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STAKEHOLDERS' CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Solomon Sapo Shanko[i]
Lecturer, Department of Pedagogical Sciences,
School of Pedagogical & Behavioral Sciences,
Arba Minch University,
Ethiopia

Abstract:
This study aims to identify the challenges and extent of stakeholders' contributions to the implementation of the school improvement program in primary schools. An explanatory sequential design was used with mixed research methods (QUAN→qual). Primary data were obtained from students, teachers, principals, and school improvement committees. However, secondary data were obtained via document analysis. A total of 571 (14.2%) sample size was comprised of 99(24.1%) teachers, 396(11.4%) students, 32(10%) principals, and 44(10%) committee members. A simple random sampling - lottery method was employed as a technique. A self-developed close and open-ended questionnaire was used with a combination of semi-structured interviews. Mean, SD, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc comparisons were used as a method of analysis at 0.05 significance level. As the results of the study, the stakeholders moderately contributed to the implementation of the program and, hence, there is statistically no significant view difference about their contributions. However, scarcity of instructional materials, lack of adequate budgets, improper utilization of school grants, absence of incentive mechanisms, and failure to search for additional budgets are found as the major hurdles. Moreover, these challenges significantly hinder the program implementation. Therefore, it is recommended to the education sector to properly apply the school improvement program Blue Print and framework, adopt incentive packages, link the program with teachers' appraisal system, and timely release of grant budgets. On top of that, higher education institutions are advised to revise curriculum for course - 'school and society' and encourage staff to design and implement school development projects.

Keywords: school improvement program, stakeholders, challenges

[i] Correspondence: email bulchasapo@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Education is a tool used for developing human skills and knowledge (Todaro, 2006). Accordingly, the objective of education is to equip students with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that enable them to render useful services to themselves and society at large. In support of this, Barro (2006), mentioned that education with higher quality fosters the economic growth and development of a nation. According to Sullivan and Glanz (2007), "*a nation which properly educates its children is investing in its future development*". In this regard many views, education as an indispensable vehicle that strongly influences the development and economic fortunes of a nation and life of its people.

Quality education is the base for all-rounded development of any nation that has a dream of change. This means, improving schools in a well-designed manner is the only alternative of nations in now a day's rapidly changing world since education enables individual nation and society to make all rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills, and attitudes (MoE, 1994). Now a day's quality of education is the challenge of many, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia. Undertaking different educational initiatives is an important dimension to assure the quality of education. To this end, the school improvement program becomes one of the major educational initiatives that many countries have developed and implemented to realize the provision of quality education (Plan, 2004).

According to MoE (2007), the objectives of school improvement program are - to improve the capacity of schools to prioritize needs and develop a school improvement plan; to enhance school and community participation in resource utilization, decisions, and resource generation; to improve government's capacity to deliver a specified amount of schools grant at district level; and to improve the learning environment by providing basic operational resources to the school. As a result, to achieve these objectives the Ministry of education has developed a general education quality improvement package which comprises six major pillars like teacher development, curriculum, management and leadership, school improvement, civic and ethical education, and information communication technology. As a result, the school improvement program is one of the components of the general education quality improvement package (Plan, 2006). This program can be implemented in schools that exist within the context of stakeholders like parents, community, pupils, school districts, other educational organizations and institutions, and levels of government. Each of them has an impact on the school and though the school of pupils (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Schools need the participation of all stakeholders in school plans, but most of the time school plans are prepared by school principals. Consequently, the school mission and vision are not visible to all stakeholders and the intended student's outcome, and ethical centred activities are not achieved without the participation of stakeholder (MoE, 2007). Moreover, schools need to seek ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by collaborating with parents and

community, other education and training institutions, local businesses, and community organizations. Particularly, parents and community are considered as integral members of the school community and partners in their students' learning (Fullan, 1991). Therefore, the participation of the community, particularly, stakeholders to effectively implement school improvement programs has paramount importance.

According to Incoing (1999), the major challenges school improvement program includes are lack of providing performance standards for pupils, teachers, and staff to develop a standard guide system to assess the schools, establish incentive systems encourage self and peer monitoring and evaluation, and promote advocacy and social for quality education. Moreover, the school improvement program is very complex that would be hindered by various impediments that challenge the implementation (Stoll & Fink, 1996). These challenges include - "*complexity of the program, mobility of teachers and principals, principals' coordination problems and sustaining commitment, low support from top-level officials, and lack of involvement of the stakeholders*." Similarly, due to the lack of commitment of school society, other stakeholders and non-government organizations are not enough to solve the problem of the schools by providing instructional materials and other financial support (MoE, 2007). That is why the present study aims to assess the extent of stakeholders' contributions to the implementation of school improvement program and its associated challenges in primary schools.

