reference to the adequacy of ICT awareness, utilisation, access, and support for teaching staff, the 287 (Mean = 2.35; SD= 1.22) result showed that currently there is poor ICT infrastructure in secondary schools and there is need to enhance the present situation in secondary schools.

Sixth, in relation to teachers' participation in some form of professional development during a ten month period, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.84 ; SD = 1.229) showed that teachers' participation was above the middling point, but also needs consideration on the part of the school principals. In compliance with the results of Table 22 above, the respondents' responses collected from the qualitative written open ended questionnaires, 73 (25.44%) respondents confirmed that the absence of well-built continuous professional

development for teachers; and lack of modules for continuous professional development materials were the major challenges regarding this issue.

With reference to teachers' continuous professional development, the close ended questionnaire and open ended questionnaire results verified that these were encouraging when compared with the set targets of the school improvement programme. Thus, to minimise the current challenges in secondary schools, the students suggested that the schools have to get standardised manuals as handbooks for continuous professional development in the areas of induction training for novice teachers, action research methods and pedagogical skills and knowledge that enables teachers to be highly committed to continuous improvement of their own teaching. The next section examines schools' learning and evaluation systems.

5.3.2.4 School learning and evaluation system

The Ministry of Education (ESDP IV, 2010:12-17) outlined that teachers have to achieve measurable improvements in student results and a range of assessment methods must be used in each grade to assess student learning. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has to develop with reference to school curriculum to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice, and the teaching and learning process in line with curriculum has to be shared with parents and communities (ESDP IV, 2010:45).

Table 23 presents the status of school learning and the evaluation system in secondary schools as follows:

Table 23: School learning and evaluation system

Variables related to school learning and evaluation system	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
In the school students' results are defined as what students of different ages know, understand and can do in the subjects of the curriculum.	287	3.13	1.207
A range of assessment methods are used in each grade to assess student learning and, based on the results, teachers provide extra teaching support to underperforming students.	287	3.10	1.264
Assessment practices are aligned with the curriculum and are designed to clarify, diagnose and monitor students' learning progress over time.	287	3.17	1.184
Reporting practices are aligned to the curriculum and provide specific, accurate, constructive and timely feedback to students.	287	2.98	1.258

Anchored in the above idea, Table 23 shows whether the school students' results are defined as what students of different ages know, understand and can do in the subjects of the curriculum. The mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.13; SD = 1.207) reveals that the performance was good, but more effort is still needed to bring extra results. Second, with regards to the question whether a range of assessment methods are used in each grade to assess student learning based on the results, and whether teachers provide extra teaching support to underperforming students, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.10; SD = 1.264) confirmed that the outcome of student assessment and teachers' support was performing well, but still more work needs to be done to get the best results from this indicator. Third, in terms of whether assessment practices are aligned to the curriculum and are designed to clarify, diagnose and monitor students' learning progress over time, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.17; SD = 1.184) showed that moderately it was a good performance but this indicator as well requires hard work to bring additional results. Fourth, reporting practices are aligned to the curriculum and provide specific, accurate, constructive and timely feedback to students, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.98; SD = 1.258)

respectively verified that the outcome was above the middling position in status, but more attention is needed to get advanced results.

The respondents' responses from the qualitative open ended questionnaire show that 68 (23.67%) of respondents reported that the causes of the assessment problem in the secondary education system were lack of sufficient training in classroom assessment; lack of skills to develop classroom assessment tools; and absence of manuals and supporting materials that assist teachers in the development of classroom assessment. The results in Table 23 also confirm that the practice of learning and evaluation is of a promising standard. This coincides with the following idea of the Ministry of Education (2010:14) that states that for teachers to achieve measurable improvements in student results one of the most important standards is to measure the overall goal of the school improvement programme and what students of different ages know, understand and can do in the subjects of the curriculum. Moreover, the results in Table 23 substantiate that the results of the Ministry of Education road map which states that a range of assessment methods have to be used in each grade to assess student learning and based on the results, teachers have to provide extra teaching support to underperforming students (MOE, 2010:15).

To minimise the challenges with regards to learning and evaluation systems in secondary schools, the researcher proposes that, to become effective, teachers have to have classroom assessment manuals that enable school teachers to implement the competency based curriculum in the classroom and improve their assessment techniques. This will help in assessing students effectively, efficiently, and fairly with the intention of enhancing student learning by empowering teachers. The next section examines a summary of the results of the elements of the domain of teaching and learning in the descriptive statistics (Q49 – Q70).

5.3.2.5 Summary Results of the Elements of the Domain of Teaching and Learning in Descriptive Statistics (Q49 – Q70)

There are 4 major elements reviewed under teaching and learning. Then, the next Table 24 shows the summary results of the elements in the school improvement programme implementation. Table 24: Summary of the results of the elements of the domain of teaching and learning in descriptive statistics (Q49 – Q70)

Summary of the results of the elements of the domain of the teaching and learning process in descriptive statistics			
The domains of teaching and learning process	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching and learning process mean value and standard deviation summary	287	2.9826	0.76453

In Table 24, the summary results of Q49 - Q70 with regard to each and every one of the indicators of practice in the school teaching and learning process, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.9826; SD = 0.76453) respectively confirmed that the result was above the middling cut-off point. Table 21 above unveiled that the smallest standard deviation (SD = 0.76) with no wider distribution of spread among the school respondents revealed that standard deviation was a good measure of reliability of the mean value. The results showed that there was no high and consistent anticipation of all learners; no clear and continuing focus on teaching and learning; absence of well developed actions for assessing how learners are progressing; and the accountability for learning shared by the learners themselves was not strongly built.

In summary, the questionnaire and the open ended qualitative questionnaire revealed that the result performed until now, even if there has been a great deal of effort made in secondary schools in connection with school improvement programme implementation, indicate that the present practices of teaching and learning processes are not accomplished successfully as expected in the Ministry of Education school improvement programme framework. Thus, the results from the respondents validated that the school teaching and learning process has not

improved during the implementing the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years.

Lastly, the open ended questionnaire collected from 89 (31.01%) respondents recommended that, with respect to teaching and learning processes, the Ministry of Education must revise the current school improvement programme model based on research studies. The respondents, however, did not indicate precise possible solutions to challenges encountered in implementing the school improvement programmes. Thus, the researcher suggests that preparing training modules as handbooks in the areas of active learning methods strategies, continuous teacher professional development, continuous assessment, and instructional leadership for secondary schools. Additionally, there is need for broad in-service on the job training and summer programmes to counter the challenges of school improvement programme implementation. The next section examines the role of the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools.

5.3.3 The Role of the School Improvement Programme in Improving the Learning Environment of Secondary Schools

In this sub-basic research question, the purpose was to pin-point problems related to learning environments in the school improvement programme implementation. The data solicited from participants by means of the questionnaire was analysed in line with the above basic research question. This section, therefore, answers the question: how successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools? The following section discusses the system of school student empowerment.

5.3.3.1 The System of School Student Empowerment

Student empowerment is the process where students have to develop the habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined life (MOE, 2010:20). By empowering students, we can engage them further in learning to provide a more democratic learning experience and, of course, find the most powerful resource in the classroom. That is by giving our students a voice through forums for students' feedback; give students decision making power in an area of curriculum, encourage meaningful technology to use in the classroom; and involve students in real issues

(MOE, 2010:21). In the light of the definitions above, Table 25 reflects the mean deviation of student empowerment in secondary schools.

Table 25: The system of school student empowerment

The system of school student empowerment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students have developed the habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined life.	287	2.61	1.135
Students provide teachers with constructive feedback about the teaching and learning.	287	2.76	1.192
Student teamwork, responsibility and self-discipline are fostered.	287	2.82	1.089
Students are able to express the purpose of their learning, are motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons.	287	2.65	1.105

In Table 25, in response to the question whether students have developed the habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined life, the mean and standard deviation results 287 (Mean = 2.61; SD = 1.135) indicated that even though the result was above the middling point, insignificant effort was made to empower the students in secondary schools. Therefore, further effort is required to enhance the existing practices.

The results of the mean and standard deviation regarding students' provision to teachers of constructive feedback about the teaching and learning reveal a 287 (Mean = 2.76; SD= 1.192) which proves that even though the result was above the average cut-off point, the practice of providing constructive feedback by the students in the teaching and learning process was insignificant. Then again, as regards to whether student teamwork, responsibility and self-discipline are fostered, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.82; SD = 1.089) showed that the result was above the middling point, but the practices were not worth mentioning in secondary schools. With regard to whether students are able to express the purpose of their learning, motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.65; SD = 1.105) disclosed that even though the result was above average, the students were not fully expressing the purpose of their learning, and were not motivated to learn and actively participate in their learning.

Furthermore, data from 54 (18.81%) respondents who filled in the qualitative open ended questionnaires revealed that there were problems in the schools such as being frustrated or in despair regarding future job opportunities; poor background in mathematics and English language; and absence of student council participation in decision making in the school management system. Accordingly, the next section discusses student support in secondary schools.

5.3.3.2 Student Support

Student support is a process of creating chances for students to develop self-regulated learners. In addition, it refers to teaching methods that teachers use to meet student needs, providing sufficient learning materials, making assistive devices available and building collaborative support for children with special needs (MOE, 2010:32). With regards to the selected schools, the results on student support are presented in Table 26 below.

Table 26: Student support

Student support	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Schools create opportunities for students to develop into self-regulating learners within and beyond the classroom.	287	2.83	1.113
Teachers use various teaching methods in order to meet the diverse student needs in the classroom.	287	3.10	1.063
Sufficient learning and teaching materials are available.	287	2.28	1.099
Assistive devices are available and in use.	287	2.23	1.032
There is collaborative work at the school and community level to support learners with special needs.	287	2.22	1.144

Table 26 presents results with regard to schools' student support, particularly about the schools creating chances for students to develop into self-regulating learners within and beyond the classroom. The mean value and standard deviation 287 ($M = 2.83$; $SD = 1.113$) showed that the result was above the middling point, but the practice concerning this outcome was not promising even though the result was above average. Thus, there is need for the schools to strengthen

present practice and reverse the situation. In connection with the teachers' use of various teaching methods in order to meet the diverse student needs in the classroom in secondary schools, the mean value and standard deviation was 287 (Mean = 3.10; SD = 1.063). The result showed good performance, and the effort made in schools is encouraging.

Regarding the existence or availability of sufficient learning and teaching materials, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.28; SD = 1.1) substantiated that the outcome was less than average in its performance, and additional effort is needed to change the current situation in the schools. On whether there was collaborative work at the school and community level to support learners with special needs, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.22; SD = 1.144) showed the result was below the middling point. This indicates that there was no collaborative work at the selected schools and at community level to encourage and support learners with special needs in secondary schools.

The results from the written qualitative open ended questionnaire show that 39 respondents (13.59%) disclosed that the school community was not guaranteed to provide appropriate educational services for secondary students with disabilities/special needs and there was also a lack of well-established on the spot tutorial sessions for students who are low achievers. The results also confirmed that parents and the community did not participate actively in transforming the learning environment in the schools. Additionally, they disclosed that the secondary school staff had no adequate training to empower the students even though there are policies and procedures in place in the schools. The next section discusses the relationships among school staff, students and families.

5.3.3.3 Relationships among School Staff, Students and Families

School polices, regulations and procedures have to be effectively communicated and followed; the schools' decision-making and administrative processes (including data collection and analysis, and communicating with parents) have to be carried out effectively; and teachers have to meet with parents when necessary - and at a minimum twice per semester - to provide quality reports and to discuss their children's learning achievements (GQEIP, 2008:6; ESDP IV,

2010:19). Thus, the next section discusses relationships among school staff, students and families in detail.

Table 27: Relationships among school staff, students and families

Relationships among school staff, students and families	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
School policy and guidelines focusing on the creation of a learning-friendly environment are developed, implemented and promoted throughout the school community.	287	2.78	1.103
Positive and trusting relationships exist among staff, students and families.	287	2.90	1.115
Interactions among all members of the school community reflect a sense of justice, dignity and respect.	287	2.91	1.137
Academic success, attendance, and other aspects of positive behaviour are recognized and celebrated school-wide to promote positive relationship building.	287	2.96	1.094

In table 27 above concerning secondary school policy and guidelines focusing on a learning-friendly environment being created, developed, implemented and promoted throughout the school community, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.78; SD = 1.103) showed that result was above the middling point, but still there was no considerable concerted effort made so far to transform this practice in the selected schools. With regard to the existence of positive and trusting relationships among staff, students and families, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.90; SD = 1.12) verified that the result was above the average cut-off point. But this indicator was also low in performance and required concerted effort to transform the current situation.

Regarding whether there were interactions among all members of the school community to reflect a sense of justice, dignity and respect, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.91; SD = 1.137) respectively showed that the result was above the average cut-off point and that interactions between all members of the school community were strong in the schools. In relation to whether academic success, attendance, and other aspects of positive behaviour are recognised and celebrated school-wide to promote positive relationship building,

the results of mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.96; SD = 1.01) respectively validated that the performance indicator was above the middling point but when we evaluate the results gained in terms of students' learning achievement, lots of work in the future is necessary to transform the current situations in the schools.

Results from 45 (15.68%) respondents who filled in the qualitative open ended questionnaire disclosed that there was weak collaboration between teachers and parents. Additionally, well-built relationships between teachers and students were absent; and the same was true of holding meetings between homeroom teachers and parents. These were the major challenges in the schools. The next section explores student behaviour in schools.

5.3.3.4 Student Behaviour in School

Every teacher has to deal with students who display undesirable behaviour in the classroom and beyond school. These behaviours can range from students who engage in behaviours such as talking with their friends, chewing gum, being rowdy and truly negative behaviours such as harassment of other students (MOE, 2010:29). Thus, the principle from psychology can be used to provide teachers with several options for how to reduce these undesirable behaviours, and many of these techniques come from behaviour perspectives in psychology (MOE, 2010:31). The table below presents the results on student behaviour in selected secondary schools.

Table 28: Student behaviour in school

Student behaviour in school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is a behaviour code for students that emphasises respect, self-discipline, positive relationships, and the prevention of inappropriate behaviour.	287	3.66	1.242
Students' behaviour rules, regulations and expectations are understood and communicated to parents, students, teachers and all staff.	287	2.86	1.093
The school's policies and practices are followed to ensure that coordinated and consistent practices exist within classrooms and across the school.	287	2.84	1.034
Teachers establish clear expectations of students and deal promptly, fairly and respectfully with behaviour issues.	287	3.10	1.264
Students demonstrate an understanding of the school's behaviour policy and act accordingly.	287	2.76	1.130
The school is free from external threats and has an orderly, purposeful atmosphere, free from the threat of physical harm.	287	3.52	1.292
Teachers have a common understanding of learning strategies that develop positive behaviours.	287	3.45	1.148
Teachers establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create a learning environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.	287	3.13	1.129
Students are affirmed and rewarded for positive behaviours.	287	2.71	1.191

In Table 28 above, the results on whether there are behaviour codes for students that emphasise respect, self-discipline, positive relationships, and the prevention of inappropriate behaviour in secondary schools were mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.66; SD = 1.242). This is very good and shows there are behaviour codes for students in secondary schools. Second, whether there were students' behaviour rules, regulations and expectations were understood and communicated to parents, students, teachers, and all staff, the results of the mean value and standard deviations 287 (Mean = 2.86; SD = 1.1) showed that the result was above average in practice, but it required further effort to get better outcomes from the schools.

Third, on whether the school's policies and practices were followed to ensure that coordinated and consistent practices exist within classrooms and across the schools, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.84; SD = 1.034) revealed that the results were above the middling point, but still required strong effort in implementing policies and practices to ensure coordination in the school improvement programme. Fourth, with regard to whether teachers establish clear expectations of students and deal promptly, fairly and respectfully with behaviour issues, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.10; SD = 1.264) confirmed that the results had good status, and the performance of teachers was promising in the establishment of clear expectations of students with behaviour issues.

Sixth, in connection with whether students who demonstrate an understanding of the school's behaviour policy and approach and act accordingly, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.76; SD = 1.130) revealed that the indicator's practice was above the middling point, but hard work is required to transform the existing situation in the schools. Seventh, with regard to whether the school was free from external threat and has an orderly, purposeful atmosphere, free from the threat of physical harm, the results of the mean and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.52; SD = 1.3) showed that the result had a very good status indicating that there was no external and internal threats hindering students in secondary schools from learning.

Eighth, pertaining to whether teachers have a common understanding of learning strategies that develop positive behaviours, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.45; SD = 1.148) disclosed that the results had a very good status, and relatively there was a common understanding of learning strategies that develop positive behaviour among teachers in secondary schools. Ninth, in connection with whether teachers establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create a learning environment where student time is spent on learning tasks, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 3.13; and SD = 1.13) showed that the result was at a good status and that teachers made an effort to establish and maintain orderly learning in secondary schools. Lastly, regarding whether students are affirmed and rewarded for positive behaviours, the results of the mean and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.71; SD = 1.1) disclosed that the result was above the middling cut-off point. In this case

much effort is needed from the school leadership to upgrade the existing performance in the schools.

Furthermore, pertaining to student behaviours at school, 34 (11.85%) respondents from the qualitative open ended questionnaires revealed that there were problems in the schools such as being irresponsible and careless in their learning; student discipline problems; and lack of practicing student disciplinary guidelines to maximise student learning in the schools. The next section presents the school students' facilities.

5.3.3.5 Students Facilities in Schools

Secondary schools have to provide quality school facilities that enable all staff to work well and all students to learn, and structures and processes that exist to support shared leadership in which everyone has collective responsibility for student learning (GQEIP, 2008:6). In relation to this topic, Table 29 shows the results of the research.

Table 29: Students facilities in schools

Student facilities in schools	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Schools provide quality school facilities that enable all staff to work well and all children to learn.	287	2.59	1.187
Rules concerning cleanliness are consistently applied in the school to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.	287	2.76	1.144

In Table 29 in response to the question whether schools provide quality school facilities that enable all staff to work well and all children to learn, the results of the mean value and standard deviation were 287 (Mean = 2.59; SD = 1.19) showing an above average cut-off point. This illustrates that the condition of school facilities were below the expected standard, pointing to a need to work harder in providing adequate and up to standard facilities. In connection with rules concerning cleanliness in the school so as to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, the results of the mean and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.76; SD = 1.144) demonstrated that the mean was above the middling point, meaning strong efforts were obligatory from the school

leadership and school governing bodies to create an attractive learning environment in the schools.

Additionally, from the open ended questionnaire written data collected from 62 (21.6 %) respondents' responses, the major challenges suggested were the following: students' lack of adequate prior knowledge and skills in subject areas; absence of student led school sanitation and hygiene, school latrines not convenient to use because they were full of flies and smelly (not appropriately ventilated); no facility for washing hands attached to latrine floor; schools do not have appropriate school waste collection and disposal systems; existence of poor personal hygiene of the students; and lack of adequate infrastructures like water, electricity, internet, ICT centre, sanitation structure system, etc.). The next section presents a summary of the results of the elements of the domain of learning environment in descriptive statistics.

5.3.3.6 A Summary of the Results of the Elements of the Domain of the Learning Environment in Descriptive Statistics (Q71 – Q95)

There are 5 major elements reviewed under learning environment. Then, the next Table 30 shows the summary results of the elements in the school improvement programme implementation.

Table 30: Summary of the results of the elements of the domain of the learning environment in descriptive statistics (Q71 – Q95)

Summary results of the elements of the domain of learning environment in descriptive statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning environment mean value and standard deviation summary results	287	2.7697	0.70219

In Table 30 above, the summary results of Q71- Q95 with each and every one of the indicator practices in the school learning environment, the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.7697; SD = 0.70219) confirmed that the results were above the middling point, and that there was no significant progress to secure and build attractive learning environments in the schools. The standard deviation value (SD = 0.70) with no wider distribution of spread among the school respondents revealed that standard deviation was a good measure of reliability of the mean value.

Thus, the summary result from the respondents confirmed that the school learning environment did not improve during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years.

Accordingly, to minimize the current challenges with regard to the learning environment, the researcher suggests that the school principal and school governing bodies need to work harder in order to create a safe and orderly learning environment. Again, student council members should be involved in decision-making in the schools' management structure to give them an opportunity to influence decisions made for them. The next section presents the sub-basic research question: to what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme.

5.3.4 Community Participation and the School Improvement Programme

In this sub-basic research question, the purpose was to identify challenges related to school community participation in the school improvement programme implementation. The data collected from participants by means of questionnaires was analysed in line with the basic research question to examine: to what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

5.3.4.1. Parent Participation in Schools

Parents' involvement is crucial, i.e. to work with schools hand in hand in order to ensure that the students are well disciplined. The involvement of parents in the school activities will create strong and cordial home/school relationships required for the growth and development of the secondary school learners (MOE, 2010:34). The next section examines parent involvement in secondary school activities.

Table 31: Parent participation in schools

Parent participation in schools	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is a clear and focused vision for teaching and learning processes with parents that facilitates the reform that focuses on student achievement.	287	2.72	1.115
Teachers meet with parents when necessary, and at a minimum twice per semester, to provide quality reports and to discuss students' learning achievements.	287	2.56	1.178
Parent teacher associations and school boards discuss student achievement at their meetings and inform parents about assessment and the outcomes achieved in the school reform.	287	2.74	1.202
Parents and students' voices in learning are actively encouraged in the school.	287	2.62	1.158

Based on the definitions above in Table 31, the question whether there is a clear and focused vision for the teaching and learning process with parents that facilitates reforms that focus on student achievement has a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.72, SD = 1.12). The results were above the middling point and indicated that parents' participation in the schools requires reform to reverse the current situation. Secondly, pertaining to teachers meeting with parents when necessary and at a minimum twice per semester to provide quality reports and to discuss students' learning achievements, the results of the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.56; SD = 1.18) disclosed that the result was above average and that parents were inactive as far as their participation is concerned. Therefore, there is need for effort from the school principals to improve parents' participation in the schools.

Thirdly, whether parent teacher associations and school boards discuss student achievement at their meetings and inform parents about assessment and the outcomes achieved in the school reform, the results showed a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.74; SD = 1.20), which is above the average cut-off point. The results prove that school boards were not supportive in activities and this necessitates strong efforts from school principals to reverse the present situation. Fourth, on whether parents and students' voices in learning are actively

encouraged in the school, the results show a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.62; SD =1.16). The results were above the middling point but the voices of parents and students in learning were not actively encouraged in the schools. Thus, additional efforts are required from school principals to reverse the current situation in the schools. In sum, the results in Table 27 revealed that parents did not collaborate with the schools to improve the learners' academic achievements. Accordingly, the next section analyses community participation in the school system.

5.3.4.2. Community Participation in the School System

Secondary schools have to successfully mobilise the community to provide resources to support the implementation of the school improvement plan and be active in communicating and promoting the importance of school improvement in the community (ESDP IV, 2010:45). This is necessary for the success of the students. Table 32 below presents the results of community participation in the selected secondary schools.

