

# Educational Development Practices and Challenges in Local Governance Context:

*A case of Gulomekeda Woreda, Eastern Zone of Tigray Region, Ethiopia*

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**Abstract:** *At the World Education Forum, Dakar 2000, and other national as well as regional initiatives and commitments regarding to education the international community has pledged itself to develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management. However many states like Ethiopia have been witnessed challenged in bringing effective and quality educational development. Therefore in this research undertaking an attempt is made to assess educational sector development practices and challenges from local governance perspective taking Gulomekeda woreda as a focus of study. To come up with the required data pertinent to the research undertaking mixed research methodology was employed. To select the sample respondents for the research both probability and non probability sampling designs were used. First to select the three sample Kebeles out of the 19 in the woreda the researcher had employed simple random sampling and particularly lottery method. Where as to select key informants and interviewees from woreda education office, civic associations , schools, school principals, teachers and students the researcher had employed purposive sampling and particularly judgmental sampling technique. Moreover, documents of woreda sector offices, regional and national documents those have critical relevance to the research have been reviewed. Accordingly the research findings revealed that access to education, students enrollment and educational equity has been improved in the woreda, where as quality and educational efficiency( particularly educational efficiency in grade 8 to some extent, and to higher extent in grades 10 and 12) not yet promoted. The major challenges hindering educational development practices in the district are problems of good governance, poor educational management, the Ethio-Eritrean war and lack of finance. So that to deal with the challenges of educational development, ensuring good governance and participatory planning, capacity building practices both at woreda and school and kebele levels are recommended.*

**Keywords:** Gulomekeda woreda, education, local governments, development, Kebele

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## Background of the study

Almost all educational decentralization reforms assume that decision making closer to the local level will foster a greater degree of student and teacher motivation, parent participation, a sense of ownership, curriculum adaptation to local settings, and community willingness to contribute financially to schools. They also assume that implementation of the decentralization policy will lead to significant changes. As a process of delivering educational services in a democratic country, decentralization as a power-sharing device makes good sense since the educational process should belong to regions and Woredas and not the state. Consequently, strong, determined, and focused local leadership must necessarily come from top down and bottom up, presenting opportunities and not simply problems which are transferred from one level to another.

The Ethiopian government is striving to bring socio-economic development in the country by formulating various strategies, policies and sector development programs. To deal effectively with the inspiring policies and strategies the government had focused on decentralization of its administration since 1991 formally though there were practices of decentralization system before the second half of the nineteenth century (Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2008; Abrham, 2011; Tilahun, 2014). The first was decentralization of powers and functions of the state to autonomous regional governments (Tilahun, 2014). While the second involves shifting the decision-making closer to the people at woreda level in a more comprehensive and concerted way to ensure socio-economic development under the program of District Level Decentralization (Meskerem, 2007) and on which this research is focused on.

As a result one of the most visible initiative of the government concerning to decentralization is in the area of education service. The administration of primary and secondary education has been decentralized and as a result local administration is responsible to deliver these services. Unfortunately, experience from educational decentralization in Ethiopia has not fully guaranteed these outcomes. Though improvements in certain areas at national level are in place but it is not promising to claim that educational sector development which includes (access, equity, quality and efficiency) is ensured in all parts of Ethiopia. Therefore, this study is meant to assess educational development practices and challenges in Gulomekeda woreda from local governance perspective.

## Methodology

### Description of the study area

This study was carried out in the year 2016, in three randomly selected Kebeles of Gulomekeda district, Eastern zone of Tigray National Regional State, Ethiopia, which is found at about 915 km North of Addis-Ababa. According to the Statistical Magazine of the woreda (2014) the total population of the Woreda is 102,726 of whom 49,171 were male and 53, 115 were female. Among the total population 14,559 are urban dwellers. . In regard to educational sector there are a total of 52 primary and secondary schools. Out of which 6 are not governmental while the rest are government schools. According to the 2014/15 data of woreda office of education 20,000 primary and 2587 secondary school students are in the schools and 715 teachers with different qualifications are serving in the education sector.