1.2 Problem Statement

As highlighted in the MoE (2006), the duties and responsibilities of school stakeholders like education training boards, parent-teacher associations, and school improvement committee are used to participate stakeholders actively in school improvement activities and facilitate the school-community relationships. However, the education system in Ethiopia has been suffering from quality and relevance, efficiency, educational leadership practices, and organization problems (MoE, 2005). As a result, these problems caused dissatisfaction in stakeholders, suggestions, and recommendations from educators for change in the education system at the national level. In contrast, the condition calls for improvement at schools since the education is widely acknowledged that achievements in access have not been accompanied by sufficient improvements in quality - in some areas quality has deteriorated at least partly as a result of rapid expansion. Furthermore, identifying the hindering challenges and extent of stakeholders' contributions to the school improvement program are important to call for quality education. To this end, the school improvement program started in 2007 to improve the quality of education by enhancing students learning achievement and outcomes (MOE, 2006). This requires the effectiveness and commitment of all the stakeholders, particularly teachers and the school leadership and management. However, Harries in Hopkins (2002) has noted "*the difficulty to change school management, arrangement and working culture as a challenge to implement school improvement program in developing countries*''. Thus, the success of school improvement program needs to identify the hindrances to take corrective measures on time.

The school improvement program also required schools to undertake major activities such as prepare and collect pieces of information, system survey, evaluate the school performance, design strategic plan and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting. Related to these, most of the school principals lack necessary educational trainings and leadership skills. Even, those who trained are not effective in implementing the program in schools. Furthermore, principals lack ability to develop vision and coordinate the school community so as to lead towards the attainment of educational goals (MOE, 2007).

Despite the existence of rapid expansion and improved access to schools, Ethiopia's education sector has been facing key challenges – low level community participation, failure to identify hindrances related school improvement, achievements in access have not been accompanied by adequate improvements in quality, and in some areas, quality has deteriorated at least partly as a result of rapid expansion. This is due to the fact that, the rapid expansion of education system has left a considerable financing gap between available funds and the anticipated cost of investments needed to improve and maintain quality. At the same time, a high proportion of the education recurrent budget for education particularly at primary level is allocated to teacher salaries over 90 percent (GEQIP, 2008). Therefore, the present study aims to identify the challenges and extent of stakeholders' contributions to the school improvement program implementation which are not yet addressed, and the gaps not filled as evidently stated above using different studies and evidences in the school improvement program implementation in primary schools.

1.3. Research Questions

The following basic research questions were formulated to achieve the intended objectives of the present study.

1) To what extent do stakeholders contribute to the implementation of the program?
2) Is there statistically significant difference among respondents' views towards stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of the program?
3) What are the challenges hindering the implementation of the program?
4) Is there statistically significant difference among views of stakeholders about challenges hindering the implementation of the program?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is delimited to both geographically and conceptually. Conceptually, its focus is to identify hindering challenges and the extent of stakeholders' contributions regarding school improvement program implementation in terms of four mains domains namely; teaching-learning, conducive school environment, community participation and, leadership and management. It is also geographically delimited to primary schools of four districts, namely; Bonke, Boreda, Demba Gofa, and Geze Gofa in Gamo Gofa Zone, South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region of Ethiopia.

2. Literature Review

The school improvement program mainly involves school stakeholders' contributions like evaluating and planning for school improvement in areas like teaching and learning, leadership and management, school environment, and community involvement. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the stakeholders' contribution to the effective implementation of the program since it is one of the major important programs among the six general education quality improvement package set by the ministry of education of Ethiopia (MoE, 2007). Furthermore, the program can be implemented in primary schools that exist within the context of stakeholders like parents, community, pupils, teachers, school districts, and levels of government. Therefore, each of them has an impact on the school and though the school of pupils (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Similarly, strengthening the internal conditions of the schools, what Ethiopia so far has undertaken to provide quality education is promising. As a result, based on the current education and training policy, the education management system is decentralized to the grass-root level to ensure active engagement of the school community mainly stakeholders at the school level (MoE, 2001).

As a study conducted by Tasmania (2002), the greater the community involvement in the process of the school improvement program, the greater improvements of school in achieving their goals of education. He also stated that "*The greater the community involvement in the process, the greater the input of different groups within the community, then the more likely that is generated will be an accurate reflection of that community*" (Townsend, 1994). Therefore, according to his arguments, the rationales for increasing community involvement in schools are: it contributes to the development of school policies and practices which could be the most effective and equitable for that community.

The capacity of the school to solve education problems enhances when parents and community members are part of the problem-solving. Participation in real decision making at every identification, feasibility study, planning, implementation, and evaluation is paramount important. When a government makes an effort to expand access and promoting the quality of education, however, its economy may not allow fulfilling both the quantity and quality demands without community participation. Therefore, the contributions of these stakeholders in resources are crucial to promoting relevance, quality, and access to education. In line with this, Cummings (1997), cited in Getachew (2001), stated that in difficult areas where resources are scarce and government support is unsatisfactory, community participation may be the most possible strategies for realizing the goals of the school improvement program. Townsend (1994), also revealed in his study that the community participation in funding schools implies that the government and educational system in many parts of the world are encouraging local communities to be more responsible for the program.