Table 32: Community participation in the school system

Community participation in the school system	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Schools successfully mobilise resources from the community to support implementation of the school improvement plan.	287	2.76	1.140
Schools are active in communicating and promoting the importance of the school improvement programme in the community.	287	2.84	1.147

Concerning whether schools successfully mobilise resources from the community to support implementation of the school improvement plan, Table 32 shows a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.76; SD = 1.14). The results are above the middling cut-off point, but there was poor mobilisation of resources by the schools from the community. Consequently, more effort is required from the school principals to maximise community participation to reach the expected standard.

Second, regarding whether schools are active in communicating and promoting the importance of the school improvement programme in the community, the results show a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.84; SD = 1.148) meaning they are above the average cut-off point. This reveals that schools were relatively very poor in communicating school improvement programmes in the community at large. Therefore, there is need for additional efforts from the school principals to correct this situation in the schools.

Data collected from the open ended questionnaires by 57 (18.86%) of the respondents presents these as challenges to community participation: absence of strong collaboration between stakeholders; lack of awareness on the basic idea of a school improvement programme; lack of community participation in the school improvement programme due to the remoteness of schools from the community; and unwillingness to come to school when called for discussions. The following section presents the level (degree) of community participation in the school improvement programme.

5.3.4.2. The Degree of Community Participation in the School Improvement Programmes

School and communities struggled to effectively apply the Ministry of Education's school improvement programme (SIP) policy. Secondary schools' school improvement programmes aim to improve student performance via a cycle of data gathering, self-assessment, planning, implementation and review (Iluababor Education Annual Report, 2014:12). This annual report further explains that schools and district education offices need support to implement school improvement programmes effectively and mobilise communities to participate in the school improvement process. Based on the above idea, Table 33 presents the degree of community participation in the school improvement programmes in secondary schools.

Table 33: The level (degree) of community participation in the school improvement programme

The level (degree) of community participation in the school improvement programme	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Involvement through the mere use of services (such as enrolling students, reducing the dropout rate and the repeating rate).	287	2.57	1.141
Involvement through the contribution or extraction of money, materials, and labour.		2.59	1.284
Involvement through attendance (meeting, etc).	287	2.58	1.103
Involvement through consultation on school improvement issues.	287	2.75	0.972
Participation in the delivery of services often as a partner with other actors in the school improvement programme.	287	2.46	1.148
Participation as implementers of delegated powers in the school improvement programme.	287	2.43	1.116
Participation in real decision-making at every stage, including identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.	287	2.35	1.220

In Table 33 above, pertaining to the involvement of the community through the mere use of services, the results of the mean value and standard deviation were 287 (Mean = 2.57; SD = 1.141) which is above the middling point. Nevertheless, there is need for improved effort from school principals to turn around the present situation in the schools. Regarding community participation through the contribution or extraction of money, materials, and labour, the results of the mean value and standard deviation were 287 (Mean = 2.59; SD = 1.284) which was above middling. This shows that the level of involvement was passive in the schools. Strong efforts, therefore, are needed from school principals to reverse the current condition in the schools.

The community involvement through consultation on school improvement issues had a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.58; SD = 1.103) which was above the middling point. This shows that the level of involvement was relatively passive and additional effort is required to change the current condition in the schools.

Concerning community involvement through consultation on school improvement issues, the mean and the standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.75; SD = 0.972) confirmed that the result was above the average cut-off point. The results show that the degree of involvement is not encouraging. Therefore, additional work is needed to reverse the current situation. With regards to participation in the delivery of service often as a partner with other actors in the school improvement programme, the mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.46; and SD = 1.148) shows that the result was below the middling point. Community involvement on service delivery was very poor, pointing to a need to transform the current situation by school principals.

In relation to the community participating as implementers of delegated powers in the school improvement programme, a mean value and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.43; SD = 1.116) shows that the variable is below the average cut-off point, which is very poor. Consequently, the practice needs transformation to reverse the current situation in the schools. On community participation in real decision-making at every stage of the school improvement programme, including identification of problems, the results of the study on feasibility, planning, implementation and evaluation had the mean and standard deviation of 287 (Mean = 2.35; SD = 1.220) showing that the factor was below the middling cut-off point. It seems that the degree of participation of the community with regard to identification of the problem, planning, monitoring and the evaluation was at a low stage in the operation. Therefore, in this indicator, more responsibility is required from the school principals to turn around the present situation.

The results in Table 33 above also confirmed that involvement of parents and the communities was low as they were largely passive and less active. This contradicts the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:26) framework which states that some specific activities that involve a high degree of participation in a wider school plan development context, which can be applied in the school improvement programme, include: collecting and analysing information; defining priorities and strategic goals; assessing available resources; deciding on and planning of the school improvement programmes; designing strategies to implement school improvement programmes and dividing responsibilities among participants; managing school improvement programmes; monitoring progress of the school improvement programmes; and evaluating the results and impacts, among others. The subsequent section presents a summary of the results of the elements of the domain of community participation in descriptive statistics.

Table 34: Summary results of the elements of the domain of community participation in descriptive statistics (Q96 – Q 107)

Summary results of the elements of the domain of community participation in descriptive statistics.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parents and community participation mean value and standard deviation summary.	287	2.6451	0.86429

In table 34 above, the summary results of Q96 – Q 107 of each and every one of the indicator practices of parents and community participation, the results of the mean value and standard deviation are 287 (Mean = 2.64; SD = 0.70219). The results confirm that there was no significant progress in terms of the school improvement programme’s set targets with regards to parents/local communities’ involvement. In other words, participation was largely passive and dismal. A low standard deviation value of SD = 0.86429 in Table 34 shows that it is very closely related to the mean value, confirming the data as reliable pertaining to parents and local communities’ involvement in school initiatives.

The summary results in Table 34 verified that secondary schools should work more closely with parents, the community at large and other stakeholders to help mobilise the resources needed to meet the challenges facing the school improvement implementation targets set by the Ministry of Education. This is because it is only through working together that the schools can seize sustainable school improvement as an opportunity.

The results from the respondents who participated in the questionnaires disclosed that parents and community participation was not improved during the implementing of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. Therefore, the school leadership and management team have a responsibility to find new ways to leverage or to bring out the big-heartedness of parents, teachers, students, the community, and other partners so as to produce sustainable school improvement. The school leadership should hope to be a voice and a conduit for a collective commitment to mobilise

diverse financial, material and human resources. Subsequently, in the effort to greatly expand finance for secondary school improvement, one of the most promising areas is to increase domestic resource mobilisation in the schools. The following section answers the question: what are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?

5.3.5 Challenges of Implementing the School Improvement Programme in the Secondary Schools

In this section, the purpose is to identify what are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools. The data collected from participants by means of the questionnaire was analysed and aligned with the basic research question. In other words, the section answers the question: what are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?

5.3.5.1 Major Challenges of the School Improvement Programme in secondary schools

The main aim of this study is to identify the challenges that are encountered during the implementation of the school improvement programme. The challenges and their mean value and deviation are presented in Table 35 below.

Table 35: Participants' responses on major challenges of SIP in secondary schools

Variables related to challenges of SIP in secondary schools	N	Yes	No	Total percent		
				Yes	No	
				%	%	%
Unable to market the school vision and mission of the school improvement programme/ineffective communication.	287	66	221	23.0	77.0	100
Poor school management and leadership.	287	210	77	73.2 (5)*	26.8	100
Lack of capacity building by principals in their roles as instructional leaders.		222	65	77.4 (2)*	22.6	
Inefficient administrative services which include improper strategic planning and improper implementation of yearly plans.	287	219	68	76.3 (3)*	23.7	
Inadequacy of the school grant/support from government/insufficient allocations of the budget.	287	83	204	28.9	71.1	100
Less commitment towards implementation, mainly by principals and teachers.	287	212	75	73.9 (4)*	26.1	100
Weak collaboration of stakeholders.	287	226	61	78.7 (1)*	21.3	100
Lack of curriculum input/lack of adequate textbooks and teaching and learning materials exacerbate the low levels of student achievement.	287	59	228	20.6	79.4	100
Poor mechanism for teacher promotions and transfer from one place to another area.	287	52	235	18.1	81.9	100
Deficiency of schools to develop and implement school-wide discipline/unable to increase consistency regarding students' behaviour throughout the school.	287	57	230	19.9	80.1	100

* It shows the ranking orders

The following were identified as major challenges for secondary schools in Table 35, in ranking order from 1-5:

- ✓ Weak collaboration of stakeholders - 226 (78.7%);
- ✓ Lack of capacity building for principals in their role as instructional leaders - 222 (77.4%);
- ✓ Inefficient administrative services which include improper strategic planning and improperly implementation of yearly plans - 219 (76.3);
- ✓ Less commitment to implementation, mainly by principals and teachers - 212 (73.9%);
- ✓ Poor school management and leadership - 210 (73.17%).

Furthermore, the major challenges from the open ended questionnaires collected from 83 (28.92%) respondents were as follows:

- ✓ dropout rate and repeating rates;
- ✓ The rapidly increasing number of students in urban areas coupled with limited resources have contributed to the low quality of teaching and raises concerns of how to meet the growing demands of secondary school education;
- ✓ Learning achievement over the past years, with less than half of the students achieving a minimum proficiency in core subjects;
- ✓ Stakeholders were not collaborative;
- ✓ Readiness and commitment among the committee members and stakeholders is very weak; and
- ✓ The weak follow up of the school improvement programme.

Secondary schools, therefore, have to actively find ways to address the above challenges in the school improve programme implementation, more so with regards to school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the learning environment, and parent and local community participation. So, extensive work is needed in school improvement by expanding capacity building and making connections among school partners within the coming five years.

5.3.6 Major Opportunities of the School Improvement Programme

This section aims to classify what the major prospects of implementing the school improvement programme in secondary schools are. The data collected from participants by means of the questionnaire was analysed and linked with the basic research question. The question to be

answered is: what are the major prospects of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools? The results are presented in the following sections. Table 36 presents the major opportunities of SIP as presented by the participants.

Table 36: Participants responses on major opportunities of SIP

Variables related to opportunities of SIP in secondary schools	N	Yes	No	Total percent		
				Yes	No	
				%	%	%
The potential for the strategic plan of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) to improve the quality of education throughout the country.	287	230	57	80.1 (1)*	19.9	100
A policy of decentralisation that advocates the devolution of decision making authority from the Federal Ministry of Education to regional education bureaus, district education offices and to the school level.	287	228	59	79.4 (2)*	20.6	100
The investment of resources in the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) that is required in the education system.	287	67	220	23.3	23.37	100
The government of Ethiopia has attached great importance to the expansion of secondary education (9-12), where the adoption of scientific concepts of development has created favourable conditions for preparatory and vocational education.	287	77	210	26.87	73.2	100
The great demand for skilled human resources in the labour market.	287	68	219	23.7	76.3	100
The curriculum matter relates to real-life contexts when compared with the old education system. It is more of a practical hands-on experience and inquiry learning that leaves room for the local contexts of the schools which offer more choices for study.	287	218	69	76.0 (4)*	24.0	100
Presence of policy guidelines, rules and regulations for school improvement and community participation framework respectively.	287	220	67	76.7 (3)*	23.3	100

* It shows the ranking orders

The respondents' responses in Table 36 above show the major prospects of secondary schools under the study in ranking order from 1-4:

- ✓ The potential for the strategic plan of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) aimed to improve the quality of education throughout the country - 230 (80.1%);
- ✓ A policy of decentralisation that advocates the devolution of the decision making authority from the Federal Ministry of Education to regional education bureaus, district education offices and to the school level - 228 (79.4%);

- ✓ Presence of policy guidelines, rules and regulations for school improvement and community participation framework respectively - 220 (76.7 %); and
- ✓ The curriculum matter relates to real-life contexts when compared with the old education system. It is more of a practical hands-on experience and inquiry learning that leaves room for the local contexts of the schools which offers more choices for the study - 218 (76.0%).

Additionally, data collected from the open ended questionnaire from 63 (21.95%) respondents identifies the following as major prospects for the future of SIP:

- The existence of General Education Quality Improvement Programme II (GEQIP II);
- School Improvement Programme Implementation II (SIP II);
- Existence of conducive political environment; and
- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) with regard to the goal of education that states “to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

In line with Sustainable Development Goals – (Education Goal 4) and other major prospects above, the school improvement programme has to be endorsed as the highest quality education enhancement programme in (9-10) secondary schools. Next section presents summary results or performance in terms of geographical location, SIP domain and elements.

5.3.7 Summary Results on the Geographical Location between Schools within the Domains and the Elements of the Domains in the School Improvement Performances

The test the performance levels within elements of domains and between the geographical location of secondary schools to describe their statistical significance and insignificance concerning the nature of collected data under study. Table 37 presents the performance level of secondary schools in their geographical locations.

Table 37: Tests about the performance of each school in SIP terms of school geographical location

Results between-subjects effects in terms of school geographical location	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Tests between-subjects effects in terms of school geographical location	508.540	12	42.378	6.598	0.000

In Table 37 above, $F(42.38, 11) = 6.6$, $P < 0.001$ shows there is a significance difference among secondary schools (9-10) in performing the activities of the school improvement programme in the schools' geographical location. In this case, the results from the questionnaire disclosed that there were no uniform performances of the activities of the school improvement programme in terms of the output among schools. The next table presents performance differences among secondary schools with regards to school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the learning environment, parents and community participation/tests of school improvement programme domains within-subjects effects.

Table 38: Tests of SIP domains within subjects' effect

Results of SIP domains within-subjects effects	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SIP domains within-subjects effects	17.689	3	5.896	27.097	0.000

Table 38 above presents the practice of school improvement among schools in terms of domains within subjects' effects of the schools. $F(27.097, 2) = 5.89$, $P < 0.001$ revealed there is a significant difference among the schools. This implies that there were low performances among secondary schools when compared with the intended result. Table 39 presents the tests of elements of SIP domains in SIP within-subjects effects.

Table 39: The tests of elements of the domains in SIP within- subjects' effect

The results elements of the domains in SIP tests within-subjects effects	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Elements of the domains in SIP tests within-subjects effects	454.573	21	21.646	41.972	0.000

In Table 39 above the implementation of elements in the domains of SIP $F(41.98, 20) = 21.65$, $P < 001$ revealed that there are significant differences in implementation with regard to elements in the domains of school improvement in secondary schools. The results also show that there is significant difference between the elements of the domains in school improvement. This implies that there were low performance achievements between 22 sub-elements of school improvement.

Additionally, data collected from the open ended questionnaires by 208 (72.47%) of the respondents revealed that the school improvement guidelines have to be adapted to the betterment of the needs of rural secondary schools. School grants have to continue to be provided with additional per capital incentives for disadvantaged students, including students with special educational needs. School leadership and management knowledge and skills training have to be provided to school principals and supervisors to strengthen their evidence based planning and decision making. Lastly, hygiene and sanitation and ICT infrastructure should be improved to enhance the school improvement programme. The next sections present qualitative analysis and interpretation of interviews with zone education supervisors, districts education office experts, principals, vice principals and supervisors of secondary schools.

5.4 Interviews with Zone Education Supervisors, District Education Office Experts, Principals, Vice Principals and Supervisors of Secondary Schools

A simple description narrative was used to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of data which involves the transformation of 'field notes' into 'research notes'. In order to organise the data from the interview sessions, first the data was manually coded, categorised, and themed in 15 sub-divisions in the form of diaries and then discussion was made in detail. Then again, respondents' responses were organised using the interview questions which facilitated the interpretation of the data collected from each clustered secondary school. Consequently, this

section provides an analysis of the interview questions collected from 12 (six principals and six vice principals), 12 distinct education department experts, six secondary school supervisors, and four zone education office supervisors. Each interview question focused on the experiences of participants in the implementation of the school improvement programme at their respective secondary schools.

Table 40: Interview respondents' classification by education level and age

Ages and education levels of respondents of the interview discussions																		
Age and educational	Zone education			School supervisors			principal s			Vice princip			District Education			Total participants		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
20-30 age					1	1	-	1	1	-	2	2		-	-	-	4	4
31-40 age	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	6	11	7	18
41- 50 age	1	-	1	2	-	2	2		2	1	-	1	5	1	6	11	1	12
Above 50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	1	4	4	2	6	4	2	6	3	3	6	8	4	12	22	12	34
Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BA/B.SC.	3	-	3	4	2	6	4	2	6	3	3	6	8	4	12	22	11	33
MA	-	1	1	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	1	1
Total	3	1	4	4	2	6	4	2	6	3	3	6	8	4	12	22	12	34

As indicated in Table 40 above, with regard to the age of the respondents, 4 (11.76%) were 20-30 years of age, 18 (52.94%) between 31-40 years of age, and 12 (35.29%) were 41-50 years of age. In total, there were 34 respondents, 22 male and 12 female. Concerning the educational status of the respondents, 33 (97.05%) hold BA/BSC degrees, while 1 (2.95%) holds an MA degree. The next section present the interview results on school leadership and management in relation to the school improvement programme.

5.4.1 Interview Results on School Leadership and Management in Relation to the School Improvement Programme

The main aim of this interview session was to examine the extent to which school leadership and management in secondary schools improved as a result of implementing the school improvement programme. It also assesses to what extent school principals and administrators in secondary schools can run a school improvement programme efficiently and effectively, balancing their roles as instructional leaders, that is, how they are effective in managing teachers' professional development, parent and community relationships, make data-driven decisions, and nurture personal growth and leadership. Then the next section discusses school leadership and management in grades 9-10 secondary schools in detail.

5.4.1.1 School Leadership and Management

The section answers the question: To what extent do school leadership and management teams run the implementation of the school improvement programme? This question was first presented to the six secondary schools of Gachi, Hurumu, Gore, Nopa, Uka, and Mattu. The respondents were six school principals (male 4, female 2), six vice school principals (male 3, female 3) and six school supervisors (male 4, female 2). In Gore and Mettu secondary schools the principals and supervisors specifically revealed that “currently the schools have updated policies, procedures, systems and strategies to implement the school improvement programme going on in the secondary schools. Hurumu and Nopa secondary principals and supervisors also verified that the schools have adopted policies and practices that clearly identify delegation, responsibilities and accountability with flat organisational structures that support the implementation of the school improvement programme.” Besides, six school principals confirmed that “almost all the schools have developed a strategic direction of school improvement plan based on their vision and mission and strategic directions that align with the government legislative requirements” however, as the researcher and assistant viewed, in clustered schools there are still weaknesses in setting the strategic direction of the school plans that identify key directions which are dynamic and responsive to change over time.

The twelve district education office experts (male 8, female 4) verified that in their respective districts, “secondary schools were guided by the national strategic plans, however, schools develop their own plans that reflect the school’s vision and mission statements, objectives, actions, resources, responsibilities of various school based on structures, and mechanisms of measuring performance within a specific time. The school assumes the responsibilities of establishing organisational structure committees and sub-committees and systems that will drive various programmes and manage various performance areas.”

Doing well planning of school improvement helps the schools in improving their performance in secondary schools (9-10); this happens if there is a leadership and management support in secondary in the administrative zone for school community on how to make the school improvement plans. In relation to the available support on planning, one of the zone education department experts’s pointed out:

“We give training and detailed orientation at the beginning of each year to principals and supervisor on planning and related issues of school improvement programme. After attending the trainings they go to their schools and handle the preparation of the plans for their own schools.”

Besides, four supervisors in the zone education office (male 3, female 1) also disclosed that “districts were not able to strengthen principals’ hands in becoming stronger instructional leaders by addressing the barriers noted above through policies and teacher development training; defining the instructional leadership role so that principals and administrators clearly understand what is expected of them; using an assessment system that provides data on principal instructional leadership, that is both reliable and valid for accountability and useful for professional improvement.” They also stated that “there is good practice that developed in secondary schools in implementing school improvement programme that some school’s vision and mission act as a steady point of reference for achieving the improvement goals of the school.” Contrary to this idea, “the district education experts confirmed that in their respective districts “school leadership and management teams were not uniformly committed to translating into action the vision and mission of the school improvement programme.” The next section presents school leadership approaches suitable for secondary school improvement programmes.

5.4.1.2 Leadership Approaches to Bring Future Focused Change in the School Improvement Programme

This section answers the question: which leadership approaches were applied in secondary schools to bring future focused change in the school improvement programme? With regard to this question, four zone education supervisors (3 male, 1 female) agreed that in secondary schools “there is a trend of organising a strategic planning sessions with the staff and other concerned bodies, to shape and share by all stakeholders. However, principals lack knowledge and skills of assigning tasks as to who should report to whom, and on how to delegate specific duties to specific staff members according to the decision taken in the plenary phase.”

The 12 district education experts (8 male and 4 female) confirmed that “in organising school improvement programmes, the principals have difficulties in harmonising relations among all stakeholders that have a mandate to reach school improvement goals.” Zone education supervisors also verified “that school principals lack knowledge and skill in handling and resolving conflict, and in the art of negotiation which is essential for the fulfilment of the school improvement programme.” Both zone education and district education office participants (11male and 5 female) explained that “in terms of the school leadership approaches used, secondary school principals could not discharge and create a balance between their school management and school leadership responsibilities to improve their schools.”

Two school principals verified that “schools were without sufficient finances that made school improvement programme goals difficult to meet.” Even when the schools have sufficient funds to sustain its educational activities, some funds were not properly managed. Besides, these two principals revealed that they have been unable to ensure that school funds were not raised and properly managed. The next section presents the practices of change exercised in secondary school improvement programmes.

5.4.1.3 Change in the Implementation of the School Improvement Programme

This section answers the question: what type of change is going on in the school improvement programme implementation? In relation to this question, four zone education office supervisors

(male 3, female 1), 12 district education office experts (male 8, female 4), six school principals (male 4, female 2), six vice school principals (male 3, female 3), and six secondary school supervisors (male 4, female 2) concomitantly disclosed that “incremental change approach was practiced in the schools, and that happened as a step-by-step movement towards the set targets, with the notions that good change can take time that school improvement programme implementation occurring in an evolutionary way.” In proposing solutions to this question, all 34 respondents (male 22, female 12) stated that the transformational change approach was preferable because currently in the zone administrative zone schools were working poorly both internally and externally. They further explained that transformational change is needed to entirely bring new behaviour sets on the part of school principals, school governing bodies, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, local communities and other partners.” The next section presents activities related to good practices in relation to school improvement programme.

5.4.1.4 Leading and Managing the School Activities with Good Practices

This section answers the question: in leading and managing the school activities presently what good practices are there to strengthen the school improvement programme implementation? In responding to this question one of school principal said that, in his school there is thinking in the school community that all jobs related to school improvement programme were left to the management team.” He further argued that, “school improvement programme implementation in the secondary schools needs active assessment on the part of all teachers, students, parents and other stake holders on how to improve the current school improvement programme implementation.” He also added that “there was no well-built trend of continuous consultation time with parents, students and other stakeholders in the schools who are the final judges of school improvement programme implementation output whether the planned programme was met or exceed the needs of and expectations of the students and parents.”