An additional resource from the community is essential to the implementation of the program to fulfill infrastructure which enables the school to achieve its goals. Also, expanding community finance may encourage participation to value education more

highly, and greater parental involvement can promote the effectiveness of the school system. In line with this, Bank (2008), proposes that cost-sharing with communities is desirable, particularly where public resources are insufficient. Local communities and parents are also increasingly playing a role in educational finance especially about sharing the cost of buildings, maintenance, and fulfilling for the success of the school improvement program.

However, challenges hindering the school improvement vary per the variations with the unique features of schools as well as with the external environment in which schools are operating. For instance - the size of the school is associated with innovative behavior for that smaller schools lack the resources to engage in significant change (Hussen & Postethwore, 1994). Also, there are common challenges that most school improvement programs face. These are lack of schedules in schools that permit teachers to meet and work together for sustained periods; the demanding nature of teachers' work as an increasing number of students arrive at school less well-socialized, less prepared to deal with materials, and more frequently from family settings that are not supportive; the aging and often demoralization of teachers due to declining resources, increasing levels of bureaucratization and the rapid and frequent demands for change that come from central authorities. Besides, an organizational structure in which teachers' work is less autonomous and more integrated with that of other teachers' affects the development of a commitment to change. Moreover, the continuous transfer of teachers, principals, and educational administrators at the local level puts pressure on the program to continuously train new staff who may not serve in schools for long (Plan, 2006).

Indeed, to run the program effectively financial, material, and human resources are very important in the Ethiopian education system. The parent-teacher association and/or school improvement committee members, therefore, can play crucial roles in generating resources. These committees also can mobilize the community to contribute money or labor, etc to build classrooms and schools. Similarly, according to MoE (2002), communities should contribute money, materials, and labor for a new school building, purchasing basic equipment and materials, building classrooms, and teachers' houses particularly in rural areas. These are mainly to improve the schools and provide quality education when the community is mobilized to contribute resources. To these ends, the community involvement in the construction of new buildings, supervision of construction, maintenance of classrooms, and beautification of the school compound are the main roles in succeeding of the school improvement program.

3. Methods

A mixed-methods design provides a better understanding of the research problem and question than either method by itself. Hence, explanatory sequential design (QUAN→qual), or a two-phase model design was used to undertake the present study. The rationale was that it consists of first collecting quantitative data, and then, collecting qualitative data to explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. A blend of quantitative

(QUAN) and qualitative (qual) research method was employed for triangulation i.e. collection of data using different tools for cross-checking.

The data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from students, teachers, principals, and school improvement committees. However, the secondary data were obtained from document analysis like school improvement plan and report, and school improvement committee minute. Moreover, the secondary data were also gathered by reviewing published and unpublished governmental reports and plans, academic works such as books, manuals, guidelines, thesis, journals, articles, and online sources.

The population of the study includes teachers, students, principals, and school improvement committees in the study area. The size of the target population for this study equals to 4,008. Accordingly, a total of 571(14.2%) sample size was comprised of 99(24.1%) teachers, 396(11.4%) students, 32(10%) principals, and 44(10%) school improvement committees (SICs). Except for those four school improvement experts needed for interviews from district education offices, the remaining samples were selected using a simple random sampling technique - a lottery method to give equal opportunity to every unit of the population being selected in the sample. Since the age and maturity level of students in primary schools are not satisfactory to give reliable data for this study, only grade 7 & 8 students were involved as participants.

Table 1: Summary of sample frame and sampling techniques

Participants	Bonke			Boreda			Demba Gofa			Geze Gofa			Total			Sampling
	P	S	%	P	S	%	P	SS	%	P	S	%	P	S	%	
Schools	40	4	10	37	4	10.8	39	4	10.2	36	4	11.1	152	16	10.5	Lottery method
Principals	8	8	100	9	9	100	9	9	87.5	6	6	85.7	32	32	93.8	
Teachers	100	26	26	90	32	35.5	108	21	19.4	113	20	17.7	411	99	24.1	
Students	931	105	11.3	532	85	16	1058	108	10.2	949	98	10.3	3470	396	11.4	
SICs	29	11	37.9	20	9	45	20	11	55	22	13	59.1	91	44	48.3	

Whereas: P = Population, S = Sample Size, & SICs=School Improvement Committees
Source: Gamo Gofa Zone Education Department (2018/19)

The questionnaire was designed containing two types of items that are closed-ended for a quantitative approach and open-ended for a qualitative one. Close-ended items were used to collect data from teachers, students, principals, and the school improvement committee concerning the challenges and extent of stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of the school improvement program. Open ended items were used to provide an opportunity for respondents to express their overall arguing and impressions regarding the challenges and stakeholders' contributions. Accordingly, a five-point Likert response scale questionnaire was prepared and appropriately employed. The questionnaire was also prepared in the English language and translated into Amharic language to make it clear for respondents.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data from four SICs chairmen and four principals from all districts who granted permission to give supplementary information regarding hindering challenges, and stakeholders'

contributions. Accordingly, twenty minutes interview time arrangements were made with these respondents in their respective workplaces.

Documents like school improvement plans, and reports, school improvement committee minutes, self- assessment tools, monitoring and evaluation checklists from sampled primary schools extensively and intensively reviewed to be used as secondary sources of data to triangulate with qualitative data.

Following the data collection, analyses was carried out using different types of statistical techniques including qualitative analyses - narration. Accordingly, all returned close-ended questionnaires were encoded on SPSS version 20.0. Then, descriptive statistics like-mean and SD were used to analyze the collected data about identify challenges and stakeholders' contributions. On the other hand, the inferential statistics, mainly one-way ANOVA and post hoc comparisons were used to identify the significant view differences among respondents associated with these two variables. In doing so, the level of significance was set at 0.05. Furthermore, qualitative data obtained through interviews and document review was presented in the form of narration and triangulated with quantitative data to enrich the analysis and interpretation of the study.

The researcher collected both forms of data by two-phases - explanatory sequential design (QUAN→qual). Hence, firstly, before the questionnaire was distributed, the researcher had given a brief orientation to all participants concerning – its purpose, and how appropriately to fill the questionnaires to get reliable data. Then, the questionnaire was distributed and collected back by the researcher with the assistance and collaborations of temporarily hired coordinators from each district. However, ahead of all procedures, the pre-test of the tool to check the consistency of items and its validity was conducted at Kamba primary school before the distribution and collection of data from the study areas. Some corrections were made after the pilot study. Similarly, some ambiguous, double barreled, and questions difficult to understand were reworded and corrected. Some items were added and some of them were removed. Then when internal consistency among items measured - the value of $\alpha = 0.86$. Secondly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. Before doing this, the researcher had initial contact with the interviewees to make interviewees clear about the purpose of the study, and to get consent from participants, and then, the researcher started careful recoding of the main points for at least 20 minutes.

4. Result and Discussion

The major findings of the present study are identified and supported by empirical evidences immediately after the interpretations of results in the discussions. Moreover, this part consists of two major sections, and the results under it were analyzed by using the mean results of the respondents' rating responses. For furthermore conclusions, one-way ANOVA and post hoc comparisons are used to analyze views of respondents regarding challenges and stakeholders' contributions to show the significant differences

among views of respondents by the point of view of school improvement program implementation in primary schools of target districts.

4.1 Stakeholders' Contributions to the Implementation School Improvement Program

It is worthwhile to explore the extent of stakeholders' contributions to the implementation of the school improvement program which in turn helps to improve students' learning and learning outcomes. To this end, 7 items related to stakeholders' contributions were prepared by using five-points Likert scales as; "Very Low", "Low", "Moderate"," High", and "Very High". Then, the calculated average mean for every 1 item was interpreted by using the level of agreement as 1.00-1.99=Very Low, 2.00-2.99=Low, 3.00-3.99=Moderate, 4.00-4.49=High and 4.50-5.00=Very High, and the results are presented as well as harmonized with qualitative data obtained by open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Under Table 3, the variable is compared by districts, and one-way ANOVA and its post hoc comparisons are also used to see the meaningful differences among views of respondents to this variable under Table 4 & 5 respectively.

Table 2: Mean and SD values of stakeholders' contribution
(N values of Principals, SIC, Teachers, & Students are 32, 44, 99 & 396 respectively)

S.	Items Related to	Principals		SICs		Teachers		Students		Total	
No	Stakeholders' Contribution	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Students actively engage in the planning & implementation of SIP	3.06	1.48	3.18	1.50	3.10	1.48	3.78	1.52	3.57	1.54
2	Teachers actively engage in the planning & implementation of SIP	3.75	1.02	3.98	.98	3.99	.98	3.79	1.32	3.83	1.23
3	Parents & school community actively engage in the planning &implementation of SIP	2.72	1.55	3.18	1.50	2.76	1.53	3.15	1.71	3.06	1.66
4	Principals actively engage in the planning & implementation of SIP	4.28	.89	4.34	.61	4.17	.87	4.05	1.15	4.11	1.06
5	School improvement committees actively engage in the planning & implementation of SIP	3.78	.83	3.86	1.05	3.78	1.15	3.84	1.23	3.83	1.18
6	Supervisors actively engage in the planning & implementation of SIP	4.09	1.03	4.07	.87	3.93	1.01	3.90	1.30	3.93	1.21
7	Stakeholders discuss on the issue of students' learning & learning outcome	3.94	1.13	4.02	1.07	3.78	1.37	3.68	1.44	3.74	1.39