In supporting the above idea, three (male 2, female 1) district education officers confirmed that there were no trends of external look for the school improvement programme of secondary schools to get best experiences as a benchmark in the secondary schools services to find the best method to fit in to the existing school improvement programme implementation. They also verified that this needs concerted efforts from all school principals to get best experiences as a

benchmark to bring real changes in secondary schools.” The next section presents the generation of school internal income in secondary schools.

5.4.1.5 Generation of School Internal Income to Fund the School Improvement Programme

This section answers the question: how do schools generate school internal income to fund school improvement programme implementation? Concerning this question four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) and 12 (male 8, female 4) district education department experts explained that school registration fees were the major source of internal income for government schools before the Education and Training Policy was adopted in 1994.” But 12 (male 8, female 4) district education department experts said that “the new Education and Training policy of 1994 abolished all types of school fees so that no child/student will be denied admission to school because of his/her inability to pay school fees.” Zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) revealed that the government was not able to allocate enough budgets to schools, which would compensate for what they lost because of the abolishment of school fees. As a result, all secondary schools, except those in rural areas that have farmlands, faced severe financial constraints. The principals and vice principals agreed that “they face financial constraints to run their schools”. In fact, all of the schools covered in this study received cash or material support for school improvement from district education departments.

To overcome financial problems, two the principals (male 2, female -) and three supervisors (male 2, female 1) revealed that “they understood the importance of generating internal income to fund for school improvement programme implementation. But it was only a small number of schools that managed to generate internal income in their schools. Their major sources internal income was farmlands, parents’ contribution, school club activities, evening classes and rent of classrooms for different events.” The next section presents school supervision by principals and department heads.

5.4.1.6 School Supervision by Principals and Department Heads

This section answers the question: to what extent does the school principal provide supervision and support department heads and teachers to meet the purposes of the school improvement? In this question, in the interviews held with six school supervisors (male 4, female 2) and zone education supervisor (male 3, female 1) confirmed that “the major challenges of school

management and leadership were: lack of experiences and capacity building; absence of inner decentralisation that involves sharing leadership by sharing out among staff members and weak collaboration among stakeholders and lack of knowledge and skills in the areas of instructional leadership.” In this area of school supervision for school principals and department heads capacity building is needed to overcome the current problems. For example with regards to the principal’s role in the school one of the principal in secondary school said:

“As a principal of the school I have no time to spend in supporting teachers, because I mainly engaged in activities and meetings outside of the school. I only come to the school two or three times a week and acts like a visitor.”

On the other hand, the four education supervisors of the zone (male 4, female 1) and the 12 district education office experts (male 8, female 4) verified that “principals did not free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and could not focus their efforts on improving teaching and learning.” The next section discusses the involvement of the school committee in the school improvement process.

5.4.1.7 Involvement of School Committee in the School Improvement Process

This section answers the question: how do you rate the involvement of the school improvement committee in school self-assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? In this particular question, the interview sessions were held with all principals and vice principals about school self-assessment and school development planning and they responded that “all of them make self-assessment and planning in their respective schools. However, the participation of school improvement committee is largely passive and inactive”. With regards to monitoring and evaluation of tasks to ensure whether the set objectives were met, the principals confirmed that “there were weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating the set goals to determine the cause for the failure and corrective action to resolve the problems in the implementation processes.”

5.4.1.8 Alternative Strategies to the School Improvement Programme

This section answers the question: what other school improvement measures will you suggest to make the existing implementation of the school improvement programme more effective? In connection with what measures will be needed for the existing school improvement programme, the six school principals (male 4, female 2) and three secondary school supervisors (male 2,

female 1) suggested that “strengthening clustering of secondary school to give confidence of stakeholders at different stages and cluster (e.g. schools to schools, principals to principals, teacher – teacher; teacher – parents; parent – parent; parents – traditional leaders; parents – local governments; schools – local governments) and encourage educational practices that promote pupils learning growth into the school decision making process is supportive in strengthening the existing school improvement programme”.

Similarly, the interview with two principals (male 1, female 1) revealed that “in the school improvement activities, secondary schools were not strongly clustered with each other under the responsibility of zone education office. Hence, it is recommended to cluster secondary schools in the administrative zone according to their geographical location with district education offices.” The next paragraph presents the involvement of school education boards and parent teacher associations.

5.4.1.9 Involvement of School Education Board and Parent Teacher Association

This section answers the question: to what extent is the school education board and school parent teacher association (PTA) effective in planning, organising and the implementing the school improvement programme? In this question, six school boards and PTAs (male 4, female 2) and school principals (male 3, female 1) confirmed that “the involvement of PTAs was showing improvement from time to time in school improvement programme at all stages. Nonetheless, involvements of the school boards in the schools were mostly passive.” The next section presents the interview results of the teaching and learning process in the selected secondary schools.

5.4.2 Interview Results on Improving Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

The main objective this topic was to determine the effectiveness of the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools. Then the next sections discuss the interviews results on curriculum; use of teaching methods in the classroom; teachers professional development; the learning and evaluation system; relationships among staff, students and families and students’ learning and their problems in detail.

5.4.2.1 Interview Results on Curriculum

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to the curriculum? Interviews with four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1), 12 district education office experts (male 7, female 5), six school principals (male 4, female 2), six vice principals (male 3, female 3) and six supervisors of secondary schools (male 4, female 2) concomitantly disclosed that “the new curriculum of secondary schools is aimed at having a significant contribution to the improvement of the quality of education. Additionally, zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) verified that the quality of education has been an issue since 1994 during the Derge regime in which the community strongly criticised the Derge regime for not doing enough to provide access, relevance, equity and quality education. Besides, 4 district education office experts (male 3, female 2) said that “the new curriculum that was implemented in secondary schools throughout Ethiopia allows various nationalities and people to be educated in their own mother tongue, and it appreciates the role and contributions of women in the society at large and it provides access, relevance, equity and quality education.” The next section presents the use of teaching methods in the classroom.

5.4.2.2 Interview Results on the Use of Teaching Methods in the Classroom

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to the use of teaching methods? The interview results of two principals (male 1, female 1), and three vice principals (male 1, female 2) and three secondary school supervisors (male 1, female 2) in Uka, Mattu, and Gore secondary schools disclosed that “in the areas of curriculum implementation, teachers face difficulties due to shortage of supplementary teaching materials and teaching aids.” Some of these materials include lack of up-to-date maps, laboratory chemicals and apparatus.

Gachi, Hurumu and Nopa secondary school principals (male 2, female 1) and three supervisors (male 1, female 2) noted that in the school improvement programme, with respect to the implementation of active learning strategies in secondary schools, the teaching and learning process was hampered by the following factors:

1. Most teachers in secondary school strongly support the traditional method (lecture method) of teaching, assuming that the teacher is the main source of knowledge and knows best;
2. The classroom condition - size, shape and construction of the classroom, instructional facilities like furniture, resource centre, and laboratory and library services were insufficient and poor.
3. Class size in the urban secondary schools (Mettu, Gore, Bedele and Darimu) - teachers cannot do practical activities and problem solving methods in overcrowded classrooms. As a result it is not suitable to provide different projects; experiments and group work have many students in overcrowded classrooms.
4. Absence of a clean and well-kept rooms with appropriate resources and air conditioned rooms hampered active learning.
5. In terms of the curriculum, some text books do not incorporate active learning; they only served one-way communication.

With regard to active teaching method, one of the principals in secondary school indicated that:

“Most of the teachers in the school are not committed to use of active learning strategies. Their professional development plans also do not strictly focus on acquainting themselves with active learning strategies that help students to interact with each other.”

Additionally, two principals (male 1, female 1) and two school supervisors (male 2, female 0) confirmed that in Nopa and Uka secondary schools, “the physical environment (classroom arrangements, furniture arrangements, classroom layout, etc.) made it difficult to promote active learning.” Above and beyond, two principals (male 1, female 1) said that the absence of clean and well-kept rooms with appropriate resources and well aired rooms contributed negatively to teaching and learning processes. Lastly, two school supervisors (male 2, female 0) said that “some syllabi and students text books do not incorporate active learning strategies. That is, syllabi and student text books only serve one-way instruction, whereby learners read what has been written, but in no way respond to the material. This greatly reduces the creativity of the learners and the implementation of active learning.”

The interview results from three school principals (male 2, female 1), three vice principals (male 1, female 2) and three school supervisors (male 2, female 1) of Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools with respect to active learning noted that “all teachers use the lecture method which shows that the student-centred approach is declining and some teachers use the class discussion method in which very few students participate. Three vice principals (male 1, female 2) further elaborated that “most students did not participate in the discussions due to large classes and the problem of using the English language as a medium of instruction. Three school principals (male 2, female 1), also noted that “the students begin to learn all subjects in English from grade 9 so they are reluctant to speak in English. There is no uniformity in all subjects or all grade levels as far as active learning is concerned. Besides, three school supervisors (male 2, female 1) verified that “pair share learning was not practiced in the schools. But students share ideas when they get opportunities when they have free class even they teach each other.”

Four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) disclosed that “the learning cell method as an active learning strategy was not successfully implemented, however, in all classes and grade levels, students are grouped into 1:5 (one to five) groups.” On the other hand, 12 district education office experts (male 8, female 4) commonly said that “the students were active only in doing the assignments together. The great challenge to teachers and to the school concerning group work is that in each group brave students do the assignment for others. The rest get marks without participating in the group work.” Four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) also confirmed that this was affecting the quality of education negatively. As the participants further noted, the class game learning method was not used. But occasionally language classes use it through selected students.” The next section presents the nature of teachers’ professional development in the selected secondary schools.

5.4.2.3 Interview Results on Teachers’ Continuous Professional Development

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to teachers’ continuous professional developments? Concerning teachers’ professional development, six principals (male 4, female 2), six vice principals (male 3, female 3), and six supervisors (male 4, female 2)

stated that “all schools have a programme for teachers’ continuous professional development. That is, in all schools teachers have individual programmes or plans.

The supervisor of one secondary school indicated that:

“The arrangement for experience sharing at cluster level is challenged by lack of the necessary facilities, such as lack of transport for teachers to travel from their school to cluster school and shortage of funds to cover their daily expenses during cluster meetings.”

All teachers in each department meet once a week to discuss on issues related to teachers’ professional development but there was no coordinated plan throughout the year. Three principals (male 2, female 1), three vice principals (male 1, female 2), and three supervisors (male 2, female 1) from Sibbo, Gachi and Mettu secondary schools also disclosed that “there are teachers who conduct action researches to get promotion and for salary increment and other incentives.” They also said that action research is not used to solve teaching and learning problems. Besides, they underpinned that the impact of teachers’ continuous professional development on teachers’ and student achievement was insignificant due to the absence of handbooks of guiding manuals for teachers’ continuous professional development.”

5.4.2.4 Interview Results on Learning and Evaluation System

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to the learning and evaluation system? An interview held with four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) and 12 district education officers (male 8, female 4) disclosed that “assessment is the most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.” That is, assessment works best when it seeks for continual improvement, and has clear, explicitly stated purposes.

However, they confirmed that secondary schools were not applying continuous assessment uniformly as a result of the following problems:

- large class sizes;
- teachers think that continuous assessment can cause grade inflation;
- teachers assume that it creates high workload for teachers;

- Due to lack of resources (like laboratory equipment and other teaching materials).”

The next section presents the interview results on relationships among staff, students and families.

5.4.2.5 Interview Results on Relationship among Staff, Students and Families

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to relationships among staff, students and families? With respect to the relationship among school, staff, students and families (parents) three principals (male 2, female 1), three vice principals (male 1, female 2), and three supervisors (male 2, female 1) from Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi secondary schools confirmed that “in their schools the schools have created friendly environment for teachers specially saving and credit association systems.” Besides, three principals (male 2, female 1) also disclosed that “students have students’ council and through their representatives, they participate in different discussions settings with teachers, parents and school management teams.”

In schools like Nopa, Hurumu and Gachi, Gore, Uka Mattu secondary schools pertaining to students’ behaviour three supervisors (male 2, female 1) revealed that “almost all students have positive relations with each other and the school community.” Three vice principals (male 1, female 2) also replied that there are exceptional students who misbehave.” In addition, three principals (male 2, female 1) verified that in their respective schools “students are aggressive to teachers and their fellow friends. In dealing with this problem, all the principals and vice principals explained that to prevent inappropriate behaviour there is a school regulation known by all students, and there are advices and punishments decided by the teachers and parent association of the school.”

Concerning the student facilities six principals (male 3, female 2), six vice principals (male 3, female 3), and six supervisors (male 4, female 2) from Nopa, Hurumu, Gachi, Gore, Uka and Mattu secondary schools confirmed that “their schools provide the available facilities to the students.” But they noted that “there is shortage of many facilities like students seats in class, with more than sixty students learning in one class, lack of plasma, and lack of internet facilities

and shortage of water supply, whereby students cannot get even drinking water throughout the year.”

Then again, in the secondary schools of Mettu, Gore, Gachi and Hurumu, four school principals (male 3, female 1), four vice principals (male 2, female 2) and four secondary school supervisors (male 3, female 1) explained that with regards to “sanitation and hygiene facilities in their respective secondary schools sanitation and hygiene facilities were not promoted systematically through the application of clear regulation and participation of school staff, students and parents in planning and managing facilities with regards to hygiene and sanitation in the schools.” This indicates concerted effort is needed to enhance hygiene and sanitation in secondary schools. The next section presents the interview results on students learning and their problems.

5.4.2.6 Interview Results on Student Learning and their Problems

This section answers the question: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools with regards to student learning and their problems? Four zone supervisors (male 3, female 1), 12 district education officers (male 8, female 4), and six supervisors (male 4, female 2) disclosed that “in Iluababor administrative zone, the major problems encountered by students for the most part was low academic achievements.” There are different opinions by different school communities. High school teachers blame the primary schools. That is, primary school students join secondary schools without basic skills like reading, writing and speaking, especially in the English language. In secondary schools, all subjects except Afaan Oromo and Amaharic languages are presented in English. Accordingly, students in grades 9-10 face problems of communication in the English language.

Most participants, six (male 4, female 2) principals, six (male 3, female 3) vice principals and six (male 4, female 2) school supervisors disclosed “that teachers complain that their living standard is low and the cost of living is beyond their ability.” They also said, “teachers also criticise that their rights and benefits are not treated properly and that they are suffering from low income, low purchasing power which leads to low living standards, while other employers in other government sectors are lucky in terms of getting salary than teachers who have very long service

years.” In addition, they explained that there are no salary increments for senior teachers after reaching the last level of the teachers’ career structure. Additionally, they disclosed that there are very few opportunities for teachers to upgrade and update their professional qualifications.

In the secondary schools of Gore, Mettu, Hurumu and Gachi the four principals (male 2, female 1) and the four vice principals (male 3, female 1) said in their respective schools teachers complain that many teachers are very poor or without homes of their own and most teachers live in rented houses paying high costs and have no chance to build their houses because they are poor and cannot get residential land due to lack of good governance in their respective areas.

Example, with regards to the students’ discipline in the secondary schools, one of the supervisors said:

“Teachers prefer to keep silent as they are told to make students free and students are given much freedom in the school. There is no way to control misbehaving students. In the school I was supervising, the management team of the school were reluctant to take actions on discipline matters unless the problems are related to politics.”

As a result, teachers could not position themselves in suitable learning environments to read, write and think peacefully. Such conditions affect teachers’ lesson preparation and other teaching and learning processes. Currently, most teachers are not interested in the teaching profession; they want to abandon the profession by studying other subjects not related to their respective subjects to join other professions. The problems listed above in turn affect negatively the student learning in secondary schools.

Four zone education supervisors (male 3, female 1) and 12 district education officers (male 8, female 4) substantiated that teachers have the following problems: “Some teachers do not like to prepare lesson plan; many teachers do not to apply active learning method; some teachers consider CTPD (Continuous Teachers Professional Development) as laborious, time consuming and extra load upon teachers.” Finally, they recommended “that to avoid problems related to teachers they propose the following solutions, that is, supervisors, directors and teachers have to receive teaching licences and teachers’ performances have to be evaluated continuously.” In this regard, immense efforts are needed from the Ministry of Education for capacity building

facilities to enable teachers to work well and all learners to learn. The next section presents the interview results on the learning environment of secondary schools.

5.4.3 Interview Results on the Learning Environment of Secondary Schools

Creating an effective learning environment requires building effective classroom management. Its main goal is to provide effective instruction that leads to student learning. To achieve this it requires creating a classroom environment that is consistent, positive, and promotes students' independent behaviour. Thus, this section discusses briefly the existing learning environment in the grades 9-10 secondary schools.

The questions presented to the participants were: How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools? How do you evaluate the status of your school facilities that enable all staff to work well and for all students? How do you describe sanitation and hygiene facilities in secondary schools? In the secondary schools of Nopa, Hurumu and Gachi, Uka, four principals (male 3, female 1) and four vice principals (male 2, female 2) verified that “the physical outward looking of the schools for example, buildings, fences around the school grounds, playing area for students, and a teacher's room with desks and storage were poorly managed. Besides, in schools there were also untidy buildings and other school facilities that negatively affect the teaching and learning activities.”

Regarding resources and facilities, one of the supervisors in the one of the secondary schools indicated that:

“The schools do not have sufficient budget for basic materials and facilities needed for school improvement. Sometimes the school faces shortage of materials in the school and sometimes, the school authorities tell us that the school improvement activities are not budgeted for.”

In addition, in the secondary schools of Nopa and Uka the two school principals (male 1, female 1) the two supervisors (male 1, female 1) and the two vice principals (male 1, female 1) confirmed that “the state of the school's physical facilities in secondary schools were not in a position to invite learners and provide safe place for existing staff and learners.” Then again, teachers did not have sufficient space to perform their administrative duties in schools. Two vice principals (male 1, female 1) in their respective schools said that “there were insufficient classrooms leading to overcrowding and over utilisation of facilities such as school furniture.”

Two supervisors (male 1, female 1) also verified that “there were no sufficient and well maintained school grounds for all learners’ sporting and recreational activities for spending considerable time in the classroom as well as providing vital interaction with fellow learners.” The next section presents the interview results on parents and community participation.

5.4.4 Interview Result on Parents and Community Participation

The involvement of parents and local communities in the school improvement programme is critical to grades 9-10 secondary school academic success. Then in this section participation of school boards, the role played by PTAs, and school collaboration with external stakeholders is discussed as follows.

5.4.4.1 Participation of School Boards and Parent Teacher Associations

The question presented to the participants was: what is the participation status of PTAs and school boards in the school improvement programme? In the secondary schools of Gachi, Hurumu, Nopa and Sibona four (male 3, female 1) school principals and 4 (male 2, female 2) vice principals commonly agreed that “the school education and training boards are formally in existence. But they were not effective in discharging their duties and responsibilities. The significance/functions of the boards, their members/leaders, their activities and their work place etc., were not well known among the school staff, with respect to the school improvement programme implementation.” school principals and 4 (male 2, female 2) also verified that “the school board committees lacked coordination to prepare effective plans that brought high absence of board members during regular meetings. In all the four schools with regards to the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement programme implementation high absenteeism of board members is still a continuous problem during regular meetings.” Besides, 4 (male 2, female 2) vice principals also disclosed that “school boards have no sufficient awareness of their duties and responsibilities, whilst parent teacher association (PTA) members who are selected from the community relied on their own daily duties rather than giving focus to school agendas due to lack of awareness and lack of incentives.” Additionally, four (male 3, female 1) school principals disclosed that “there were no quarterly and annual evaluations in the schools with PTAs, local communities and district education offices on a regular basis.” The next section presents school collaboration with external stakeholders.

5.4.4.2 School Collaboration with External Stakeholders

The question presented to the participants was: to what extent does collaboration with external stakeholders support secondary school improvement programme initiatives? In Mettu, Gore, Bedele Gachi, Hurumu, and Uka secondary schools six (male 4, female 2) principals and six (male 3, female 3) vice principals described that “there was no strong collaboration among school principals, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.” Similarly,” they confirmed that there was no well-built collaboration within the district education office, the zone education office and the schools.”

Regarding community participation one of the principal in secondary school said:

“We call parents for a general meeting at the beginning of each year, and we communicate them the annual school improvement plan of the school to parents and other selected community members. At the end of the year, we call for second general meeting to report what the school has done to the community.”

From this principal’s idea one can see that there was no continuous monitoring of the school achievements because it is only at the end of the year that the participants discuss on the achievements of the school year based on the report of the school.

As a possible solution they suggested that secondary school principal should establish strong relations between the district education office, the zone education office and NGOs and others in their area for the purpose of school programme implementation. The next section presents interview results on the major challenges of school improvement of secondary schools.

5.4.5 Interview Results on Major Challenges of School Improvement of Secondary Schools

In this section the main objective the interviews sessions was to identify the main challenges of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools. The next paragraphs present the interview results as follows.

The question presented to the participants was: what are the main challenges in implementing the school improvement programme in secondary schools? Concerning the interviews made in Mettu, Gore, and Bedele secondary school discussions made with the four zone education office supervisors (male 4, female 1), the three district education office experts (male 1, female 2), the three secondary school supervisors (male 1, female 2), the three school principals (male 1, female 2) and the three vice principals (male 2, female 1) all uniformly confirmed that

“insufficient co-operation by parents and the community in supporting school initiatives created as one challenge. This is partly due to the fact that teachers and school principals have not done sufficient efforts to raise the awareness of parents and communities about the importance of school improvement programme. The other challenge they disclosed was the lack of incentives for teachers and principals to carry out school improvement activities.”

In Mettu, Gore, Bedele Gachi, Hurumu and Uka secondary schools six (male 4, female 2) principals and six (male 3, female 3) vice principals confirmed that “the other major challenge highlighted was budget limitations.” The budget allotted by district education offices for secondary schools for non-salary activities was low and this has not been sufficient to support their school improvement initiatives. So, raising additional revenue locally will reinforce differences between schools, since communities with lower resource levels were less able to contribute. Additionally, in Mettu, Gore, Bedele Gachi, Hurumu and Uka secondary schools six (male 4, female 2) principals and six (male 3, female 3) vice principals confirmed that “lack of skills and knowledge to manage the schools were challenges.” By and large, the six supervisors (male 4, female 3) and 12 experts of district education offices (male 8, female 4) similarly indicated that “the implementation of the school improvement programme has faced obstacles at school levels mainly due to lack of implementation capacity, financial limitations, lack of proper support from top leadership and low awareness of parents and communities.” Accordingly, supervisors and experts of district education departments recommended that “if the school improvement programme is to be properly implemented, then systematic and well-organised efforts are required at all levels.”

Nonetheless, in Mettu, Gore, Bedele Gachi, Hurumu and Uka secondary schools six (male 4, female 2) principals and six (male 3, female 3) vice principals, six (male 4, female 2) secondary school supervisors, four (male 3, female 1) zone education supervisors, 12 (male 8, female 4) district education experts all agreed that “the key challenges were: a lack trained laboratory technicians; insufficient learning resources such as laboratory equipment; lack of interest to learn on the parts of few students; and lack of induction training of new teachers about school improvement programme.”

Lastly, in the secondary schools of Sibbo, Mettu, Gachi Gore, Hurumu and Uka six (male 4, female 2) principals, six (male 3, female 3) vice principals, six (male 4, female 2) school supervisors, 12 (male 8, female 4) districts education supervisors and four (male 4, female 1) zone education supervisors explained that “the absence of education law proclamation for secondary school system that clearly identifies delegations, responsibilities and accountability for school principals, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in the schools were the key challenges for the school improvement implementation.” The next section presents the major opportunities for the school improvement programme.

5.4.6 Interview Results on Major Opportunities for Secondary Schools

This section helps to explore the major prospects for the school improvement programme implementation in selected secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone. The next paragraphs present the results of the interviews sessions as follows.

The question presented to the participants was: what are the major prospects/opportunities of implementing the school improvement programme? In the secondary schools of Sibbo, Mettu, Gachi Gore, Hurumu and Uka six (male 4, female 2) principals, six (male 3, female 3) vice principals, six (male 4, female 2) school supervisors, 12 (male 8, female 4) district education supervisors and four (male 4, female 1) zone education supervisors all groups commonly verified that “the opportunities for secondary school improvement programme they listed were similar with responses from open ended questionnaire, that is presence of policy guidelines; existence of education sector development programme (ESDP); a policy of decentralisation system, and existence good political environment to implement school improvement programme.” The next section presents the focus discussion analysis related to the basic questions to the study.

5.5 Focus Group Discussion Results from PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations) and Student Council Members

In this section, an analysis of the focus group discussions with parent teacher association and student council representative committees in groups of five to seven is provided. The focus group discussions were about the participants’ experience of service in the committee pertaining to the school improvement programme at their respective secondary schools. Accordingly, this

section also provides an analysis of the focus group discussion interviews with parents and teacher association and student council members in groups of five to seven in three clustered secondary schools (9-10). Each interview question focused on the roles and involvement of the committees in the school improvement programme at their respective secondary schools. Consequently, the next section presents the focus groups' discussion respondents' education status and age levels.

Table 41: Respondents' classification by education status and age levels

Respondents' classification by education status and age levels						
Educational level and age levels of the respondents	Parent Teacher Association (PTA)			Student council members		
Age levels of the respondents	M	F	T	M	F	T
15-20	-	-	-	14	7	21
20-30 age	1	2	3	-	-	-
31-40 age	9	4	13	-	-	-
41-50 age	3	2	5	-	-	-
Above 50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	13	8	21	14	7	21
Educational status of the respondents						
1-4 grade	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-8 grade	-	-	-	-	-	-
9-10 grade	1	-	1	14	7	21
11-12 grade	6	5	11	-	-	-
Certificate	1	-	1	-	-	-
Diploma	2	-	2	-	-	-
BA/B.SC.	3	3	6	-	-	-
Total	13	8	21	14	7	21

As indicated in Table 41 above, with regard to the age of parent teacher association committees 3(14.29%) were in the 20-30 years age category, 13 (61.90%) were 31-40 years, 5 (23.81%) were 41-50 years. The total number of PTS respondents was 21. The age of student council members ranged from 15-20 for all 21 participants (100%). The education status of the PTAs was as follows: 9-10 grades 22 (52.38%), 11-12 grades 11 (26.19%), certificate holder one (2.38%), diploma holder two (4.76%), BA/BSC degree was six (14.28 %) respectively. Concerning student council members' education status, all 21 of them (100%) were grades 9-10 pupils. The respondents involved in the interviews session were 42 in total. The next paragraph presents focus group discussion results of the questions presented to the respondents as follows:

5.5.1 Focus Group Discussions on School Leadership and Management

In this section the main objective of the focus group discussion was to assess secondary school principals and school management teams on how they run the school improvement tasks being responsible for both school leadership and management hand-in-hand. The next section discusses the role of school principals, school management teams, strategies, school planning, monitoring, evaluation, and the technical assistance from the zone education office and the district education offices.

5.5.1.1 Role of School Leader and Management Teams

The question presented to the participants was: to what extent do school leadership and management teams run the implementation of the school improvement programme? The question concerning school leadership and management in Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools PTAs, 14 (male 10, female 4) focus group participants responded that “since the commencement of the school improvement programme in 2008, management tasks such as planning, organising, directing and controlling system of school improvement programme getting strengthened from time to time.” That is, planning in the schools was placed on the school vision, goals and objectives. With their particular school principals PTAs organise the planning process to link components of the school improvement structure including school community, so that through joint action increased effectiveness can be achieved in executing school improvement tasks. In addition, one of the PTA members indicated that:

“The school has no strong link with the community. It has not established a system of continuous discussion with parents and other stakeholders. The community did not fully participate in school improvement activities and in the use of resources and facilities in the school.”

On the other hand, the 14 (male 9, female 5) student council members of the two secondary schools verified that “in the school planning process, in monitoring and controlling systems they participate fully and also practice school improvement activities by preparing regular checklist in Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools, mainly focusing on assessing whether the aims and objectives are achieved.” One group in Sibbo secondary school disclosed that “the major problems in the school leadership and management in these two schools were the school principals giving more attention to managerial, administrative tasks, and other assignments from

district administrative bodies while that of teaching and learning they assign to others in the administrative ladder, even if the core task of a school is teaching and learning.” The next section presents the school leadership and management strategies of school improvement programmes.

5.5.1.2 School Leadership and Management and Strategies

The question presented to the participants was: what leadership and management strategies were applied in your respective secondary schools to bring future focused change via the school improvement programme? The 14 student council members of Mettu and Sibbo (male 9, female 5) and the 14 PTA members (male 9, female 5) from the secondary schools verified that, “the practice of exercising school self-assessment tasks provided them with an important base line of information to measure the annual plan against the school strategic plan over five to three years.” The seven parent teacher association members in Sibbo (male 4, female 3) secondary school verified that “there were practices of analysing information collected during the self-assessment stage, and identifying priority areas for improvement in the school each year. Similarly, in Mettu secondary school seven PTA members (male 4, female 3) disclosed that “school leaders make considerable effort to put into practice the school vision on the school improvement programme and how to establish better learning for the students.” On the other hand, one of the student council members confirmed that:

“The school has no comprehensive strategies in place to support students. At the department level, the teachers of the departments have no clear understanding of how to support students and mobilise them in school improvement activities to assist them become successful.”

Nonetheless, seven student council members (male 3, female 4) of Mettu secondary school revealed that more than ever before “the school’s climate is conducive for teaching and learning due to the school’s reform packages in the process of implementation nowadays”. However, the scarcity of finance, material and other necessary inputs for the instructional process was beyond the capacity of school principals. That is, the principals have no financial provision to organise and support teaching and learning processes on their own.”

The response from 14 student council members (male 9, female 5) of Sibbo and Gachi explained that “there was poor performance in the areas of instructional leadership and there were no favourable situations for teachers to create enabling conditions, and secure human and material resources necessary to promote academic achievement in the teaching learning process at large.” Fourteen PTA members (male 9, female 5) in Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools disclosed that “school goals were not articulated to promote accountability and instructional improvement as well as problems in the areas of promoting a positive climate specially norms and attitudes of students and staff that influence learning in the schools.” The response from 14 student council members of Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools (male 8, female 6) verified, that “the school principals have low willingness and competence in involving others (staff) in decision-making.” The next part presents about school planning, monitoring and evaluation in the school improvement programmes.

5.5.1.3 School planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

The question presented to the participants was: how do you describe the involvement of the school improvement management team and the committee in school self-evaluation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation? With regards to this question, Gachi seven secondary school PTAs members (male 3, female 4) and seven student council members (male 4, female 3) revealed that “in the planning process the school management team carry out the school development plan goals that pave the way for the formulation of more concerted and specific objectives at secondary school levels.” They also established the aim that the heads of department and senior teachers should be accountable for providing a more detailed expression of what the goal of teaching would require and how it could be achieved.”

Alternatively, seven Mettu secondary school PTA members (male 4, female 3) verified that planning was made after school self-assessment is done by the school improvement committee. First planning is made at one centre by the school improvement committee. However, annual plans were sometimes urgently prepared without the participation of stakeholders. Seven student council members (male 4, female 3) of Gachi secondary school in turn disclosed that the absence of close collaboration among stakeholders was a major problem in school improvement planning. In view of that, the student council members of Gachi secondary school suggested that

their “school principal has to work in close relationship with the district education office and other stakeholders starting from the planning phase.” In Mettu secondary school, seven PTA members (male 4, female 3) and seven student council members (male 4, female 3) both revealed that “the involvement of the school improvement committee is getting better from time to time in school improvement programme at all stages. Nonetheless, the school improvement school boards tasks in terms of their participation it is passive and inactive.” The next part discusses the technical assistance from the zone education office and district education offices.

5.5.1.4 Technical Assistance of the Zone Education office and District Education Offices

The question presented to the participants was: how do zone education office and district education offices provide technical assistance to secondary schools to carry out secondary school improvement programme initiatives? In connection to this question, in Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi secondary schools 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members 21 (male 14, female 7) confirmed that “the role of the zone education office was to supervises and evaluate periodically and quarterly the school improvement progress in secondary schools.” Concomitantly, both groups disclosed that “district education offices’ technical assistance has a closer relationship with schools through providing training and significant supervision.”

The other question presented to the participants was: what other school improvement measures will you suggest to influence the existing implementation of the school improvement programme? In answer to this question in Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) disclosed that “to bring radical changes in secondary schools system transformational change approaches are needed on the parts of school teachers, students, school leadership and management team and other stakeholders.”

5.5.2 Focus Group Discussion Results on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

The aim of the focus group discussion in this section was to explore how students grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens as well as to assess how effectively students acquire new knowledge and skills in their learning, and the capacity to work independently and collaboratively. The next section presents the focus group discussions results as follows.

The question presented to the participants was: how effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools? In Mettu, Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) revealed that presently “there is a

promising result in the implementation of the school improvement programme since its inception up to the present day because the programme has helped both the teachers and learners in building their skills and knowledge.”

The other question presented to the participants was: to what extent does the school principal provide supervision for teachers to meet the purpose of the school improvement programme? In Mettu secondary schools 7 PTA members (male 4, female 3) revealed that “principals and vice principals have trends of supervising through classroom observation of the teachers whose main area of operation and function is curriculum delivery.” In addition the seven student council members (male 4, female 3) confirmed that “there is a system of coordination with department heads, in supporting, motivating and monitoring their activities that guided by continuous reflection was practiced in the school.” In Sibbo, Mettu, and Gachi secondary schools 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) disclosed that “the styles of school leadership practices that principals practice in the schools were mostly autocratic leadership when compared to the other leadership styles. That is, team based and collaborative leadership style is not predominant.” The next part presents the focus group discussion results on the learning environment of secondary schools.

5.5.3 Focus Group Discussion Results on the Learning Environment of Secondary Schools

A school learning environment is an essential component for students’ life. Thus, schools have the responsibility to provide students with a safe environment in which to develop academically, while at the same time developing relations with others. The next paragraphs outline secondary school (grades 9-10) learning environment in relation to stability, school structure and the existing limitations as follows.

The question presented to the participants was: how successful is the school improvement programme in providing a safe and orderly teaching and learning environment? Concerning the question above, the seven PTA members (male 4, female 3) disclosed that “Mettu preparatory (grades 11-12) school and the secondary school (grades 9-10) are not separated until today; they are being led by one principal in one school compound which creates problems in managing teaching and learning processes in the school.” In Gachi secondary school seven PTA members (male 3, female 4) said that “still more efforts is needed from the school governing body to work harder so as to get good order within the school environment.” In the Gachi and Sibbo secondary

schools, the 14 representative student council members (male 9, female 5) revealed that “there was not as much effort made to keep schools clean, neat and well maintained to make them pleasant for everyone in the school.”

Similarly, the 21 Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo secondary school PTA members (male 13, female 8) revealed that “the schools did not have appropriate waste collection and disposal systems.” Additionally, the 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) of Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools confirmed that “there were no school community led efforts to stop open defecation in the schools.” Both groups confirmed that “student-led school sanitation and hygiene was not in practice to develop an approach whereby students take the lead of their school sanitation and hygiene implementation.” One of the student’s council members highlighted that:

“The school has not made an effort of engagements with partner organisations to work on school improvement to get attractive learning environments specially in securing enough resources and facilities mainly for sanitation and hygiene activities.”

Equally the groups agreed that “there were no circumstances where the students initiate and lead change processes by establishing their own committees and setting their own by-laws to excel their school compound hygiene and sanitation implementation that includes latrine utilisation, solid waste management, personal hygiene, hand washing, food hygiene, and safe water management in the secondary schools as part and parcel of school improvement programme.”

Both groups, 21 PTAs (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) of Gachi, Mettu, and Sibbo secondary schools suggested that “secondary schools have to contribute to the school improvement of quality secondary education. That is, the schools have to device strategies to create attractive school learning environments for hygiene and sanitation. Interventions were necessary to make the school clean and attractive; improve the hygiene and sanitation practices of the school community that reduce students’ absenteeism and drop out due to poor hygiene and sanitation related sicknesses”. From two secondary schools 14 PTAs (male 8, female 3) proposed that the school improvement strategy has to be enhanced to strengthen student leadership; capacity building; and strengthening school sanitation and hygiene structures in the schools.”

The second question presented to the participants was: how do you evaluate the status of your school facilities that enable all teachers to work well and for the learning of all students? In Sibbo secondary school, seven PTAs (3 male and 4 female) and seven student council members (male 4, female 3) confirmed that “there were problems with regards to school facilities, such as shortage of classrooms to accommodate large numbers of students and laboratory apparatus, lack of adequate library facilities, absence of pedagogical centre, lack of staff room for teachers and absence offices for departments’ members.”

In Mettu secondary school again, seven PTAs (male 4, female 3) and seven student council members (male 4, female 3) suggested that “since there are severe problems with regards to hygiene and sanitation working with students on this matter will make learners eager to learn and to stimulate and support positive behavioural change.” They also said “students have the role to make students become agents of change within their families and school communities.”

In addition, in Mettu and Gachi secondary schools, 14 PTAs (9 male and 5 female) and 14 student council members (male 9, female 5) revealed that “there is insufficient water supply, sanitation and hand-washing facilities, toilet or latrines that are not adapted to the needs of students, in particular for girls”. Similarly, there were broken, dirty and unsafe water supplies in the schools. For example, one student council member representative said “if the poor sanitation and hygiene system in school currently continues, the schools will become unsafe places where diseases are transmitted and the school will face students being infected by parasites and flukes.” Additionally, seven PTAs members (male 3, female 4) of Sibbo secondary school said that the “absence of sanitation and hygiene related facilities will contribute to absenteeism, poor health of students that affects their ability to learn and therefore influences their perspective in life.” In one secondary school 7 (male 4, female 3) student council members confirmed that, “to secure good health in schools, there is need to give serious attention to sanitation and hygiene at secondary schools. These are essential for now and an investment for the future.”

The third question presented to the participants was: are there fun events for each grade and/or for the whole school to build a sense of belonging through shared experience? In Gachi secondary school, seven student council members (male 4, female 3) disclosed that, “there was no approach of acknowledging good work in the schools for teachers, students and school

committees to praise good work they performed in the school improvement programme implementation.” In the same school, seven PTA members (male 4, female 3) confirmed that “providing rewards for positive behaviour for students in the school was not exercised as well as the trend of preparing fun events for grade 9 and 10 was not as much effective to build a sense of belongingness in secondary schools is very poor.” The next section presents the focus group discussion results on parents and community participation.

5.5.4 Focus Group Discussion Results on Parents and Community Participation

The main objective of this section was to evaluate the extent to which community participation improved as a result of the implementation of the school improvement programme. The results of focus group discussions are presented as follows. The question presented to the participants was: to what extent does community participation improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme? In Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools, 14 PTA (male 10, female 4) and 14 student council members (male 8, female 6) disclosed that “there is less involvement of parents in the school improvement activities to make effective possibility for learners’ learning.” Similarly in Mettu secondary school, seven student council members (male 4, female 3) and 14 PTA (male 4, female 3) members revealed that “there is less effort made in informing students and parents what is happening in the school to make them feel part and parcel of the school activities concerning school improvement programme implementation.”

On the other hand, in the secondary schools of Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) disclosed that in connection with community participation the major forms of involvement in their respective schools were involvement through attendance of meetings in the school; participation in decision-making in all phases of the school improvement programme and by contribution of money and participating in labour work. They also confirmed that in the three schools “there was unsatisfactory community participation due to the absence of collaboration among secondary school stakeholders.” They further explained that “at the back the above problems, the school principals lack in organising the community as it is intended in the school improvement programme framework.”

In Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools, 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) revealed that meetings on issues like school finances, fundraising, and security conditions in the presence of students, teachers and parents were discussed twice a year.” In addition, 21 PTA members in Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo schools (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) disclosed that “because the secondary school students come from different localities far from the schools, the school governing body is not able to meet with all the parents in various localities or in wider catchments areas and in mobilising the surrounding community and parents for the school work.” Another obstacle was the lack of readiness of teachers, learners and parents to work together in union with one another. They said that to strengthen the involvement of parents and local communities, “principals of secondary school have to work in close relationship with the district education offices, starting from the planning phase and in the process of monitoring and evaluation of school improvement programme.” Additionally, in Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools, the 14 student council members (male 9, female 5) disclosed that “the school principals were not competent enough in establishing strong relationship between schools and the local community to set up effective mechanisms to discuss with local community on school issues on regular basis.”

The second question presented to the participants was: to what extent are the school education board and school parent and teacher associations (PTAs) effective in planning, organising, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school improvement programme? What is the participation status of PTAs and student council representative in the school improvement programme? In Sibbo, Mettu, and Gachi secondary schools, 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) disclosed that “when compared to education and training board committees, the participation of Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs) was comparatively active in Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi secondary schools.” PTAs were in a better position to discuss problems that the schools face in the school programme implementation and to find solutions to the problems and also take action against those who violate the school rules and regulations.” One of the PTA members in the selected secondary school complained that:

“Although the school communicates us on the school improvement plan or the report, it is not comfortable to make changes based on our suggestions. After spending much time in discussing on the school improvement plan or report, the school management team tell

us that the school appreciates our involvement, but they do not make the amendments/changes/ accordance to our idea.”

This indicates that there are complaints in the community that parents/ stakeholders ideas are disregarded. The community senses that they are not contributing inputs for school improvement process. Subsequently, these cases probably create problems of ownership of what is planned or reported in secondary schools with regards to the school improvement programme implementation.

In Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi secondary 21 school student council members (male 14, female 7) described that “student council members to some extent are involved in the decision-making of the school improvement practices, through the leaders of student council and they monitor schools improvement activities. But the trend of involvement was not on a regular basis especially with regards to decision-making processes that affect their learning in the schools.” They also disclosed that “absence of willingness to strictly follow up students by their families, absence of commitment and dedication on the part of teachers to work with parents were key problems in the schools. As a result, their commitment and dedication was not satisfactory.”

In turn, the 14 PTAs members of Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools (male 9, female 5) revealed that “shortage of professionals who are qualified in areas of school management/administration absence of commitment and dedication on the part of principals to discharge their professional responsibilities in mobilising the community and parents for school improvement programme were the major challenges.” Lastly, 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) of Gachi, Mettu and Sibbo secondary schools described that “the strong participation in extracurricular activities provided opportunities for students with a wide range of interests to participate in the activities school improvement programme on a regular basis.”

The third question presented to the participants was: to what extent does collaboration with external stakeholders support secondary school improvement programme initiatives? In Sibbo, Mettu and Gachi secondary schools, 21 PTAs members (male 13, female 8) described that “there were no non-government organisations to empower teachers with additional and specific skills to enhance their teaching and learning activities in the facilitation of teaching to make available for teachers professional development.” In this case, the PTAs (male 4, female 3) in one secondary

school proposed that “the principal should identify relevant NGOs and invite them to the school to provide educational services and facilities that the school does not have.” These services can be directed at teachers and learners as well. In addition, PTAs (male 4, female 3) said secondary school principals should establish strong relations between district education office, zone education and NGOs and others in its area for the purpose of school programme implementation.” The next part presents the focus group discussion results on major challenges in implementing the school improvement programme in selected secondary schools

5.5.5 Focus Group Discussions Results on Major Challenges in Implementing the School Improvement Programme in Secondary Schools

The main objective of this section was to identify the main challenges of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools. The results of the focus group discussions were presented as follows. The question presented to the participants was: what are the main challenges in implementing the school improvement programme in secondary schools? What possible solutions do you suggest to overcome the challenges? In Mettu, Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools 21 PTA members (male 13, female 8) and students council members 11 (male 7, female 4) explained that “the major challenges in secondary schools were as follows:

- Weak community participation in the school improvement programme, as well as in fund raising, and resource mobilisation.
- Lack of adequate educational facilities;
- Student discipline problems, that is, students do not respect teachers and administrative staff;
- Low examination performance;
- Lack of good governance;
- Student drop-out and repeating rate.”

In addition, in Mettu, Sibbo and Gachi secondary schools 21 PTA (male 13, female 8) and 21 student council members (male 14, female 7) suggested possible solutions for the above problems of school improvement programme implementation as follows: “to develop self commitment for every individual in the school; plan, monitor and evaluate the performance and give feedback to the concerned bodies; working collaboratively with the community and non-government organisation; create good relationship with all concerned bodies; make occasional

meeting with community and other stakeholders at the right time; and make proper utilisation of budget.” The next section presents the qualitative findings related to document analysis from the Iluababor Education office.

5.6 Documents Analysis Results on School Improvement Programme from Iluababor Zone Education Department

In this section, the study analyses the documents from the zone education office annual reports concerning school improvement programmes in the previous years. These annual reports were organised separately as 24 secondary schools in the Iluababor administrative zone. This document analysis is also helpful to investigate decision-making and strategic planning, resource allocation and the outcomes of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone. The main purpose was to narrate and triangulate the results of the document analysis with questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion results so as to derive conclusions and recommendations in relation to the sub-basic research questions of the study.

5.6.1 Document Analysis on School Leadership and Management in Secondary Schools

In this section the objective of document analysis was to examine the practices of school leadership and management in the administrative zone whether there are procedures for assessing how the school improvement programme is progressing. The next sub-topic presents about school principals and supervisors’ qualifications in secondary schools in the Iluababor administrative zone.

5.6.1.1 School principals and Supervisors’ Qualifications

The school principals and supervisors are in charge of the daily operations of schools. They are responsible for managing teachers, students, and all other school stakeholders. Thus, to carry out their responsibilities they have to obtain a licence in school leadership and management. Table 42 presents the qualifications of secondary school principals and supervisors.