Note: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, SICs=School Improvement Committees, & SIP= School Improvement Program

Concerning the first item, as indicated in Table 2, the mean values (M=3.06, 3.18, 3.10 & 3.78) of all respondents fell to a moderate level. However, the mean value (M=3.78) of student respondents is comparatively greater to imply that they were engaged to a better extent in the planning and implementation of the school improvement program. Moreover, the grand mean value (M=3.57, SD=1.54) is also fell to a moderate level to indicate that all the respondents were agreed by the students' better engagements in the program. Similarly, the mean values of all respondents and their grand mean value (M=3.83, SD=1.23) regard to the second item indicates that they all agreed to the medium level engagement of teachers in the phases of the program. The same level of agreement is also confirmed by all the respondents about engagements of the school improvement committees to plan and implement the program. On the other hand, the mean values of all respondents and their grand mean value (M=3.06, SD=1.66), refer that parents and community were moderately engaged in the activities of the program.

As revealed by the grand mean value (M=4.11, SD=1.06), all respondents are agreed to the same level of principals' engagement which points that principals were highly engaged in the planning and implementation of the school improvement program. Concerning supervisors' extent of engagement, nearly the same mean values (M=4.09, SD=1.03 & M=4.07, SD=.87) of principals and SICs respectively indicate high-level contributions of supervisors to the implementation of the program. Similarly, nearly same extent of the agreement was also responded by the teachers and students, and this is assured by the mean values (M=3.93, SD= 1.01 & M=3.90 & SD=1.30) to indicate that all respondents nearly agreed to the moderate level engagement of supervisors.

Regarding the seventh item, even though the mean value of SICs is (M=4.02, SD=1.07), the grand mean value (M=3.74, SD=1.39), points that the stakeholders moderately discuss on the issue of students' learning & learning outcome.

To sum up, only the principals were actively engaged in all phases of the school improvement program to a high level (M=4.11, SD=1.06) contributions. However, based on grand mean values it is possible to conclude that all the stakeholders (i.e. SICs, teachers, supervisors, parents, and community) moderately contribute to the planning and implementation of school improvement programs in primary schools of Gamo Gofa Zone. In favor of these findings, almost all primary SICs and school principals stated respectively as follows:

> *"The principals were implementing the main domains of the program better than the other stakeholders, but the extent of parents' engagement was much less than the expected level. And, therefore, the parents and students themselves should promote the extent of their participation in the implementation of the program than anybody else since the program was initially developed to enhance students' learning and the learning outcomes. These views of the SICs were fully agreed by the four school principals, and the principals focused their viewed attentions to the students since they are the main beneficiary of the program by stressing that all other stakeholders were primarily working for the benefits of the students themselves."*

Some of the intensively reviewed documents like – school improvement plans and reports, monitoring and evaluation checklists, school improvement committee minutes showed;

> *"The low extent of stakeholders' participation at the time of interventions and evaluation since there were no recorded pieces of evidence – except the cases of principals and teachers. Similarly, these documents also showed all stakeholders were actively engaged in the preliminary activities like school self-assessment to prepare a strategic plan for the next three strategic years. Besides, it was seen that majority of these bodies never visited back to accomplish the remaining phases of the school improvement program. It is also possible to say all stakeholders attend the conference prepared in aiming to announce students' results and close the calendar of the year."*

With regard to the above major findings and qualitative pieces of information, it is evidently stressed in the study conducted by Stoll and Fink (1996), the school improvement program can also be implemented in primary schools that exist within the context of stakeholders such as parents, community, pupils, teachers, school districts, and levels of government because each of them has an impact on the school and though the school of pupils. Similarly, the education management system particularly concerned with the school improvement program is decentralized to the grass-root level to ensure active engagement of the school community (MoE, 2001). On the other hand, the study results by Tasmania (2002) revealed that the greater the community involvement in the process of the school improvement program, the greater improvements of school in achieving their goals of education. He also stated that "*The greater the community involvement in the process, the greater the input of different groups within the community, then the more likely that is generated will be an accurate reflection of that community*". Therefore, according to his arguments, the rationales for increasing community involvement in schools are: it contributes to the development of school policies and practices which could be the most effective and equitable for that community. In line with the aim and result of this study, Cummings and Nelsen (1997), cited in Getachew (2001), also stated that in difficult areas where resources are scarce and government support is unsatisfactory, community participation may be the most possible strategies for realizing the goals of the school improvement program. According to Bank (1995), cited in Rose (2003), the additional resources from the community are essential to the implementation of the program to fulfill infrastructure which enables the school to achieve its goals. Particularly, parents and community are considered as integral members of the school community, and partners in their students' learning (Fullan, 1991). Thus, the participation of the community-stakeholders to effectively and efficiently implement school improvement programs has paramount importance.

Table 3: Comparison of views toward stakeholders' contribution by District

Compared groups	Stakeholders' Contribution to the SIP Implementation				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Geze Gofa	137	1.57	5.00	3.6924	.75690
Demba Gofa	149	1.57	5.00	3.8926	.80759
Boreda	135	1.71	5.00	3.6730	.78341
Bonke	150	1.00	5.00	3.6505	.94522
Total	**571**	**1.00**	**5.00**	**3.7290**	**.83280**

The mean values of all respondents' views are compared concerning stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of the school improvement program to see the differences among districts as illustrated in Table 3. Accordingly, the Demba Gofa district shows the relatively higher mean value than the mean values of the rest three districts. However, there is no mean score difference among the four districts, because the mean values of all groups and the grand mean fell to a moderate level as the results in above Table. Therefore, it is possible to say all the stakeholders moderately contribute to the same extent to the planning and implementation of school improvement program implementation without a significant mean difference among districts.

Table 4: Summary of One-way ANOVA
among views of respondents to the stakeholders' contribution

Variable		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Stakeholders' Contributions	Between Groups	1.262	3	.421	.605	.612
	Within Groups	394.062	567	.695		
	Total	395.325	570			

As clearly shown in Table 4, further analysis is made using a summary of one-way ANOVA to find out if there is significant difference in the views of stakeholders about their contributions for the SIP implementation. In doing so, the results revealed that there is no statistically significant difference on the views of principals, school improvement committees, teachers, and students towards stakeholders' contributions to effective implementation of the program ($p<.05$ level (F (1.262, 394.062) =.605, p=.612)).

Table 5: Post hoc comparison of views of respondents towards stakeholders' contributions

Views	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Sig.	95% confidence interval for mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Principals	32	3.6607	.78728	.13917	3.6436	3.3769	3.9446
SICs	44	3.8052	.70935	.10694	3.6607	3.5895	4.0209
Teachers	99	3.6436	.84623	.08505	3.7475	3.4748	3.8124
Students	396	3.7475	.84649	.04254	3.8052	3.6638	3.8311
Total	**571**	**3.7290**	**.83280**	**.03485**	**.7130**	**3.6606**	**3.7975**

As expressed in Table 5, for furthermore conclusions, to specifically identify the group that has a relatively highest view, a post hoc comparison is used, and the results are

presented using Tukey HSD. Therefore, the results point out that the mean scores of all respondents are nearly equal to 4 by referring that F-value (F=.713>P=.05) to the views of respondents toward stakeholders' contributions to the implementation of school improvement program is greater than .05, which confirms that no respondent view relatively made the highest view difference.

4.2 Challenges Hindering Implementation of School Improvement Program (SIP)

It is believed to improve students' learning and learning outcomes by effectively implementing the school improvement program in schools which in turn helps ultimately to improve the quality of education. Therefore, 13 items related to challenges were prepared by using five-point Likert scales as "strongly disagree", "disagree", "undecided", "agree" and "strongly agree". Then, the calculated average mean for every 1 item is interpreted by using the level of agreement as 1.00-1.80=Strongly Disagree, 1.81-2.60=Disagree, 2.61-3.40=Undecided, 3.41-4.20=Agree and 4.21-5.00=Strongly Agree, and the results are presented as well as harmonized with data obtained by open-ended questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. Moreover, similar to the presentation, analysis, interpretations, and discussion followed under section 4.1, means of 13 items, and the results shown in Table 6 are used to identify challenges hindering the implementation of the school improvement program. To strengthen the findings of these challenges, a comparison of respondents' views toward hindrances by districts is presented under Table 7. Similarly, one-way ANOVA and its post hoc comparison were also used to see the significant differences among views of respondents as presented respectively under Table 8 & 9.

Table 6: Mean and SD values of hindering challenges
(N values of Principals, SIC, Teachers, & Students are 32, 44, 99 & 396 respectively)

S. No	Items Related to Challenges	Principals		SIC		Teachers		Students		Total	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	The school has no strategic plan/SIP plan	1.78	1.24	2.25	1.43	3.02	1.64	2.51	1.70	2.54	1.67
2	School partners do not regularly monitor SIP implementation	2.88	1.34	2.70	1.36	3.19	1.35	3.23	1.51	3.16	1.47
3	Training was not given to stakeholders to ensure their participation in the planning & implementation of SIP	3.34	1.10	3.27	1.44	3.45	1.33	3.31	1.43	3.33	1.39
4	There are no sufficient instructional materials to effectively implement SIP	3.25	1.24	3.55	1.25	3.42	1.36	3.47	1.47	3.46	1.42
5	The school has no adequate budget for planning & implementation of SIP	3.81	1.38	4.02	1.25	3.81	1.47	3.91	1.47	3.89	1.44
6	The school had a problem of school grant utilization	2.38	1.48	3.55	1.59	3.63	1.56	3.57	1.61	3.51	1.65