Table: 42 School principals, vice school principals and supervisors with their respective subject qualification in 24 secondary schools

School principals, vice school principals and supervisors with their respective subject qualification in 24 secondary schools											
Principals and supervisors	Educational planning and management	History	Mathematics	Chemistry	languages other English and	Biology	Geography	Physics	Civics education	psychology	Total
School principals	7	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	2		24
Vice school principal	2	2	-	4	7	6	2	-	-	1	24
High school supervisors	3	2	-	2	1	3	3	-	-	-	14

Source: Ilababor Zone Education Office School principals, vice school principals and supervisors with their respective subject qualification in 24 secondary schools, 2014

In Table 42 concerning school principals, vice school principals and supervisors with their respective subject qualification in 24 secondary schools, only seven (29.16%) of school principals two vice principals (8.33%) and three supervisors (21.42%) were qualified in educational planning and management respectively. This data indicates that there is lack of trained school principals and secondary school supervisors in the subject of school leadership and management.

On the other hand, pertaining to the education system and its structure in Iluababor administrative zone, the following points were identified from the documents in the office. The Iluababor Education office annual report (2014:12) states that the unique tasks of the schools are the provision of quality teaching and learning by qualified staff in their setting, within the Ethiopian educational policy framework and constitutional confines. In line with the Education and Training policy in the administrative zone, there is a good organisational structure and guidelines that help to bring all stakeholders together towards achieving school improvement goals. The secondary schools also have education office staff and experts, the principals, vice principals, the school management team, teachers, learners and parents who can perform functions aimed at achieving the school improvement programme to carry out quality teaching and learning in a conducive environment (Iluababor Education Office Annual Report, 2014:15). The schools have clear objectives to be achieved pertaining to school improvement programme

activities and employees need to meet these objectives (Iluabobor Education office Annual Report, 2014:22). Furthermore, secondary schools education management systems are a decentralised system for the school improvement programme to create the necessary conditions to expand and improve the quality accessibility (Iluabobor Education Office Annual Report, 2014:30).

The Iluabobor Education Office Annual Report (2013:12) states that secondary schools are autonomous in their internal administration and in designing and implementing the school improvement programme with an overall coordination of leadership by boards, PTAs, teachers, students and other partners. The management of teachers and other educational personnel were organised on the basis of professional principles, working conditions, and their rights and duties. Furthermore, the documents in the zone education office revealed that the following were major barriers in school improvement programme implementation: lack of school leadership commitment especially on the parts of school principals and school management teams/ department heads/; lack stakeholders' participation in decision-making processes at every stage of the school improvement programme; and lack of readiness by teachers and learners in schools to discharge their duties and responsibilities (Iluabobor Education Office Annual Report, 2014:42). Lastly, the documents revealed that in the school improvement activities, secondary schools were not strongly clustered with each other under the responsibility of the zone education office, according to their geographical location with district education offices (Iluabobor Education Office Annual Report, 2014:56). The next section presents the qualifications of teachers teaching in grades 9-10 in relation to the sub-basic question: how effective was the teaching and learning process in Iluababor administrative zone?

5.6.2 Document Analysis on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

As said by the Ministry of Education in the new Education Policy (MOE, 1994:4-5), a secondary school teacher in Ethiopia should hold at least a first degree. In practice, however, the minimum criterion to teach at secondary school level is a first degree graduate.

Table 43: Teachers' qualifications in grades 9-10

Number of teachers' qualification status in 24 secondary schools	BA/BSC degree	Diploma	Total
Teachers	767	150	917
Percentile	83.64%	16.36%	100%

Source: Ilababor Zone Education Teachers' Qualifications Profile (2014)

In the Table 43 above 150 (16.36%) respondents are diploma holders which shows that 16.36 % of teachers are poorly prepared, that is, they lack knowledge, skills and methodologies for teaching at the levels they are assigned. The next section presents enrolments, repeating and drop-out rates of grade 9 students.

Table 44: Grade 9 students' enrolment and drop-out rate

Year	Grade 9 enrolments			Grade 9 drop-out rate			Drop-out rate in percentage		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
2012	7256	7514	14770	1496	1147	2643	20.62	15.26	25.57
2013	7874	8495	16339	1827	1514	3341	23.20	17.82	20.51
2014	7763	7495	15258	1166	779	1945	15.02	10.39	12.71

Source: Ilababor Zone Education Office Grade 9 Students' Enrolment and Drop-out rate (2012-2014)

In Table 44 above, the grade repetition rate and the drop-out rates at a given level influence the degree of efficiency of the education system. Grade repetition is the process of using the same resource for one or more years, which is using the same space, instructional material and teacher's time for a second time that could have been used by another student. In other words, it limits the space that would be available for new entrants due to repeaters in both grades (9-10) and brings additional expenditure to the system (ILuababor, Annual Educational Report, 2014:1).

Repetition and drop-out rates are serious problems in the Iluababor administrative zone in grades 9-10 (ILuababor, Annual Educational Report, 2015:4). For grade 9, the drop-out rate was 15.02% for male students, 10.39% for female students with a total of 12.71% which is very high when compared to the target set 0% - 5% in the administrative zone (ILuababor Annual Educational Report, 2015:12). On the other hand, for grade 9 the repeating rate was 15.6% for male students and 15.6% for female students with a total of 15.6% in the administrative zone (ILuababor Annual Educational Report, 2015:3).

As the documents in the zone education office verified, improvements have continuously been witnessed in Iluababor administrative zone through increasing enrolments and expanding educational opportunities. Nonetheless, the Annual Educational Report of 2014:4 verified that the education system in the administrative zone still faces serious challenges including: internal inefficiency with high drop-out rate particularly for grade 9, and low examination performance of grade 10.

Therefore, as the documents sources from the years 2012-2014 showed, the students have got access to education; however, they do not attend and learn effectively; that showed all students did not complete grades 9-10 successfully with improved results. Accordingly, the documents in the zone education office annual report indicated that the major barrier of the drop-out rate and the repeating rate were as follows: inability of parents to support students' schooling expenses (like clothing, notebooks, etc.); parents wanting students' labour for household and farm chores; secondary schools being too far from students' homes (tiresome, risk on the way, and transportation cost, etc); parents not having positive attitude about education/giving less value to education; learners poor academic performance (low achievement); teachers being unsupportive and unable to motivate students, particularly for low academic achievers; unavailability of school facilities such as chairs, tables, separate toilets for girls, etc.; students having low self-concept and believing that they cannot cope with academic demands in the school; and regular absenteeism from school (due to illness, being late, chores at home, etc.) and then quitting.

Therefore, high repetition and dropout rates and low completion rates were the main challenges in the teaching and learning characterised by low examination performances and drop-out rates. The next section presents grade students' examination performances for nine years.

Table 45: Grade 10 students' examination performance (2006-2014)

Years	Number of students that took examination			Number of students that passed examination for preparatory school numerically			Number of students that passed examination for preparatory school in percent		
	M	F	total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
2006	4832	2970	7802	953	243	1196	19.72	8.18	15.3
2007	4423	2105	6528	1003	406	1409	22.68	19.3	21.6
2008	4012	2802	6814	1285	467	1752	32.03	16.7	25.7
2009	4131	3042	7173	1340	556	1896	32.44	18.3	26.4
2010	4914	4165	9079	2498	1363	3861	50.83	32.7	42.5
2011	5462	4820	10282	2845	1720	4565	52.09	35.7	44.4
2012	4314	3810	8124	2227	1378	3605	51.62	36.2	44.4
2013	3473	3592	7065	1991	1384	3375	57.33	38.5	47.8
2014	4720	5305	10025	2109	1381	3490	44.68	26.03	36.00

Source: Ilababor Zone Education Office Grade 10 Students' Examination Performance (2006-2014)

In Table 45 above, regardless of how there are degrees of disparity among different districts found in the zone concerning student achievement in grade 10, there has been critically low academic achievement in students' performance in the last nine years. The analysed documents verified this, that low performance in grade 10 national examinations can be associated with major challenges such as: insufficient administration of schools and weak school leadership system; students' attendance in the classroom; absence of skilled trained teachers in schools; the economic status of the family; family support and follow up of students' educational progress; lack of well established on-the-spot tutorial sessions; students being irresponsible and carelessness; students' lack of prior knowledge and skills in their learning and lack of basic educational facilities (Ilababor Zone Education Office Grade 10 Students' Examination Performance, 2006-2014).

To overcome the challenges, the annual documents in the education office suggested that there should be a strong unity between the education zone, the district education offices and school administration offices. Great emphasis should also be given to students' actual learning rather

than the data of students who get pass marks in national exams. Additionally, school principals ought to check whether libraries and laboratories are functional for teaching and learning purposes. Then again, student discipline guidelines should be adhered to to improve students' poor discipline in the learning process. Furthermore, the documents verified that continuous training should be given to build the capacity of school principals and teachers on instructional leadership and pedagogical knowledge and skills trainings related to specific subject matter disciplines in the administrative zone. The following section discusses the role played by the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment.

5.6.3 Document Analysis on the Learning Environment of Secondary Schools

Improved and effective schools are known for quality teaching. Teaching is executed in a positive, learning environment, with well planned learning and instructional programmes (MOE, 2010:24). The Ministry of Education verifies that learning is regarded as the responsibility of learners by themselves. If rewards and incentives are used in the school, they can encourage learners to work and then initiate learners to participate in the school activities. A positive school climate that encourages learners to work is maintained (MOE, 2010:25-26). The next sub-topic presents infrastructure facilities in the secondary schools of the Iluababor administrative zone.

5.6.3.1 Infrastructure Facilities

Lack of quality infrastructures in the school will bring lower student achievement in the school. For example, buildings of structural facilities profoundly influence learning (MOE, 2010:26). Construction and use of appropriate child friendly sanitary facilities can be especially effective in reducing incidence diseases (Mitchell, 2013:17). Consequently, secondary schools have to provide necessary infrastructure facilities and an area where sanitation can be shown at best, and certain positive hygienic behaviours (hand washing with soap before eating and after going to the toilet) can become habits for the students in secondary schools. Next Table 46 presents the status of secondary schools' infrastructure facilities in 24 secondary schools.

Table 46: Status of secondary schools’ (grades 9-10) infrastructure facilities in 24 secondary schools

The status of infrastructure facilities in secondary schools in 24 secondary schools										
Facilities	Pedagogical centre	Cafeteria service	Laboratory	Library	Internet service	Electric service	Plasma TV	Water service		
								tap	wel l	Clinic
Number of facilities	16	22	12	24	6	16	18	13	2	6

Source: Iluababor Education Office, 2014

Table 46 above shows that laboratory facilities for biology (12), chemistry (12), and physics (12) are functional at only 12 secondary schools out of 24 secondary schools; facilities like plasma TV is in 18 schools, internet service in 6 schools), while only 16 schools have electrical service (Iluababor Education Office, 2014:11-12).

In Table 46 with reference to the sanitation and hygiene facilities like water service, out of 24 secondary schools only 13 had standardized water taps and the other two secondary schools are with two water wells out of 24 secondary schools. The documents in the zone education office verified that due to lack of water facilities in all secondary schools sanitation and hygiene facilities are still at a low stage. Besides, clean and safe water for drinking and washing were also not sufficient for teachers and students (girls and boys). In addition, the documents in the zone education office also disclosed that secondary schools have no appropriate waste collection and disposal system (Iluababor Education Office, 2014:4). For teachers to prepare local teaching materials there were 16 pedagogical resources with adequate teaching materials and this shows that there was a relatively good opportunity for teachers to use and prepare local materials. There are also 24 library services in the secondary schools of the administrative zone with available books and reference materials for the teaching and learning process for both teachers and learners. In some secondary schools absence of well maintained school grounds for learners for sporting and recreational activities as well as absence of providing vital interaction with fellow learners (Iluababor Education Office, 2014:8- 9).

Furthermore, the documents also revealed that the physical outward facilities of some secondary schools, for example, buildings, fences around the school grounds, playing area for students, and a teacher's room including desks and storage, were poorly managed. Besides, in some schools, there were untidy buildings and other school facilities that negatively affect the teaching and learning activities (Iluababor Education Office, 2014:10-14).

5.6.4 Document Analysis on Parents and Community Participation in Secondary Schools

The documents collected from zone education offices with regard to community participation revealed that community members were passive and inactive in parent teacher associations and school boards and community involvement. The major challenges the documents disclosed were: weak collaboration between stakeholders in the schools; lack of awareness of the basic idea of the school improvement programme; remoteness of school from parents to contact schools and the community due to distance. The documents also confirmed that in secondary schools there are five to ten hectares of farm land in their school compounds so they could not generate income for their school to the expected standard. At last, the documents indicated that attempts have to be made by school principals, school governing bodies, parents and local communities to generate income in the schools.

5.6.5 Documents Analysis on Major Challenges of Implementing the School Improvement Programme in the Secondary Schools

The data collected from the documents disclosed that the main challenges in the school improvement programmes were: lack of common vision among stakeholders, poor school leadership, shortage of classrooms to accommodate large numbers of students, inefficient supervision, lack of self confidence in the leadership, lack of moral and material incentives for teachers and the school community, lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities, lack of school leadership commitment and shortage of adequate budget.

It is undoubtedly clear that the Iluababor administrative zone has attained remarkable and nationally acclaimed results in the education sector. However, there are challenges that need to be addressed particularly in secondary schools in the coming school improvement programme. For example, critical subjects in natural and physical sciences including mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry are taught in English; unfortunately, most of the teachers and students

lack the proper level of mastering English as an instructional media. In many cases teachers are forced to translate important concepts into Amharic/Afan Oromo doing a severe disfavoured to the essence of the concepts under discussion. On the other hand, almost all secondary schools built particularly in the urban centres may take pride in their long service but fail to become environmentally friendly learning centres because they are located in areas that seriously obstruct the teaching and learning process. Besides, lack of good governance in the schools jeopardises the promotion of school improvement. In the documents the solution suggested were to build the capacity of the school leadership and management team, teachers and school governing bodies and to allocate adequate resources for the school improvement programme.

5.6.6 Document Analysis on Major Opportunities of the School Improvement Programme in Secondary Schools

The findings in this section, are based on document analysis, and the major prospects suggested in the documents of the education office were as follows: there is a good policy and strategy; presence of a school grant; presence of policy guidelines, existence of education sector development programme V (ESDP V); presence of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) and a policy of educational decentralisation system and good political environment to implement the school improvement programme.

In sum, the document in the zone education office revealed that with regards to the prospects for the school improvement programme in the administrative zone it depends upon the achievement of overall development pace of the secondary schools because the school improvement is a process and cannot be achieved in a fixed period of time or only through directives issued by the government. Lastly, the documents recommended that all stakeholders should do their part in promoting school improvement in secondary schools of the administrative zone. The next section presents the triangulation and integration of quantitative and qualitative data of the study briefly.

5.3 Triangulation and Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

This section addresses major points of qualitative and quantitative data results for triangulation and integration is condensed as follows:

5.3.1 Basic research Question 1: Leadership Management domain

School improvement is pursued by, among other things, seeking ways which will strengthen the management and leadership capacities of those working in schools to ensure that learners are provided with and experience of quality learning opportunities (Makoelle, 2011:7). School improvement is an important component of management and school leadership as a pivotal in determining the success of school improvement (Hopkins, 2005:89). Then again, studies indicated that the leadership capacity of schools to manage school improvement affects the development of schools initiative (Cravens & Hallinger, 2012:159). Contrary to the literature above, the results of quantitative and qualitative data showed that the practices in secondary schools leadership and management performances were weak due to insufficient supplies of inputs and processes. The findings verified that these weak practices were caused by lack of awareness, lack of leadership competency, weak monitoring and evaluation system; lack of commitment on the side of school management teams, lack of technical support from district education and zone education officials; and high turnover rate of principals and teachers. Besides, lack of experiences; capacity building; and absence of inner decentralisation that involves sharing leadership among staff members were also the other challenges revealed in the study.

On the other hand, weak collaboration among stakeholders and lack of knowledge and skills in the areas of instructional leadership were also cited as impediments to the implementation school improvement programme. Thus, due to the above mentioned problems in secondary schools the data gathered from qualitative and quantitative data concurrently confirmed that the school leadership and management were not improved during the implementation phase of the last five years of the school improvement programme.

5.3.2 Basic research Question 2: Teaching and learning domain

Daniel (2002:105-106) made clear that the educators in some countries spent much of their time on less important routine activities than working on the improvement of instruction in the schools. In addition, literature states that the principals as leaders should work for the common

goals of improvement by becoming pedagogical leaders (Smith and Engel 2013:107). Similarly, research studies made on continuous professional development of teachers by Chapman & Muijis (2014:351) confirm that networking and school to school collaboration can help the schools to facilitate their professional development through experience – sharing among the teachers. Jeilu (2010:173) confirms that the school improvement is the process to make the school a place that attracts the pupils to stay in the school to learn and succeed in their education. Jeilu (2010:174) further states that school improvement is an activity to improve the input and process in order to improve teaching- learning and learning out comes (students’ results). Nonetheless, in this study with regards to teaching and learning process the qualitative and quantitative data and document analysis simultaneously demonstrated that there were poor performance of students results, weak collaboration among teachers, less commitments of teachers to maximise students performance; absence of well developed actions for assessing how learners are progressing; and the accountability for learning shared by the learners themselves were not strongly built.

In addition, the findings also confirmed that almost in all the schools continuous professional development was hampered by resistance of teachers. It became noticeable in the findings that implementation of active learning methods and continuous assessments were poorly executed. Although there were attempts to implement extracurricular activities for the social and emotional development of the students, its implementation was as well negatively affected by lack of coordination and resources in the schools. Finally, absence of incentive mechanisms; the non – existence of training opportunities and workshops for the teachers and school principals, and the shortage of resources were reported as the major challenges.

5.3.3 Basic research question 3: Learning environment domain

It was established in theory that learning requires the environment to be safe and the necessary facilities to be accessible to all schools (Grift 2014:297). This author further argued that the schools which were considered as more conducive to teaching and learning had facilities and conditions which made the functioning of the schools smooth. Moreover, Ministry of Education, (MOE, 2010:14) made known that when the students start to take the responsibility for their own learning, their results will improve. They have to engage themselves in various activities of the school such as participating in decision making concerning their learning and related issues, helping other students, and handling problems related to students discipline in the school (MOE,

2010:16-17). Consequently, the students are expected to take the responsibility for their own learning and need to actively take part in lessons (MOE, 2010:15). Thus, the suitability of the learning environment is one of the factors which can affect the motivation of the students. It is known that the level of safety in the schools also affects the teaching and learning process and the amount of time the students want to stay in the school to study (MOE, 2010:18). Contrary to the above literature, this study found that more or less in all schools the school environment is labelled unsuccessful and performing poorly due to limited resources. In addition, the study also confirmed that there were no well-built strategy directions, rules and regulations in some of the secondary schools to make the schools attractive for learning. This shows that there were no clear procedures to hold safety issues in the secondary schools.

Furthermore, the absence of safe study sites or places: separate restrooms for boys and girls, clean drinking water, reading rooms, the teachers' offices and lounges were some of the challenges revealed in relation to the learning environment in secondary schools. The result in this study showed that some schools do not have attractive classrooms, the schools compound fences are broken at many places; the places of recreation for students are not inviting, the libraries are poorly stocked; and the toilets are not clean and hygienic. Thus, the absence of these facilities has negatively affected the performance of the schools. As a result, school learning environment did not improve the expected standard during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years.

5.3.4 Basic research questions 4: Parents and community participation domain

Makoelle (2011:266) confirmed that community participation begins with the establishment of a positive relationship between the school and community using various communication channels; and a good communication strategy that helps the schools to keep in touch with the community. The studies made by Scanlon (2012:188) also indicated that the school improvement process requires the participation of all the stakeholders. Nevertheless, the results in this study revealed that some secondary schools were not successful in mobilising the community to provide resources and were also inactive in communicating and promoting school improvement programme activities. Besides, the absence of full participation in the planning and decision making; lack of proper leadership support, lack of collaboration were negatively affected the implementation of school improvement programme in (9-10) secondary schools.

5.3.5 Solutions suggested by the participants for the future

The solutions suggested by the participants for the future school improvement programme implementation in this study were as follows:

- Building trust between the principals and the teachers;
- creating a link between the schools and institutions;
- Introducing recognition mechanisms;
- Providing continuous support;
- Develop the collaborative system
- use of diverse communication strategies by school principals ;
- involve all stakeholders in the school improvement planning process;
- create a positive relationship with the community;
- ensure the commitment of all stakeholders;
- Support the schools in carrying out genuine self evaluation,
- formulate action plans on the identified priorities;
- search for extra sources of budget; and
- Establish strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Finally, the experts at district and zone education offices proposed a transformational school leadership approach to establish secondary school education sector by structuring the schools support and bottom up communication approaches so as to improve performance in secondary schools in terms of student outcomes. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation of the Study

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the main findings of the research. The problem statement of the study as formulated in chapter 1 will be correlated with the findings as set out in this chapter, and the summary arising from the findings will show that the research basic questions have been effectively addressed. The chapter as well proposes a model based on the research findings for evaluating, maintaining and enhancing school improvement programme implementation and its outcomes in the Iluababor administrative zone. Finally, the chapter concludes and proposes recommendations for further research.

The following paragraphs will provide a summary of the findings of the statistical analyses, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The biographical data indicated that 287 questionnaire booklets were distributed to principals, vice principals, school supervisors and teachers. Of the 287, 220 were male and 67 female. All the questionnaires (287) which are 100 % were properly filled and returned. Additionally, interviews were carried out with 12 principals (6 principals and 6 vice principals), 12 district education experts, six secondary supervisors and four zone education office supervisors. In total, 34 respondents were asked questions with similar content. Focus group discussions in three secondary school clusters made up of 21 parent teacher association (PTA) members and 21 members of student councils were carried out. A total of 42 participated in focus groups. Lastly, annual report documents from the zone education office were analysed so as to triangulate the findings. The total participants of the study were 363 and these participated through filling in questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions respectively.

6.1.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges and opportunities that arise in the implementation of the school improvement programme of secondary schools in the Iluababor administrative zone. In order to fulfil the aims, the following main research questions and sub-basic research questions were developed, specifically, the main basic question was: What are the major challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the school improvement programme in secondary schools of the Iluababor administrative zone? The sub-research questions were:

1. To what extent do school leadership and management improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme?
2. How effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?
3. How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?
4. To what extent does community participation improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme?
5. What are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?
6. What are the major prospects of implementing the school improvement programme?

The following section discusses summary of the school leadership and management in secondary schools.

6.1.2 Summary of sub-basic research question: to what extent do schools leadership and management improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme?

Questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis results showed that the organisational structures of secondary schools have basic frameworks that show relationships and responsibilities, and tasks for principals, teachers and administrative staff in the school. The structure also shows the lines of communication and responsibilities, and the information flow in the school, including the regulations that stipulate how the various structures relate to one another from the school to the national level. It also focuses on the strategic aspect of school management and delegation of the supervisory aspect to principals, vice principals, the heads of departments and learning area coordinators, together with the class teachers.