	allocated for effective implementation of SIP										
7	The school principal has no required qualification /education level/ to effectively implement SIP	1.41	1.01	2.36	1.51	2.42	1.53	2.55	1.64	2.45	1.59
8	There is no good work culture in the school to properly implement SIP	1.81	1.23	2.36	1.38	2.38	1.43	2.48	1.58	2.42	1.53
9	Local administrators do not give high priority & support to implement SIP	3.09	1.30	3.43	1.32	3.45	1.40	3.38	1.42	3.38	1.40
10	To plan & implement SIP effectively, there was a weak relationship between stakeholders & the school itself	2.75	1.16	3.41	1.19	3.28	1.30	3.44	1.41	3.37	1.37
11	There were no incentive mechanisms in the school to motivate model in implementing SIP	3.53	1.34	3.61	1.40	3.55	1.55	3.60	1.58	3.59	1.55
12	The school has weak endeavors to get additional budgets from external partners to implementation of SIP	3.59	1.32	3.68	1.29	3.78	1.41	3.66	1.53	3.68	1.48
13	There was no experience sharing of best practices and /or lack of proper implementation of shared experiences	2.72	1.19	3.14	1.31	2.93	1.39	3.04	1.54	3.01	1.48

As can be seen from the Table 6, the mean scores to the item 4, 5, 6, 11, & 12 fell "agree" scale which indicates as respondents agreed on the idea that all of the variables mentioned in the items had higher influences on the implementation of school improvement program in the sampled primary schools. In contrast, principals for item 6 showed their disagreements to indicate that they had no serious problem with school grant utilization in their schools. Regarding to item 1, except teacher respondents the rest were agreed to point out that their schools had the strategic plan and as a result, the variable could not hinder the effective implementation of the program. On the other hand, the mean values of items 2, 3, & 13 fell at the scale of "undecided" to mean that they had no adequate information to decide the hindrance effect of these variables on the implementation of the program. But nearly all the respondents were disagreed with items 7 & 8, meaning that they did not consider these variables as hindering challenges. Based on the mean values in Table 6, teachers and school improvement committees agreed for item 9 to imply that local administrators did not give high priority and support for the program implementation, but principals and students were unable to decide on this item. Concerning the relationship between stakeholders and the school in terms of plan and

implementation, the students and school improvement committees agreed that their weak relationship was one of the hindrances to the implementation of the program.

Thus, the major challenges found are scarcity of instructional materials (M=3.46, SD=1.42), lack of adequate budget (M=3.89, SD=1.44), improper utilization of school grant (M=3.51, SD=1.65), absence of incentive mechanisms (M=3.59, SD=1.55), and failure to search for getting additional budgets. Moreover, to supplement these quantitative results, a total of eight principals and school improvement committees were interviewed and more than three fourth of them listed down the major challenges hindering implementation of the program as;

> *"Scarcity and misuse of budget, lack of awareness in community and parents, preparation of the unrealistic plan, lack of budget to motivate models, delayed release of grants, lack of experience to develop educational projects, and student disciplinary problems. But, the SICs strongly stressed that the strategic plan preparation and its implementations had been fully accomplished by the principals without the active engagement of stakeholders. They also pointed out that principals call themselves only to fill the self-assessment forms at the preliminary stage of the program and carry out the remaining phases by themselves. Moreover, the two school principals mentioned hindrances like - expectation of elitism, workloads due to routine functions, less level initiation and commitment in SIP committees, turnover and resign of principals due to political interferences, overlapping of strategic plans over others, absence of SIP focused supervisions."*

When the document observations were conducted at primary schools;

> *"They all had strategic plans prepared by the passive participation of school improvement Committees. However, important documents like self-assessment forms, monitoring, and evaluation checklists, and school improvement committee minutes that were evident for active engagement of stakeholders were not found in eight reviewed schools' primary schools."*

In line with the above major findings, the school improvement committees should play roles in generating resources by mobilizing the community to contribute money or labor, etc. to build classrooms and schools (MoE, 2007). It also stressed, the school community should contribute money, materials, and labor for a new school building, purchasing basic equipment and materials, building classrooms, and teachers' houses particularly in rural areas. These are aimed to minimize the scarcity of resources at the school level. Also as revealed in a study by Hussen and Postethwore (1994), lack of resources significantly affects effective school functioning particularly in the implementation of the school improvement program. As indicated by the MoE (2007), providing instructional materials and other financial support is expected to be fulfilled by the school community and the local government itself. Similarly, according to MoE (2007), due to the lack of commitment of school society, other stakeholders and non-

government organizations are not enough to solve the problem of the schools by providing instructional materials and other financial support. Moreover, the school improvement program is very complex that it might be hindered by various impediments that challenge the implementation of a school improvement program (Stoll & Fink, 1996).

According to Incoing (1999), the major challenges school improvement program comprises are lack of providing performance standards for pupils, teachers, and staffs to develop a standard guide system to assess the schools, establish incentive systems encourage self and peer monitoring and evaluation, and promote advocacy and social for quality education.