The research tools also disclosed that secondary schools have better administrative policies, practices and effective staff structures that support the delivery of the schools' improvement programmes, in which everyone in the schools has collective responsibility for students' learning. This coincided with the rules and regulations framed by the Ministry of Education. The questionnaire results, however, revealed that the leadership teams of the schools were not

proactive to address areas where support is needed for the school improvement. Similarly, interviews and focus group discussions revealed that there was no leadership readiness and commitment to radically change the school system to achieve targets set by the school improvement programme.

Concomitantly, questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis results also confirmed that there were budget constraints (the budget allocation was inadequate to run the school improvement programmes); and there was absence of internal income that held back the activities of the school improvement programme. The capacity building of the school leadership and management team was in the poor stage, and great attention is required to build the capacity of school principals and teachers to enhance the schools' improvement programmes as revealed in the findings.

In secondary schools, the trend of collecting, analysing and identifying performance data to measure progress and to plan future actions were relatively good, showing positive performance. The system of schools reporting, monitoring and evaluating feedback and using relevant data in the school improvement programme also showed encouraging results. The schools' self-assessment systems that provide an important base line for the schools, with information to measure against annually preformed activities over year plans undertaken by school improvement committee, also showed a hopeful output.

Total Quality Management is a school management tool that centres on quality, based on the participation of all school community members and other stakeholders, with the aim of long run success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the school. It encompasses the school improvement perspectives of both external and internal stakeholders in an integrated manner, and thereby enables a comprehensive approach to quality management that will assure quality as well as facilitate change innovation in the school system (Westhuizen, 2010:298). Consequently, in this study as indicated in the conceptual framework and literature review, the Total Quality Management (TQM) model is suggested as a possible model that will offer solutions to the existing challenges of school improvement models. For example, this model will strengthen the existing school improvement model as an additional approach to build up the existing school improvement model.

Secondary school education management systems are decentralised systems for school improvement programmes to create the necessary conditions to expand and improve quality and accessibility, as disclosed by the interview results in the study. The focus group results also revealed that the major hurdles in the school leadership and management were that school principals gave more attention to managerial, administrative tasks and other assignments from district administrative bodies, while the tasks of teaching and learning were assigned to others in school even if the core task of a school is teaching and learning. In addition, school principals and school management teams lacked leadership and management knowledge and skills. As a result they could not build a balance between their school leadership responsibilities and duties to improve their schools to the expected standards.

Effective schools are known to have highly effective school managers and leaders. Consequently, effective school management has a close link with school effectiveness and improvement. The reason is that effective school leaders and managers have the capacity to enhance school improvement activities (Makoelle, 2011:30). But, the summary of the questionnaire results of school leadership and management process, the cumulative mean value and standard deviation was Mean = 2.87 and standard deviation (SD = 0.63). These results indicated that there were no significant gain in terms of the school improvement programme's set targets in the areas of school leadership and management. In the questionnaire, respondents suggested that the Ministry of Education has to update the existing school improvement model. The incremental change approach was practised in secondary schools that happened as a slow movement towards the set goals with the thinking that effective change can take time as the interviews and focus groups confirmed. In brief, school leadership and school management activities were at a lower stage of competency in terms of building the capacity of school leadership in managing secondary schools. When we weigh up the results gained up to now to the set targets of school leadership and management, even though there were a lot of efforts made to improve the school leadership and management, the present practices were not vigorously focused on how to reform the whole school system and student achievement.

Finally, all results from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis concurrently confirmed that school leadership and management had not improved during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone in the last five years. Therefore, building the capacity of school principals and teachers should be given high priority to enhance the school improvement programme in secondary schools. The following section discusses teaching and learning process in secondary schools.

6.1.3 Summary of the sub-basic research question: How effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?

The current curriculum of secondary schools is aimed at making a considerable contribution to the improvement of the quality of education. The schools have also a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels (ESDP IV, 2010:15, 20). Thus, the results of the questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis were positive and encouraging with regard to existing curricula that coincide with the policy and strategic direction of the Ministry of Education. In addition, research tools in the study revealed that the current curriculum allowed the various nationalities and people to be educated in their own mother tongue, and have an appreciation of the role and contribution of female learners in the society at large.

The questionnaire and interview results showed that active learning strategies were not practiced in line with the direction of the Ministry of Education. In secondary schools at present, teachers were predominantly practicing the use of the teacher-centred method of teaching rather than the student-centred approach. The questionnaires and interviews therefore validated that all schools have a programme for teachers' continuous professional development. In all schools, teachers should have individual programmes or plans. All teachers in each department were forced to meet once a week to discuss particular subjects such as social science, language, and natural science, but there was no considerable knowledge and skills that the teachers received because there were no guiding manuals or handbooks used in their discussions.

In terms of the learning and evaluation system in the secondary schools, the questionnaires, interviews and documents analysis concurrently disclosed that the causes of the assessment problem in the secondary education system were lack of sufficient training in classroom assessment; lack of skills to develop classroom assessment tools; and absence of manuals and supporting materials that assist teachers in the development of classroom assessment. In addition, interviews and documents showed that secondary schools were not applying continuous assessment uniformly, due to the following problems: large class sizes; teachers think that continuous assessment can cause grade inflation; teachers assume that it creates a high workload for teachers; and lack of resources (like laboratory equipment and other teaching materials).

Interviews results verified that principals did not free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and could not focus their efforts on improving teaching and learning. More to the point, all the focus group participants revealed that the styles of school leadership in the schools were mainly autocratic when compared to the other leadership styles. The school principals also focused on routine administrative activities rather than the core tasks of teaching and learning. In order to overcome the above obstacles, the research instruments concomitantly suggested that proper and strategic leadership must be ensured to have efficient and strategic leadership. Their respective schools should pay more attention to developing efficient team work and the expression of warm concern and trust to support personnel, teachers, the management team, the parent teacher association and other stakeholders through applying appropriate leadership styles.

With regards to qualifications of the teachers, the Ministry of Education in the new Education Policy (MOE, 1994:4-5) stipulates that a secondary school teacher in Ethiopia should hold at least a first degree. This, however, is contrary to what is happening in practice. Qualifications are limited with regard to first degree holders teaching in secondary schools. As shown in the findings, in Iluababor administrative zone there were 767 (83.64%) teachers who held a first degree, while 150 (16.36%) were under qualified as they were diploma holders. Additionally, the documents from the zone education department showed that 104 (11.34%) teachers lack pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach. This indicates that teachers were poorly prepared, that is, they lacked knowledge and skills for teaching at the levels to which they were assigned.

The documents also disclosed that 25,195 students enrolled in 24 secondary schools (9-10) for the year 2014. When compared to the target set for the school improvement programme, access with respect to gross enrolment target set in strategic planning was 56.5% while for net enrolments the target set was 45.1%. Quite opposite to the targets, access in 2014 Gross Enrolment (GER) was 36.5% and the net enrolment ratio (NER) was 17.3%. This shows there was little improvement in terms of access to secondary education in 2014.

Repetition and high drop-out rates were identified as serious challenges in the Iluababor administrative zone among grades 9-10. For example, for grade 9, the drop-out rate was 15.02% for male students, 10.39 % for female students with a total of 12.71 % which was very high when compared to the set targets of 0 %-5% (ILuababor Annual Educational Report, 2014: 2). The grade 9 repeating rate was 15.6% for male students, 15.6% for female students with a total of 15.6% in the administrative zone. These findings confirmed that output was below the set target (ILuababor Annual Educational Report, 2014: 5).

In the teaching and learning process, a continuous professional student centred approach and continuous assessments for learning are the first priorities to promote learning and are the key means for initiating school improvement. Strong national policies that make quality teaching and learning a priority are essential to ensure that all children in school actually obtain the skills and knowledge they are meant to acquire (UNESCO, 2014:217). Sound education planning, undertaken in consultation with teachers, is an important basis for successful implementation of strategies aimed at improving the quality of education. Such planning needs to take into account the costs of quality reforms and ensure that resources are available to meet these costs (UNESCO, 2014:229). Nevertheless, the results from questionnaires with each and every one of the indicators of practice in school teaching and learning process 287 (Mean = 2.9826; SD = 0.76453) confirmed that there were not significant gains in terms of the school improvement programme's set targets. Consequently, the summary of results showed that the secondary school teaching and learning process was still under-performing even though the cumulative results of the mean were above average and standard deviation variability among individual values was not extensively scattered when compared to set goals and targets in the strategic planning of the schools.

As a consequence, the result from the respondents' responses and document analysis authenticated that the school teaching and learning process was not solely improved during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the last five years. Hence, the school leadership and school governing bodies at all levels should scrutinise their efforts and services to overcome the challenges that put the school improvement activities at risk. The following section discusses the learning environment.

6.1.4 Summary of sub-basic research question: How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?

Questionnaire and interview results simultaneously revealed that the endeavours made by school principals, teachers and parents to empower and to develop a habit of taking responsibility and leading a disciplined life was not worth mentioning. Similarly, students were not motivated to learn and actively participate in learning and to be self-regulated learners. Both the interviews and questionnaires uniformly disclosed that the availability of assistive devices and building of collaborative support for learners with special needs were insufficient. There was no collaborative work at the school and community level to encourage and support learners with special needs in secondary schools.

Furthermore, questionnaires, interviews and focus group results simultaneously confirmed the school leadership and management teams did not provide enough support for the learners to ensure adequate facilities. The materials were not well and appropriately decided on by responsible teachers, and were not ordered and delivered on time to learners so that the school learning environment would be conducive to learners. Then again, research instruments in the study concomitantly confirmed in the schools the absence of friendly and enthusiastic teachers who are always available when help is needed and are easy to talk to and work harder to get acknowledged by management and parents and who provide students with rewards and recognition. Besides, learners were not able to do their school work independently and maintain high levels of commitment when it comes to the completion of school projects, daily school attendance and punctuality, as interviews, and focus group discussions revealed. More to the point, the participants in the interviews also confirmed that learners in the schools showed little willingness to take responsibility for their own and fellow learners due to unlikeable conduct.

Additionally, analysis of documents showed that the school grounds were not kept clean and were not well maintained at all times. The school buildings were not well maintained and had an unkempt appearance which was not conducive to effective learning and teaching.

The questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis also confirmed students were inactive to lead and their school sanitation and hygiene implementations were absent. For example, schools latrines were not convenient to use because they were full of flies; they were smelly (not appropriately ventilated); and lack of adequate infrastructures were the major challenges in the school learning environments.

The existing documents acquired from the zone administrative office revealed that the physical outward appearance of some secondary schools, for example, buildings, fences around the school grounds and playing areas for students, were poorly managed. Subsequently, the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions confirmed that secondary schools didn't spell out in their plans what will happen if students did not meet their expectations. Besides, in the school there were no trends of praising students who were excelling in their conduct.

Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:15) stated that the domain of learning environment focuses on empowering and supporting the students. The domain stresses that to be successful the students need to learn in a safe environment conducive to learning. One of its standards to achieve attractive learning is for students to develop a habit of taking responsibilities and leading in discipline. Nonetheless, the questionnaires results of each and every one of the indicators of practices in the school learning environment the mean and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.7697; SD = 0.70219) confirmed that there was no significant growth in the school improvement programme, with regards to creating a safe and orderly school learning environment. It was shown that all stakeholders needed to collaborate to deal with these challenges. It is also important to mention that all the results of instruments used in the study when triangulated showed that the school learning environment was not wholly improved during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. The following section discusses the role played by community participation in improving the school improvement programme.

6.1.5 Summary on sub-basic research question: to what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

The results in the questionnaire independently revealed that parents/families and local community participation did not support the school enough to improve learners' academic achievements. Additionally, data collected from open ended questionnaires from 76 (26.48%) respondents revealed the following: absence of strong collaboration between stakeholders, that is, between the school and school committee (PTAs and local school boards); lack of family support; and lack of awareness on the basic idea of the school improvement programme.

Communities and other partners must support in the upbringing, socialising, and education of their children because secondary schools are institutions that prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate by equipping them with knowledge and skills important in the society (MOE, 2010:25). In supporting this idea Marishane (2013:24) indicates that the school principal should ensure that parents and community are regularly updated on school improvement needs by organising the community and parents meetings where matters concerning school finances, fundraising, and school security are discussed. However, the interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis verified that there were no quarterly and annual evaluations in the schools with PTAs, local communities and district education offices on a regular basis. This indicated that there was no strong collaboration among school principals, teachers, parents and other stakeholders and there was no collaboration between the district education office, the zone education office and the schools. As a result, the sum of the questionnaires with regards to parents and community participation the mean value and standard deviation 287 (Mean = 2.64; SD = 0.70219) disclosed that no remarkable progress was made in terms of the school improvement programme set targets. Therefore, the results in sum showed that parents and community involvement in secondary schools was still passive and was at an inactive stage of involvement.

Consequently, the triangulation of results from the questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis verified that parents and community participation was not

entirely improved during the implementing of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. The following section discusses the major challenges in implementing school improvement plan in secondary schools.

6.1.6 The Major Challenges of Implementing the School Improvement Programme

This section discusses the findings on: what are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone?

With regard to the topic under discussion, questionnaire results outlined the following as major challenges: weak collaboration of stakeholders, lack of capacity building for principals for their roles as instructional leaders, inefficient administrative services which include improper strategic planning and improperly implementation of yearly plans; lack of commitment on the school improvement implementation programme, mainly by principals and teachers, and, lastly, poor school management and leadership.

Additionally, data collected from 83 (28.92%) respondents through open ended questionnaires outlined the following as major challenges in the last five years: drop-out rate and repeating rates; low examination performance; absence of readiness and commitment among committee members and stakeholders; and weak follow up on school improvement programmes. Furthermore, the focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis concurrently disclosed that the following were major challenges in implementing the school improvement programme: absence of enough sitting space for all students; inappropriate class lay out; lack of knowledge and skill in using instructional methods to implement active learning; absence of strong curriculum committee within the department for assessments; lack of interest to learn on the part of the students; and absence of well trained principals and supervisors who mandated for school improvement programme implementation.

The interview results also confirmed that there were lacks of incentives for teachers, principals and other stakeholders of the schools and inability to raise additional revenue locally. By and large, supervisors and experts of district education departments disclosed that the implementation of the school improvement programme has faced many obstacles at the local level, mainly due to lack of implementation capacity, financial limitations, and lack of proper support from the

Ministry of Education. Lastly, in Sibbo, Mettu, and Gachi secondary schools, the focus group discussion members explained that the absence of an education law decree for secondary school systems that clearly identifies delegations, responsibilities and accountability for school principals, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in the schools was the key challenge for the school improvement implementation. Additionally, both groups made known that the 1994 School Management and Finance Management and School Management Blue Book Manual has not been updated to discharge the responsibilities and accountability of the school governing bodies in accordance with the changing situations in schools. Data from the document analysis also showed that the main challenges in the school improvement programmes were: lack of common vision among stakeholders, poor school leadership, lack of adequate infrastructure, and low examination performance in grade 10. The solutions suggested in the documents were to build the capacity of school leadership and management teams, teachers and school governing bodies. The subsequent section presents findings on the prospects for implementing the school improvement programme.

6.1.7 Opportunities for Implementing the School Improvement Programme

This section presents the findings on major opportunities for implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone. The respondents' responses from the questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results indicated that the major opportunities for the secondary schools improvement programme are as follows: the potential for the strategic plan of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) aimed at improving the quality of education throughout the country; a policy for a decentralisation system that advocates the devolution of decision-making authority from the Federal Ministry of Education to zone education offices, district education offices and to the school level; the presence of policy guidelines, rules and regulations for school improvement and a community participation framework respectively; and, lastly, there are existing curriculum matters that relate to learners' real life contexts when compared with the old education system. It is more of a practical, hands-on experience and inquiry learning that leaves room for the local contexts of the schools which offers more choices for the study. The next section presents the conclusions of the study.

6.2 Conclusion of the Study

This section will be divided according to the basic research questions showing how the school improvement programme of secondary schools in the Iluababor administrative zone can be supported to be more successful. The findings of this study are based on research from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis to inform the school improvement programme implementation and its output. The following paragraphs deal with brief concluding remarks for each basic question as follows:

6.2.1. Conclusion of sub-basic research question 1 - to what extent did school leadership and management improve as a result of the implementing the school improvement programme?

The objective of this question was to examine the extent to which school leadership and management in secondary schools improved as a result of implementing the school improvement programme. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- In this case the research instruments in the study concurrently disclosed that secondary schools have better administrative policies, practices and effective staff structures that support the delivery of school improvement programmes in which everyone in the school has collective responsibility for student learning. This coincides with the rules and regulations framed by the Ministry of Education. School leadership and governing bodies have to be committed more than ever before to strengthen the school improvement programme and make tangible differences in school leadership and management.
- Secondary schools were not uniformly committed to translate into action the vision and mission of the school improvement programme in line with the framework of the Ministry of Education as the interview results disclosed. The entire instrument in the study commonly verified that secondary schools were without sufficient finances because the secondary schools were not in a position to generate some income from the land they owned and the sale of some produce and crops produced by secondary schools to supplement the budget allocated from the government. To overcome the problems with regards to budget allocation, secondary school should generate internal income to fund the school improvement programme to meet school improvement goals.

- With regards to building the leadership capacity, there was need for more effort towards capacity building of school principals and teachers to enhance the school improvement programmes. According to the participants, the establishment of positive relations to sustain good practices in the schools were less frequently performed when compared to the set school improvement goals. Thus, procedures have to be established to build leadership capacity and positive relations to sustain good practices in the schools.
- Besides, the interview and document analysis results correspondingly revealed that in the school improvement activities secondary schools were not strongly clustered with each other under the responsibility of the zone education office. Consequently, results from the respondents validated that school leadership and management was not improved during the implementing of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. Therefore, secondary schools have to galvanise through capacity building of school principals, school governing bodies, teachers, students and other stakeholders' involvement to strengthen the school improvement programme.
- To overcome the practices of working poorly internally and externally, the interviewed respondents and focus discussions participants suggested that it is a time to entirely bring new behaviour sets on the part of school principals, school governing bodies, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, and local communities. Consequently, the school leaders must be determined, committed and look to the interests of their followers in setting a clear vision and leading accordingly to realise the vision of secondary schools. Thus, through developing skilful school leadership at present in the zone administrative secondary education sector, schools need to put in place innovative strategies for the school improvement programme.

The next section presents discussions on the conclusions of sub-basic research question 2 - how effective was the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?

6.2.2. Conclusion of sub-basic research question 2: how effective was the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?

In this question the objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- Currently, there is a relevant curriculum in Ethiopia prescribed with learning outcomes with the expectations for what learners should know and be able to do at each grade and within each subject area primarily connected to the student-centred learning approach. But, from the questionnaire and interview results, active learning strategies were not practiced for the reason that teachers in secondary schools were practicing the use of teacher-centred methods of teaching. For this reason, as Ministry of Education outlined in the education and training policy, it is essential to apply student-centred teaching and learning in the secondary education sector.
- Teachers consider continuous professional development as laborious, time consuming and an extra load put upon teachers as the questionnaire and interview results revealed in the study. Additionally, secondary schools were not applying continuous assessment uniformly as result of large class size; teachers think continuous assessment causes grade inflation; and teachers assume that it creates a high workload for teachers. Thus, manuals for teachers' continuous professional development have to be prepared as a handbook to build the capacity of teachers to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards their profession.
- In closing, the questionnaire results with regard to indicators of practice in the school teaching and learning process, the mean value and standard deviation (Mean = 2.9826; SD = 0.76453) confirmed that there was no significant growth in terms of school improvement programme. As a result, capacity building for school principals, department heads and teachers in instructional leadership, school continuous assessment, active learning strategies and pedagogical knowledge and skills is needed to overcome the hurdles of secondary schools. The interviews, focus groups and document analysis results simultaneously disclosed that the teaching and process domain - until now – has been inadequately executed, even though a lot of hard work had previously been put into implementing the school improvement programme. The respondents' responses therefore

authenticated that the school teaching and learning processes were not improved during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. Therefore, principals of schools and school governing bodies have to deliver quick responses to the needs of learners by keeping their promises and adhering to the direction of the Ministry of Education's set targets.

The next section present discussion on the conclusion of the sub-basic research question 3 - how successful was the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?

6.2.3. Conclusion of the sub-basic research question 3 - how successful was the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?

In this sub-basic research question the objective of the study was to assess the success rate of the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of the selected secondary schools. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- The results from the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions revealed that, concerning students' empowerment in secondary schools, insignificant endeavours were made by school principals, teachers and parents to empower the students to develop a habit of taking responsibility and leading a disciplined life. As a result, mechanisms have to be devised to empower learners so as to enhance student learning in secondary schools.
- There was less effort made to acknowledge good work in the schools for teachers, students and for school improvement committees to praise good work they performed in the school improvement programme implementation as the questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions simultaneously confirmed in the study. Giving reward for positive behaviours for students in the school was rarely exercised. The trend of preparing fun events for grade 9 and 10 was not very much effective as a way to build a sense of belongingness in each grade and to share experiences, as all instruments in the study disclosed. Consequently, rules and regulations have to be established to praise good work and the positive behaviours of students, and for fun events in secondary schools.

- The interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results concurrently confirmed that student-led sanitation and hygiene was not in practice in secondary schools. Therefore, school principals have to own the responsibility to promote good hygiene and sanitation practices by engaging the students in the schools.
- In sum, the questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, document results all revealed that the school learning environment was not improved during the implementation of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. Thus, school principals, district education office and zone education office have to work together persistently to solve the problems in the school learning environment.

The next section presents discussions on the conclusions of the sub-basic research question 4 - how did community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

6.2.4. Conclusion of sub-basic research question 4 - how did community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

In this sub-basic research question the objective of the study was to evaluate the extent to which community participation improved as a result of the implementation of the school improvement programme. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- The summary results of each and every one of the indicators regarding the practices of parents and community participation the results of the mean value and standard deviation were 287 (Mean = 2.64; SD = 0.70219). This result confirms that there was no significant progress in terms of school improvement programme goals and objectives with regards to parents/local communities' involvement that revealed participation was largely passive and dismal.
- Consequently, the sum total of results from the respondents verified that parents and community participation had not improved during the implementing of the school improvement programme in the administrative zone as planned and implemented in the last five years. Therefore, secondary schools have to strengthen parents' and local communities' involvement in learners' learning in line with the Ministry of Education's strategic direction which states parents and local community should guarantee to schools

to provide appropriate educational service, especially for the learners in secondary schools.

The next section discusses the major challenges of implementing a school improvement programme in secondary schools.

6.2.5. Conclusion of sub-basic research question 5 - what are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?

In this sub-basic research question the objective of the study was to identify the main challenges of school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- Despite the changes made in the school improvement programme implementation, there were challenges (see summary section 6.1.6) that made the efforts of the school improvement programme ineffective and unsuccessful. So, secondary schools have to address the challenges of the school improvement programme with particular emphasis on strengthening school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment and community participation. Therefore, the school improvement guidelines have to adapt to better meet the needs of secondary schools. School leadership and school management trainings have to be provided to school principals and supervisors to strengthen evidence-based planning and decision making.

The next section presents the major prospects for the school improvement programme in secondary schools.

6.2.6. Conclusion of sub-basic research question 6 - what are the major opportunities of implementing the school improvement programme?

In this sub-basic research question the objective of the study was to explore the major prospects for the school improvement programme implementation in secondary schools. Based on this objective the following conclusions were derived from the study:

- Secondary schools as the bedrock of the proposed sustainable Development Goals with regard to the education goal which states that “the Goal of Education is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” has to be endorsed as the highest quality education improvement priority. Hence, in

the process of school improvement, things might have been inexcusable in the last five years. Consequently, in order to guarantee success and ensure that no secondary schools are left behind, best mechanisms have to be identified to urge solutions, which will be implemented within a certain period of time.

- To use the opportunities (see in the summary section 6.1.7) requires the concerted efforts of secondary school leaders and management teams to restructure continuously the school improvement programme. Consequently, all stakeholders should do their part in promoting school improvement in the secondary schools of the administrative zone.

The next section presents recommendations for each sub-basic research questions as follows:

6.3 Recommendation of the Study

In the interpretation and data analysis, summary and conclusions several issues were raised that call for serious attention regarding grades 9 - 10 school improvement programmes. These issues include challenges and opportunities that require action from different stakeholders, particularly at national level, and these include zone education officers, district education officers, secondary school leadership and management teams, teachers, students, parents and the community at large. The recommendations presented below emanate from the findings and conclusions reached in the study.

6.3.1 Recommendations with regard to sub-basic research question 1: To what extent does school leadership and management improve as a result of the implementing the school improvement programme?

The questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results showed that secondary schools have better administrative policies, practices and effective staff structures that support the delivery of the schools' improvement programmes in which everyone in the schools has collective responsibility for student learning that coincides with the rules and regulations framed by the Ministry of Education.

However, data analysis disclosed that, currently in secondary schools, the absence of comprehensive management tools to enhance the school improvement programme was the major hurdle. The researcher therefore recommends that Total Quality Management (TQM), a suitable school leadership style, the transformational change approach/strategy, and application of the clustering school system be adapted to enhance and implement the school improvement programme practices and initiatives in combination with the existing strategies.

Strategy 1 Application of Total Quality Management (TQM) – TQM is needed to strengthen the current school improvement programme and to bring the concerted efforts of the school wide participation of stakeholders (teachers, administrative staffs, students, parents and the local communities) for school improvement programme monitoring, evaluation, and feedback for more service quality improvement. Using TQM as a tool by the entire school community to improve the school improvement programmes also needs radical change to improve the performance of secondary schools. There is also a need for consultations with students and

parents as the customers and final judges of the quality of services provided by the schools. Additionally, schools should constantly strive to do better and constantly make enhanced improvements in all areas of school improvement domains and elements to bring about a paradigm shift. Schools also have to constantly study the best schools in the public services to identify areas where improvements can be made, and to find the best method of incorporating improvements, as a benchmark for outward looking for making any changes and improvements. Thus, to bring radical change in secondary schools TQM is recommended to carry out effective and efficient practices in the school improvement programme.

Accordingly, school principals and school governing bodies should aim at bringing about essential changes in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a consequence, the school improvement system and processes need to be restructured continuously. Then again, it would be useful for school principals and school governing bodies to have a clear view of the elements that are relevant to the application of Total Quality Management in secondary schools. Therefore, concerted hard work is needed from secondary school principals, school management teams, teachers, administrative staff, parents, PTAs, the school boards, and local communities for on the spot application of Total Quality Management.

Strategy 2 - Application of transformational school leadership style - In combination with situational school leadership, the transformational leadership style is recommended to inspire school principals, teachers, and administrative staff and to make them look beyond self-centredness and focus on school improvement goals. This model helps principals to set direction in building the shared vision and a collaborative culture, and to build strong relationships with parents and the wider community. Additionally, this model helps school principals, administrative staff, teachers and all stakeholders to frame attitudes to move their schools forward and to be committed to the goals of school improvement. This leadership style also helps school principals in the secondary schools (grades 9-10) to motivate and inspire stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, etc.) in the school. Therefore, transformational leadership is very significant in this study for secondary the school improvement programme to move forward. Consequently, the Ministry of Education, zone education officers, district education officers and secondary schools have to work in collaboration to apply the transformational school leadership

style so as to create high performance achievement for the school improvement programme implementation.

Strategy 3 - Transformational change approach strategy - The findings from the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions revealed that school improvement programme implementation was functioning poorly internally and externally at present. Even though secondary schools have registered some progress in school improvement, there are still some areas that need rapid transformation to sustain the school improvement programme for years to come. The structural transformation the schools hope to make is to move from low learners' achievement towards high learners' achievement. The transformational change approach has to be in practice because currently secondary schools are working poorly. That is why due diligence is necessary for transformational change in the coming five years of the school improvement programme implementation. Therefore, the transformational change approach is recommended so that secondary school principals, administrative staff, teachers, students, parents and local communities can uphold radical changes in the teaching and learning processes, the learning environment and the support services in order to change the entire culture of the school.

Strategy 4 - Clustering of secondary schools – The interview and document analysis results revealed that in the school improvement activities of secondary schools there were no strongly clustering systems, with each school sharing best experiences under the responsibility of the zone education office and the district education offices. Hence, it is recommended that great effort has to be made to establish strong systems of cluster centres where school principals and teachers can receive short trainings in the new appealing and student-centred classroom learning/teaching process and the manner of educational delivery that replaces the old teacher-centred approach. When clustering secondary schools in their locality, the advantages are resource centres provide educational equipment, reference books and others for the common use of teachers in order to enhance their capacities through discussions, and exchanges and shared experiences will be facilitated. Besides, school principals and teachers can get on the job training and they exchange experiences thereby learning from each other.

To sustain the ongoing school improvement endeavours in the secondary schools, a clustering system is suggested to minimise the current prevailing problems. In this case, clustering secondary schools helps to encourage stakeholders at different stages and clusters to inspire educational practices that promote learning growth in the school decision-making process which are supportive in strengthening the existing school improvement programme. For this reason, zone education offices, district education offices and secondary schools have to make enthusiastic efforts for the implementation of the school improvement programme to transfer best practices, innovative knowledge, skills and technologies to change the current low achievement of learners and stumpy performances of secondary school activities in the administrative zone, through clustering secondary schools according to their geographical locations.

Strategy 5 – Preparation of education law and updating rules and regulations - The focus group discussions and document analysis results verified that in secondary schools the absence of an education law for ruling the secondary school system that clearly identifies delegations, responsibilities and accountability for school principals, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in the schools was the key challenge for the school improvement implementation. On the other hand, the 1994 Finance Management and School Management Blue Book Manual is not updated to discharge the responsibilities and accountability of the school governing bodies in accordance with the changing situations in schools. Consequently, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education prepares education law and updates administrative working manuals for secondary schools to enhance school improvement programme implementation in the future.

Strategy 6 - Strengthening the capacity building of school leadership and school governing bodies - The questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions revealed that the major barriers in the schools were lack of proper knowledge and skills in school leadership and educational management, especially in the areas of resource management, financial management, personnel management, instructional leadership, planning, monitoring and evaluations. Also, the absence of commitment and dedication on the part of principals to discharge their professional responsibilities was a major challenge. Capacity building provides schools with tools and processes that enhance each school to build its own school leadership and governing bodies. Consequently, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education, zone education office,

district education offices and schools have to work hard towards the achievement of the intended objectives of the school improvement programmes through building the capacity of school principals, supervisors, teachers, students, parents, council members and other stakeholders.

Strategy 7 - Creating income generating schemes - The interviews, focus group discussions and the document analysis results confirmed that all secondary schools have five to ten hectares of farm lands in their school compounds. Nonetheless, secondary schools were not in a position to generate income from the land they owned and income from the sale of some products and crops produced by the schools as it was expected. This means the only source of funding was the government budget. This resulted in the school improvement programme not being able to meet school improvement goals. Additionally, block grants for school improvement in secondary school should take into account students that need additional help, including those from low income families, and disabled students with academic difficulties. In view of that, it is recommended that school management teams and principals, teachers, parents, school boards, PTAs, school boards, and districts education officers have to make a blending effort in order to provide ways of generating income for school improvement other than the government budget.

6.3.2 Recommendations with regard to sub-basic research question 2 - How effective are the school improvement programmes in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?

Strategy 8 - Preparations of manuals as guidelines for school principals and teachers - The questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results revealed that active learning strategies were not used by teachers in secondary schools who mostly used teacher-centred methods of teaching. Additionally, there were continuous assessment problems in the secondary education system due to lack of sufficient training on continuous classroom assessment; lack of skills to develop classroom continuous assessment tools; and absence of manuals and supporting materials that assist teachers in the development of classroom continuous assessment. As a result, the researcher recommends that modules as handbooks in the areas of active learning method strategies, teachers' continuous professional development, continuous assessment manual, and an instructional leadership manual for secondary schools be prepared and distributed among teachers. There is need also for capacity building, in-service

training and summer programmes to counter existing challenges of the school improvement programme implementation. Then again, strong curriculum committees within the department have to be established for the application of assessments and active learning strategies.

6.3.3 Recommendations with regard to research question 3 - To what extent does the school learning environment improve as a result of implementing the school improvement programme?

9. Building strong instructional leadership - the school principals of secondary schools have to adopt a stronger instructional leadership role, make strong more collaboration between school communities, build system of providing recognition for teachers for innovative teaching practices and more emphasis for creating conducive learning environment in (9 – 10) secondary schools. Then again, to minimize the current challenges with regard to the learning environment, the researcher recommend that the school principal and school governing bodies need to work harder in order to create a safe and orderly learning environment. Yet again, student council members should be involved in decision-making in the schools' management structure to give them an opportunity to influence decisions made for them.

Strategy 10 - School sanitation hygiene strategy – The questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results revealed that schools did not have appropriate school sanitation and hygiene facilities, and efforts to stop open defecation in the school toilets were major problems in the schools. Consequently, it recommended that student-led school sanitation and hygiene have to be in practice in secondary schools to develop an approach whereby students take the lead regarding their school sanitation and hygiene implementation. The questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results all together verified that there were no circumstances where the students initiate and lead the change processes by establishing their own committees and setting their own by-laws. Besides, students have to excel in their schools with regard to hygiene and sanitation implementation that includes latrine utilisation, solid waste management, personal hygiene, hand washing, food hygiene, and safe water management as part and parcel of the school improvement programme. So, secondary schools have to devise a strategy to strengthen student leadership, capacity building and school sanitation and hygiene. This is one aspect of the school management structure for a successful learning environment.

Strategy 11 - Preparation of clear guidelines for incentives and fun events in secondary school - Questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions proved that there were no methods of acknowledging good work in the schools for teachers, students and for other stakeholders. Thus, the trend of preparing fun events for grades 9 and 10 will make a significant contribution to building a sense of belonging in each grade, resulting in shared experiences. As a result, to maintain a positive school learning environment that encourages learners to learn and makes teachers work effectively, rewards and incentives have to be used in the school. Therefore, it is recommended that guidelines, rules and regulations have to be established and updated to praise good work, for positive behaviour change of students, and for fun events in secondary schools. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, zone education offices, district education offices and secondary schools should work together to develop clear new guiding principles and update former guidelines so as to meet teacher and learner satisfaction.

Strategy 12 - Strengthening the application of student behaviour policy guidelines - The questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions confirmed that secondary schools did not make sure all students should know what the school expects of them and spells out what will happen if students do not meet expectations. As a consequence, it is recommended that schools should constantly practice student disciplinary governed by guidelines to maximise student learning and enhance the best learners' achievements.

6.4.4 Recommendations with regard to the sub-basic research question - how did community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

Strategy 13 - Building the capacity of parents and local communities - The questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results revealed that the degree of involvement by parents and the local community was largely passive and at an inactive stage. Thus, it is recommended that building the capacity of parents and local communities' participation is important to get better school improvement programmes, and to create more effective and adjustable change. Besides, high priority should be given to the involvement of parents and local communities in planning, monitoring, and evaluation in order to provide urgent solutions to school improvement programme challenges. Hence, parents and the local

community have to ensure proactive participation in secondary school improvement efforts and contribute towards measurable achievements in the coming years.

Additionally, strong and wide ranging parents and local community participation is a key in the effort to contain bottlenecks that are lingering in secondary school improvement programmes. So, school principals and school governing bodies should unveil mal-administrative activities within the secondary schools' (9-10) education sector and contribute their share in the effort to create better governance for all leaders of secondary schools. Furthermore, the school principals, school governing bodies and teachers need to make a committed effort to fill gaps in school governance at all levels of the secondary school, especially in the grades 9-10 system. Thus, the Ministry of Education, zone education office, district education offices and schools should give high priority to the needs of the learners and make the utmost effort to be more successful in leading and managing school improvement programmes. Last but not least, the zone education office, district education offices, school principals, teachers and school governing bodies have to make intensified efforts to address the challenges of school improvements that pour cold water on the ongoing school improvement programme implementation and students' achievements.

6.4.5 Recommendations with regard to the sub-basic research question about what are the main challenges in implementing the school improvement programme in secondary schools
Strategy 14 - Building the capacity of the stakeholders to develop strong collaboration among stakeholders - As discussed in the questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis results, even though secondary schools were on the right track to bring changes and to build their capacity, they still face a lot of challenges that need the contribution of the school principals, school governing bodies, teachers, students, parents and the local community. Therefore, it recommended that in the coming years, school improvement programmes have to address the identified challenges with particular emphasis on the domains of the school improvement programme to strengthen school leadership and management, the teaching and learning process, the school learning environment, parents and community participation.

The respondents underlined the need to intensify the ongoing efforts to build on the success achieved so far and towards realising school improvement programme revitalisation. This calls

for well-organised and collaborative efforts by active participation of parents and local communities in the school improvement programme activities. Therefore, it is recommended that in the coming years there should be a period of further commitment where efforts would be intensified to build on the successes and address the challenges observed in the implementation of the school improvement programme over the past five years. Nonetheless, good governance, accountability and transparency could hardly exist unless all stakeholders work in partnership and participate in implementing school improvement programmes accordingly. Thus, ensuring school governance and abolishment of school improvement programme challenges should never be left only to school principals and teachers. Rather, it calls for the combined efforts of all stakeholders.

6.3.6 Recommendations with regards to the sub question 6 - What are the major opportunities of implementing the school improvement programme?

Since 1994, the government of Ethiopia has embarked on a decentralisation process. Decentralisation process in Ethiopia is currently undergoing a far reaching decentralisation of education, where accountability and responsibility are transferred to lower administrative levels. As a major opportunity in the education sector, decentralisation has opened the way for schools to exercise their duties and responsibilities. Through decentralisation local communities take greater responsibilities for managing their own affairs, including school improvement. However, as indicated in the study, decentralisation in all of its contexts does not in itself empower schools to be responsible for their school improvement programmes. Thus, decentralisation should reach secondary schools and local communities to empower them further still for effective school improvement programme implementation.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, the zone education office, district education offices and secondary schools have to foster mechanisms for the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to sustainable school improvement by sharing of experiences and reinforcement of best practices.

In this chapter the objectives and sub-basic research questions of the study have addressed the sections of summary, conclusion and recommendations that help to improve the practices of the school improvement programme of Iluababor zone (grades 9-10) secondary schools. Finally, further in-depth research has to be conducted to manage the challenges of school improvement programmes systematically by other researchers.

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Appendis I – Questionnaire

University of South Africa (UNISA) College of Education, Department of Education Management and Leadership

A questionnaire to be filled out by principals, vice principals, secondary school supervisors and teachers of the secondary schools in Iluababor Administrative Zone, Ethiopia I am currently writing a research for the fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in Education Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The title of the research is ‘Challenges of and Opportunities for Implementing the School Improvement Programme in Public Secondary Schools in Iluababor Administrative Zone in Ethiopia.’

The main objective of this research is to explore the challenges and opportunities of the school improvement program in secondary schools (9-10) and to propose possible recommendations. The findings of the study will benefit education sector by putting forward reform options that support the school leadership and management, teaching and learning, school learning environment and community involvement in the schools’ improvement programs. Consequently, based on your leadership and managerial role and the important responsibilities that you currently shoulder as well as your contribution to your school, I am pleased to have you as a respondent in this questionnaire survey.

As such, I would be grateful for you if you will spend some minutes to answer the questions in this survey. Please be assured that your responses in this survey will be treated in full confidence and the aggregate analysis of the data collected will be used for research purposes only. Thus, the success of this study depends on your willingness to give genuine and timely information. Therefore, you are kindly requested to respond to the questions as per the instruction indicated under each part. The questionnaire is divided into six parts.

Thank you in advance

Tekalign Minalu Tirfe

Part I: Demographic Questions

Section A – Requires your personal information regarding your school, age, gender and educational background.

Instructions: Please give your responses by circling your answer. You are also kindly requested to write out the required information where you are asked to specify.

1.1) Name of the district----- School -----

1.2) Sexes a) male b) female

1.3) Age a) 20-30 b) 31-40 c) 41-50 d) above 50

1.4) Marital status a) Married b) Unmarried c) Divorced

1.5) Educational levels a) certificate b) diploma c) BA/BSC d) MA/MSc e) others please specify

1.6) State your major area of study _____

1.7) State your current position _____

1.8) Years of services in your current position _____ in others ___ total _____

Part II: Questionnaire

The questionnaire aims at testing the major components of the school improvement programme on school leadership and management roles, the teaching and learning process, school environment, community involvement, and the system of monitoring and evaluating for the school improvement programme implementation. The questionnaire below was extracted from the domains of SIP, Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010:6-18) School Improvement Programme Guide Line: Improving the Quality of Education and Students Results of all Children at Primary and Secondary Schools. Descriptive statements are listed below. Please reply to items under the content by putting “x” that shows the degree to which the descriptive statements correspond. Numerically, choose the degree to which the issue better represents your preferences where strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, partially agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1.

The questionnaire is divided into six parts as follows:

1. Requires your personal perception regarding your school leadership and management domain and its elements in school improvement programme implementation

	Administrative regulations and structure	1	2	3	4	5
1.1	The school has adopted practices that clearly identify responsibilities.					
1.2	The school has an effective staff structure that supports the delivery of the school’s vision and mission and its strategic priorities in which everyone has collective responsibility for student learning.					
	Strategic direction	1	2	3	4	5
1.3	The school builds up and articulates the school improvement vision, guided by the values, beliefs and common aspiration of the school community.					
1.4	The school decision-making and administrative processes (including data collection and analysis, and communicating with parents) are carried out effectively.					
1.5	The leadership team of the school is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed for school improvement.					
1.6	There is leadership readiness and commitment to radically change the school system to achieve targets of the school improvement programme.					
1.7	Leadership of the school aligns and communicates support staff, teachers, students and other stakeholders to market and sell the vision and strategy of the school.					
1.8	Collaborative and purposeful professional learning across the school community improves outcomes for all students.					

1.9	Authentic learning opportunities for students are provided within safe, orderly and contemporary learning environments.					
	Strategic planning of SIP	1	2	3	4	5
1.10	School leadership keeps the improvement goals in the forefront of the school's activities.					
1.11	The annual school improvement plan identifies the key improvement goals for the year, based on the school's strategic plan.					
1.12	Key actions and strategies to achieve the improvement goals are implemented.					
1.13	Quantitative and qualitative data is identified for collection and analysis to assess progress on achievement of the improvement goals.					
1.14	Adequate resourcing is allocated to each of the improvement goals.					
1.15	Improvement goals are communicated to students, parents and families and the wider school community.					
	Consultation and communication	1	2	3	4	5
1.16	School policies, regulations and procedures are effectively communicated and followed.					
1.17	The school vision and improvement goals provoke broad stakeholder commitment.					
1.18	The school consults with the community, reflects on its data, and reviews improvement planning processes					
1.19	Progress towards improvement is formally communicated to staff, students and families on a regular basis.					
	Financial management	1	2	3	4	5

1.20	The school has highly effective processes that lead to enhanced financial management.					
1.21	The school budget aligns to the school's improvement goals.					
1.22	The school demonstrates effective administration of finances, resources and facilities focused on meeting identified needs and future demands.					
1.23	Financial management is comfortable and financial reserves are effectively maintained					
1.24	The school board regularly reviews and monitors the school's budget and financial performance.					
1.25	Departments/units have adequate resources to support the school learning and teaching processes.					
	Management of infrastructure and physical resources	1	2	3	4	5
1.26	The school uses its physical environment and facilities to inspire and maximize learning.					
1.27	The school provides a well-maintained safe, secure, stimulating and welcoming environment.					
1.28	The school plans effectively for future infrastructure needs which support student learning and stewardship of the school site.					
	Human resource management	1	2	3	4	5
1.29	There is adequate and appropriate support of human resources in quantity and quality for the smooth running of the school functions and annual action plan.					
1.30	There are support staff and teachers commitment to discharging the responsibilities of engagement in their work towards effective outcomes.					
1.31	Staff expertise is utilized to address the identified learning needs of all students.					

1.32	The school board actively monitors and reviews work health and safety practices and procedures.					
1.33	The school has strategies and practices in place to ensure that staff, students and families understand the implementation of the school improvement programme.					
1.34	Teachers attendance at school is well-managed to take responsibility for serving all students and meet high expectation for learning					

	Building the leadership capacity of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
1.35	Leadership of the school motivates and inspires staff, teachers, students and other stakeholders to create the energy and commitment to drive school improvement.					
1.36	A positive learning environment across the school community is built and sustained through contemporary leadership structures.					
1.37	In the school there is a process of organizing and staffing to make sure that everyone knows about school improvement and what is expected of him/her.					
1.38	The school leadership provides support for teachers' interaction and provides moral support by making teachers feel appreciated for their contribution in the school.					
1.39	Effective strategies for staff development, staff induction and performance review are developed and implemented.					
1.40	Relationships are fostered and promoted so as to nurture mutual respect and the wellbeing of all staff, students, parents and the wider school community.					

	Establishing a positive relationship to sustain good practices	1	2	3	4	5
1.41	Resources are prioritized and aligned to the school improvement goals to maximize the impact on teaching and learning.					
1.42	Effective organizational and administrative structures are in place to ensure sound management of the school.					
	Monitoring and evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
1.43	Improvement goals are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis to measure the effectiveness of the planned strategies.					
1.44	The school collects and analyses the identified performance data to measure progress and to plan future actions.					
1.45	The school reports regularly to the school community on its progress.					
1.46	The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated through observation, feedback, analysis and use of relevant data.					
1.47	There is school self-assessment that provides an important baseline of information that will be measured against annually over the next years focused on the plans undertaken by the school improvement committee.					
1.48	Zone education office, district staff, as well as school cluster supervisors, and the school improvement committee members monitor and evaluate the implementation of the annual action plan.					