Table 7: Comparison of views toward challenges hindering the SIP implementation by Districts

Compared groups	Challenges Hindering the SIP Implementation				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Geze Gofa	137	1.00	5.00	3.3753	.80095
Demba Gofa	149	1.00	4.85	2.9141	.85384
Boreda	135	1.23	4.85	3.2348	.75318
Bonke	150	1.54	5.00	3.2908	.80509
Total	**571**	**1.00**	**5.00**	**3.2092**	**.82059**

As indicated in Table 7, the mean scores of all respondents' responses are compared to each other concerning hindering challenges to identify the differences among districts. However, the mean values of all respondents viewed fell to an "undecided" scale of an agreement which refers that there were no differences among respondents' views regarding the mentioned variable by four districts in the primary schools. Nevertheless, the Demba Gofa district showed comparatively lower mean value than the mean values of the rest group of variables/districts meant that there was the lowest level of challenges in implementing the school improvement program.

Table 8: Summary of One-way ANOVA
among views of respondents to the hindering challenges

Variables		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Hindering Challenges	Between Groups	5.972	3	1.991	2.987	.031
	Within Groups	377.846	567	.666		
	Total	383.818	57o0			

As shown in Table 8, one-way ANOVA for further analysis is used to find out if there was a significant difference in the views of stakeholders about hindering challenges. In so far as, the results revealed there is statistically a significant difference in views of respondents regarding challenges, to effectively implement the program ($p<.05$ level ($F(5.972, 377.846) = 2.987$, $p=.031$)).

Table 9: Post hoc comparison of views of respondents towards hindering challenges

Views	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Sig.	95% confidence interval for mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Principals	32	2.7957	.67219	.11883	.0000	2.5533	3.0380
SICs	44	3.1801	.80301	.12106	3.1801	2.9359	3.4242
Teachers	99	3.2556	.79020	.07942	3.2343	3.0980	3.4132
Students	396	3.2343	.83426	.04192	3.2556	3.1518	3.3167
Total	**571**	**3.2092**	**.82059**	**.03434**	**.957**	**3.1418**	**3.2767**

As revealed in Table 9, for furthermore conclusions, to specifically identify the group that has a relatively highest effect in pointing out hindering challenges, a post hoc comparison results are presented using Tukey HSD. Therefore, the results refer that the mean scores of all respondents are nearly equal to 3 by referring that F-value (F=.957>P=.05) to the views of respondents to the hindering challenges in the implementation of school improvement program is greater than .05, which confirms that no respondent view relatively made the highest view difference. However, the mean score (M=2.7957, SD=0.67219) of principal respondents is relatively lowest than the other mean scores of the three respondents which slightly points the group that made statistically a significant difference to identify the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of school improvement program in primary schools.

5. Conclusion

The school improvement program requires contributions of stakeholders in all phases mainly in areas like teaching and learning, leadership and management, school environment, and community involvement. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the extent of stakeholders' contributions to the effective implementation of the program since it is one of the general education quality improvement programs. Moreover, to its worthiness-challenges hindering effectiveness of the program is needed to be identified, even though, these challenges vary with the unique features of schools and the external environment in which they are operating in the study area. As a result, the study is conducted to identify the extent of stakeholders' contributions and challenges hindering the effective implementation of a school improvement program that aims to assure quality education by the operations of the quality package at the school level.

Concerning the extent of stakeholders' contributions, the study findings showed that there is no meaningful difference among districts. There is also statistically no significant difference in the views of these stakeholders towards their contributions. The post hoc comparison results indicated that there is no stakeholders' response that made the highest view difference to their contributions. Contrary to this result, the principals were actively engaged in all phases of the school improvement program which reveals their high-level contributions. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that all the stakeholders particularly SICs, teachers, supervisors, parents, and community

moderately contribute to the implementation of the school improvement program in primary schools of the Gamo Gofa Zone.

The major hindering challenges found are scarcity of instructional materials, lack of adequate budget, improper utilization of school grants, absence of incentive mechanisms, and failure to search for additional budgets. Moreover, there is statistically a significant difference in the views of stakeholders about these challenges. This finding is contrary to the mean scores of the districts that reveal no difference concerning the hindrances. Accordingly, based on post hoc comparison results, there is no opinion difference among stakeholders, however, the mean score of principal respondents slightly points out the group that made statistically a significant difference to identify the major hindering challenges. Therefore, it is possible to say that these identified challenges significantly influence the effective implementation of the school improvement program. Therefore, it is recommended to the education sector at all levels to appropriately apply the school improvement program Blue Print and framework, adopt incentive packages, link the program with teachers' appraisal system, and timely release grant budgets. On top of that, higher education institutions are advised to regularly revise their curriculum for course - 'school and society' and encourage staff to design and implement school development projects.

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