2. Requires your personal perception regarding your school teaching and learning domain and its elements in school improvement programme implementation

	Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
2.49	The school's mission and vision informs and inspires the curriculum.					
2.50	The curriculum provides for breadth and depth of learning with adjustments to ensure access for all.					
2.51	There are clear curriculum/learning standards and goals at class and school level.					
2.52	The curriculum is designed and sequenced to develop successful learners, creative individuals and responsible citizens.					
2.53	Teachers understand the curriculum (in terms of age, relevance, and integration) and develop and use supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning.					
2.54	Co-curricular activities are offered for students to achieve success outside of the classroom.					
	Use of teaching methods in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
2.55	Lecture method - passively listening to teachers lecture/ using highly teacher-centred method of teaching/					
2.56	Class discussion learning method can be used with a class size to make the learners to think critically on the subject being discussed and to use logic to evaluate their and others' positions.					
2.57	Think/pair/share learning method is undertaken for students take time to think about what has just been presented by the teacher and then discuss it with one or more of the students who are sitting next to them					

	followed by a class discussion (share).					
2.58	Learning cell method is used in that a pair of students study and learn together by asking and answering questions on common reading materials.					
2.59	Collaborative learning group method is used in that the teachers assign students into groups of 3-6 people and then gives each group an assignment or task to work on together.					
2.60	Class game learning method is used as an energetic way to learn for students and help them to enjoy learning about a topic.					
	Teachers' professional development	1	2	3	4	5
2.61	Teachers participate in continuous professional development (CPD) in order to learn new knowledge to apply in the classroom.					
2.62	There is formal training courses, such as full-time or part-time training for teachers to experience sharing and meetings with other teachers/supervisors					
2.63	There is action research or study groups or mentoring, or similar activities in the school					
2.64	There is on-going continuous professional development undertaken by teachers that will have a positive impact on student results.					
2.65	Adequacy of ICT awareness, utilization, access, and support for teaching staff is promising.					
2.66	All teachers participate in some form of professional development during a ten month period.					
	Learning and evaluation system	1	2	3	4	5
2.67	In the school students' results are defined as what students of different ages know, understand and can do					

	in the subjects of the curriculum.					
2.68	A range of assessment methods are used in each grade to assess student learning and, based on the results, teachers provide extra teaching support to underperforming students.					
2.69	Assessment practices are aligned to the curriculum and are designed to clarify, diagnose and monitor students' learning progress over time.					
2.70	Reporting practices are aligned to the curriculum and provide specific, accurate, constructive and timely feedback to students.					

3. Requires your personal perception regarding your school's orderly and safe learning environment domain and its elements in school improvement programme implementation

	Student empowerment	1	2	3	4	5
3.71	Students have developed a habit of taking responsibilities and leading a disciplined life.					
3.72	Students provide teachers with constructive feedback about the teaching and learning.					
3.73	Student teamwork, responsibility and self-discipline are fostered.					
3.74	Students are able to express the purpose of their learning, are motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons					
	Student Support	1	2	3	4	5
3.75	Students are motivated to learn and actively participate in lessons to improve their results.					
3.76	School creates opportunities for students to develop into self-regulating learners within and beyond the classroom					
3.77	Teachers use various teaching methods in order to meet					

	the diverse student needs in the classroom.					
3.78	Sufficient learning and teaching materials are available.					
3.79	Assistive devices are available and in use.					
3.80	There is collaborative work at the school and community level to support children with special needs.					
3.82	Relationship among School Staff, Students and Families	1	2	3	4	5
3.82	A school policy and guidelines focusing on creation of a learning-friendly environment is developed, implemented and promoted throughout the school community					
3.83	Positive and trusting relationships exist among staff, students and families.					
3.84	Interactions among all members of the school community reflect a sense of justice, dignity and respect.					
3.85	Academic success, attendance, and other aspects of positive behaviour are recognized and celebrated school-wide to promote positive relationship and structure.					
	Students' behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
3.86	There is a behaviour code for students that emphasize respect, self-discipline, positive relationships, and the prevention of inappropriate behaviour.					
3.87	Students behaviour rules, regulation and expectations are understood and communicated to parents, students, teachers, and all staff.					
3.88	The school's policies and practices are followed to ensure that coordinated and consistent practices exist within classrooms and across the school.					
3.89	Teachers establish clear expectations of students and deal promptly, fairly and respectfully with behaviour					

	issues.					
3.90	Students demonstrate an understanding of the school's behaviour policy and approach and act accordingly.					
3.91	The school is free from external threat and has an orderly, firm atmosphere, and free from the threat of physical harm.					
3.92	Teachers have a common understanding of learning strategies that develop positive behaviours.					
3.93	Teachers establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create a learning environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.					
3.94	Students are affirmed and rewarded for positive behaviours.					
	Student Facilities	1	2	3	4	5
3.95	Schools provide quality school facilities that enable all staff to work well and all children to learn.					
3.96	Rules concerning cleanliness are consistently applied in the school to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.					

4. Requires your personal perception regarding your school community involvement domain and its elements in the school improvement programme implementation

Working with Parents		1	2	3	4	5
4.97	There is a clear and focused vision for the teaching and learning process with parents that facilitate the creation of reform that focuses on student achievement					
4.98	Teachers meet with parents when necessary, and at a minimum twice per semester, to provide quality reports and to discuss students' learning achievements.					
4.99	Parent teachers association and school boards discuss					

	student achievement at their meetings and inform parents about assessment and the outcomes achieved in the school reform.					
4.100	Parent and student voice in learning is actively encouraged in the school.					
	Community Participation	1	2	3	4	5
4.101	Schools successfully mobilise resources from the community to support implementation of the school improvement plan.					
4.102	Schools are active in communicating and promoting the importance of the school improvement programme in the community.					
	What is the Level (degree) of Community Participation in School Improvement?	1	2	3	4	5
4.103	Involvement through the mere use of services (such as enrolling students, reducing dropout rate and repeating rate).					
4.104	Involvement through the contribution or extraction of money, materials, and labour.					
4.108	Involvement through attendance (meeting etc).					
4.109	Involvement through consultation on school improvement issues.					
4.110	Participation in the delivery of service often as a partner with other actors in the school improvement programme.					
4.111	Participation as implementers of delegated powers in the school improvement programme.					
4.112	Participation in real decision making at every stage, including assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of the school improvement programme.					

5) Here are list of school improvement challenges which were expected to be encountered when the secondary schools implemented the school improvement programme. Therefore, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and rank it from 1 up to 18 in line with their cause of inconvenience in the implementing of SIP.

No.	Expected factors related to major challenges for the school improvement programme	Challenges		Rank
		Yes	No	
5.113	Unable to market the school vision and mission of school improvement programme/ineffective communication			
5.114	Poor school management and leadership			
5.115	Inefficient administrative services which include improper strategic planning and improperly implementation of yearly plan			
5.116	Inadequacy of the school grant support from government/ insufficient allocations of budget were made for schools			
5.117	Lack of capacity building for principals for their role as an instructional leader			
5.118	Less commitment of implementation, mainly principals and teachers			
5.119	Weak collaboration of stakeholders			
1.120	Lack of curriculum inputs/lack of adequate textbooks and teaching and learning materials exacerbate the low levels of student achievement			
5.121	Poor mechanism of teachers’ promotions and transfer from one place to another area			
5.122	Deficiency of schools to develop and implement school wide discipline/unable to increase consistency regarding students’ behaviour throughout the school			

6) Here are list of school improvement opportunities which are expected to help implement school improvement programme. Therefore, say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and rank them from 1 to 7 in line with their significance in the implementing of SIP.

No.	Expected factors related to major opportunities for SIP	Opportunities		Rank
		Yes	No	
6.123	The potential for strategic plan of General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) aimed to improve the quality of education throughout the country.			
6.124	A policy of decentralisation system that advocates the devolution of decision making authority from Federal Ministry of Education to regional education bureaus, district education offices and to the school level .			
6.125	The investment of resources in the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) that is required in the education system.			
6.126	The government of Ethiopia has attached great importance to the expansion of secondary education (9-12), where the adoption of scientific concepts of development has created favourable conditions for preparatory and vocational education.			
6.127	The great demands for skilled human resources in the labour market.			
6.128	The curriculum matter relates to real life contexts when compared with the old education system. It is more of practical hands-on experience and inquiry learning that leaves room for local contexts of the schools which offer more choices for the students.			
6.129	Presence of policy guide line, rules and regulation for school improvement and community participation framework respectively.			

Source: Ministry of Education. "School Improvement Guide Line: Improving the Quality of Education and Students Results of all Children at Primary and Secondary Schools." SIP Guide Line for Schools . Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education, June 30, 2010, pp 6-18.

7) Additional comments and suggestions

In this section open questions are listed where you can add positive and/or negative comments regarding your school improvement programme implementation.

7.1. In your view, what are the main problems with the school improvement programme? -----

7.2. What are the obstacles (problems) hindering school improvement programmes in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation? -----

7.3 What solution do you suggest in order to overcome the problems you have mentioned? -----

7.4 What are the major prospects for implementing the school improvement programme? -----

Appendix II: Interview Questions

Interview questions developed that were presented to the principals, zone and district education experts and supervisors.

- a) Name of participants-----
- b) Age of participants-----
- c) Educational status_____
- d) Date of discussion_____
- e) Place of discussion_____
- f) Time of discussion_____ g) Starting time _____
- h) Ending time_____

Part I: School Leadership Management

- 1) To what extent do the school leadership and management team in the school run the implementation of the school improvement programme?
- 2) What leadership approaches were applied in the secondary schools to bring future focused change in the school improvement programme?
- 3) What type of change is going on in the school improvement programme implementation?
- 4) In leading and managing the school activities presently what good practices are there to strengthen the school improvement programme implementation?
- 5) How do schools generate internal income to fund school improvement programme implementation?
- 6) To what extent does the school principal provide supervision and support department heads and teachers to meet the purposes of the school improvement (instructional leadership)?
- 7) How do you rate the involvement of the school improvement committee in the school self-assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- 8) What other school improvement measures will you suggest to more effectively the existing implementation of the school improvement programme?
- 9) To what extent are the school education board and the school parent teachers association (PTAs) effective in planning, organising and the implementing the school improvement programme?

Part II Teaching and Learning Process

10) How effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools in terms of:

- A) Curriculum;
- B) Use of teaching methods in the classroom;
- C) Teachers' professional development;
- D) Learning and evaluation system;
- E) Students' problems?

11) To what extent does the school principal provide supervision and support department heads and teachers to meet the purposes of the school improvement?

Part III: Orderly and Safe Learning Environment

12) How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?

13) How do you evaluate the status of your school facilities that enable all staff to work well and for all students?

14) How do describe sanitation and hygiene facilities in secondary schools?

Part IV Community Involvement

15) To what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?

16) To what extent does collaboration with external stakeholders support secondary school improvement programme initiatives?

17) What is the participation status of PTAs in the school improvement programme?

V) Challenges and Opportunities

18) What are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?

19. What are the major prospects of implementing the school improvement programme?

Thank you for participating in the interview

Appendix III: Focus Group Interview Questions

Focused Group interview discussion questions for PTAs and student council members

- a) Name of participants _____
- b) Age of participants _____
- c) Educational status _____
- d) Date of discussion _____
- e) Place of discussion _____
- f) Time of discussion _____
- g) Starting time _____
- h) Ending time _____.

Part I: School Leadership and Management

- 1) To what extent do the school leadership and management team run the implementation of the school improvement programme?
- 2) What leadership and management strategies were applied in your respective secondary schools to bring future focused change in the school improvement programme?
- 3) How do describe ways of planning, organising, leading, monitoring and evaluation within the school improvement programme?
- 4) How do you perceive the task of the school management team and other stakeholders that participate in the school self-evaluation and school development planning?
- 5) How do you describe the involvement of the school improvement committee in school self-evaluation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- 6) How do zone education offices and district education offices provide technical assistance to secondary schools to carry out secondary school improvement programme initiatives?
- 7) What other school improvement measures can you suggest to influence the existing implementation of the school improvement program?

Part II: Teaching and Learning Process

- 8) How effective is the school improvement programme in improving teaching and learning in secondary schools?
- 9) To what extent does the school principal provide supervision and support department heads and teachers to meet the purposes of the school improvement programme?

Part III: Orderly and Safe Learning Environment

- 10) How successful is the school improvement programme in improving the learning environment of secondary schools?
- 11) How do you evaluate the status of your school facilities that enable all to be able to work well and for all students?
- 12) Are there fun events for each grade and/or for the whole school to build a sense of belonging in each grade through shared experience?
- 13) How do describe sanitation and hygiene facilities in secondary schools?
- 14) Are students in school involved in decisions that affect them?

Part IV: Community Involvement

- 15) To what extent does community participation improve as result of implementing the school improvement programme?
- 16) To what extent are the school education board and the school parent teachers association (PTA) effective in planning, organising, monitoring and evaluation in implementing the school improvement programme?
- 17) What is the participation the status of PTAs and student council representatives in the school improvement programme?
- 18) To what extent does collaboration with external stakeholders support secondary school improvement programme initiatives?

V) Challenges and Opportunities

- 19) What are the main challenges of implementing the school improvement programme in the secondary schools?
- 20) What are the major prospects of implementing the school improvement programme?

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion!

Appendix IV: Letters sent to research sites from the zone education office and other supporting documents.



ሚኒስቴር ልማት ጥምረት ጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር
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የሚኒስቴር ልማት ጥምረት ጠቅላይ ሚኒስትር

Reference no. WSE/878/6-3
Date 22 April 2015

To
Bure, District Education Office
Halu – Uka, District Education Office
Alle, District Education Office
Mattu, District Education Office
Nopa, District Education Office
Darimu, District Education Office
Hurumu, District Education Office
Yayo, District Education Office
Cora, District Education Office
Dega, District Education Office
Bedele, District Education Office
Gachi District Education Office

Subject: - Request for Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe to Conduct Research
This is to inform you that Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe a lecturer in Mettu University is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree in Education Management with South of Africa University (UNISA). As a requirement for his study, he needs to conduct a research study on “Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing School Improvement Programmes in Public Secondary Schools of Iluababor Administrative Zone”. Hence we further request your permission to allow him:

- Conduct interviews with principals, vice principals, secondary school supervisors and Districts education experts;
- Conduct focus group interviews with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and Student Council Members ;
- Distribute questionnaire to Principals, vice principals, teachers and secondary school supervisors in your respective secondary school (9-10).

Therefore, we would kindly request your District Education Office to allow him the necessary assistance and support in this important research activity.

Your usual cooperation is strongly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

(Signature)
Lalifawu Mohammed Waqshuum
C/ *(Signature)*
Te Aanaa Hogganaa Waajjira
Barnota G/UA/Booraa
(Signature)

To Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe
Mettu University



Wabii Barnoota Oromiyaatti
 Yaadhu Barnoota Godina
 Itti Aanaa Booraa
 G/1/A/Booraa
 G/1/A/Booraa

Reference no. WBG/878/G-3
 Date 22 April/2015

To
 Sibbo Secondary School
 Uka Secondary School
 Gore Secondary School
 Mattu Secondary School
 Nopa Secondary School
 Darimu Secondary School
 Hurumu Secondary School
 Yayo Secondary School
 Cora Secondary School
 Dega Secondary School
 Bedele Secondary School
 Gachi Secondary School

Subject: - *Request for Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe to Conduct Research*

This is to inform you that Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe a lecturer in Mettu University is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree in Education Management with South of Africa University (UNISA). As a requirement for his study, he needs to conduct a research study on “*Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing School Improvement Programmes in Public Secondary Schools of Iluababor Administrative Zone*”. Hence we further request your permission to allow him:

- Conduct interviews with principals, vice principals, secondary school supervisors and Districts education experts;
- Conduct focus group interviews with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and Student Council Members;
- Distribute questionnaire to Principals, vice principals, teachers and secondary school supervisors in your respective secondary school (9-10).

Therefore, we would kindly request your secondary school (9-10) to allow him the necessary assistance and support in this important research activity.

Your usual cooperation is strongly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Lamma Mokeenon Waqqshuum
AA/1/A/Booraa
 Itti Aanaa Hogganaa Waantira
 Barnoota G/1/A/Booraa
 G/1/A/Booraa

To Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe
Mattu University



Reference no. WBS/40/6-3
Date --29 sept 2015

To University of South Africa (UNISA)
College of Education and Educational leadership and Management
To Professor MM Dichaba Mepho

Subject: - Conduct of Research

This is to inform you that Mr. Tekalign Minalu Tirfe a lecturer in Mettu University was conducted a research in Iluababor administrative zone in pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree in Education Management with South of Africa University (UNISA). As a requirement for his study he conducted a research study on *'Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing School Improvement Programmes in Public Secondary Schools of Iluababor Administrative Zone, Ethiopia.'* Hence we further inform you that with our permission he:

- Conducted interviews with principals(6), vice principals (6), secondary school supervisors (6), Districts education experts (12); zone education (4) total 34 participants from six clustered geographical areas;
- Conducted focus group interviews with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) - 21; and Student Council Members (21) total 42 participants from three clustered areas;
- Distributed questionnaire to Principals (12), vice principals (12), teachers (251), secondary school supervisors (12), and zone education office (4) with total participants of 287 from in six clustered geographical areas; and other necessary supportive raw documents from Zone education. So, the total numbers of respondents in his research study were 363.

Therefore, our office would kindly inform University of South Africa (UNISA) College of Education and Department of Education Management; and Professor MM Dichaba Mepho that our office has assisted the student researcher by allowing him the necessary assistance and support in this important research activity in 12 Public secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone.

Yours Sincerely

Lalifetu Mokonnen Maaqshum
AA:Si: 44777 9288
Itu Aanaa Hogganaa Waajira
Bamodee W/VA/Booraa
P.A:AMG M/VA/Booraa
To Mr tekalign Minalu Tirfe



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 April 2015

Ref#: 2015/03/18/53341538/25/MC
Student #: Mr TM Tirfe
Student number#: 53341538

Dear Mr Tirfe,

Decision: Approved

Researcher

Mr Tirfe
P O Box 3727
Mkhado
0920
+27828239963
Mu:audzisaandra1@gmail.com

Supervisor

Prof MM Dichaba
Department Adult Basic Education and Youth Development
+2712 429 6153
dichamm@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Challenges and opportunities of implementation school improvement programs in public secondary schools of Iluababor administrative zone, Ethiopia

Qualification: D Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for 2 years.

For full approval: *The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the CEDU ERC on 15 April 2015.*

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should*



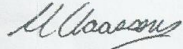
be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

- 3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Note:

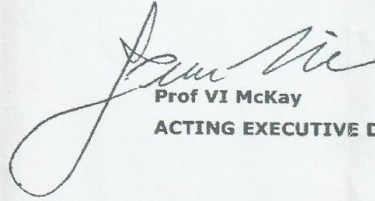
The reference number [top right corner of this communiqué] should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,

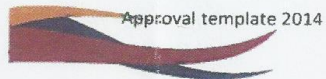


Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU ERC

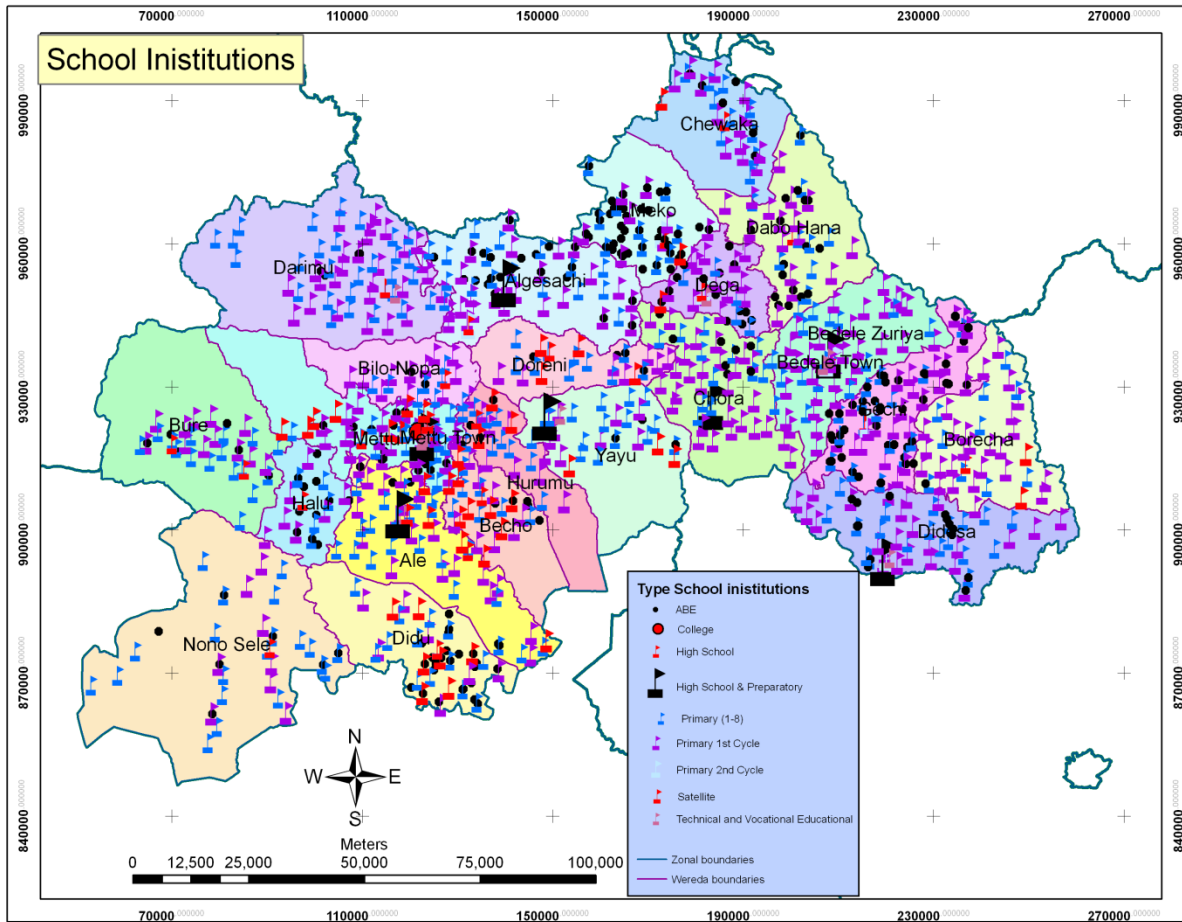
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof VI McKay
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN



University of South Africa
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
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Source: Finance and Economic Development of Iluababor administrative zone office (2013)

8 Nahoon Valley Place
Nahoon Valley
East London
5241
4 January 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited the following doctoral thesis using the Windows "Tracking" system to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action:

Challenges of and opportunities for implementing the School Improvement Programme in public secondary schools in Iluababor Administrative Zone in Ethiopia by *Tekalign Tirfe*, a thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (DED) in the subject Education Management at the University of South Africa.



Brian Carlson (B.A., M.Ed.)
Professional Editor

Email: bcarlson521@gmail.com

Cell: 0834596647

Disclaimer: Although I have made comments and suggested corrections, the responsibility for the quality of the final document lies with the author in the first instance and not with myself as the editor.

BK & AJ Carlson Professional Editing Services