### **Sample and sampling procedure**

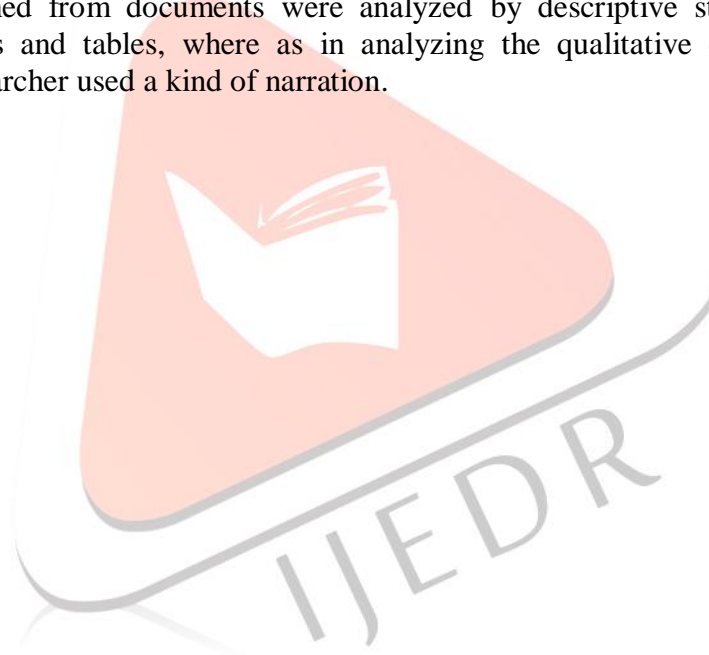
The study was carried out by purposively selecting three Kebeles out of a total of nineteen Kebeles. To select concerned interview participants from each Kebele the researcher had also employed judgmental sampling technique.

### **Type, source and method of data collection**

Both primary and secondary data about the state of educational sector development practices were used. The data were qualitative and quantitative in nature. The qualitative data were used to support the quantitative data obtained from different documents. The Primary data were gathered from a total of 20 interview participants (teachers, school principals, students, woreda education heads, members of woreda teacher and women associations and Kebele Administrators) in the three Kebeles using structured interview schedule. Secondary data were reviewed and collected from local, regional and national documents and reports of most accredited international institutions.

### **Data Analysis**

The secondary data obtained from documents were analyzed by descriptive statistics using graphs, simple percentages and tables, where as in analyzing the qualitative data obtained through interviews the researcher used a kind of narration.

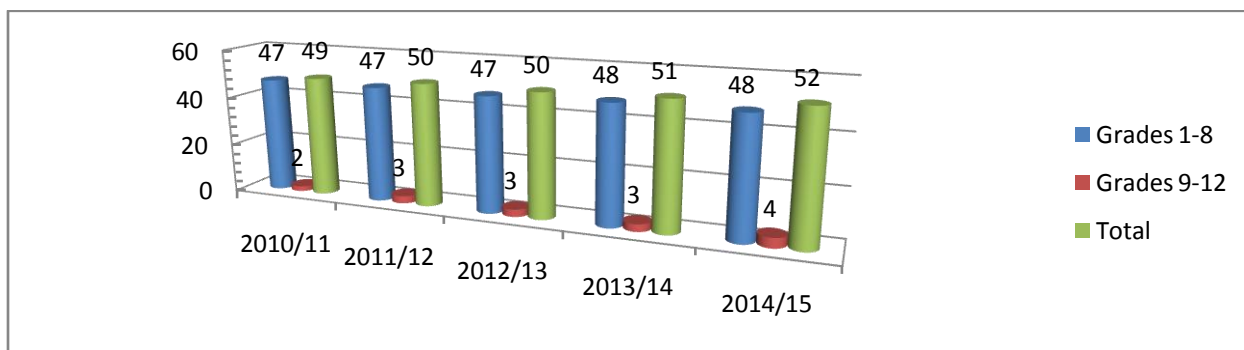


## Education Sector Development in Gulomekeda woreda

### I) Access to Education and Educational Enrollment

#### A) Access to school

In Gulomekeda woreda there were 47 primary schools in 2010/11 to 2012/13. Out of these a total of six schools (four of them are 1-4 grades, one of them 1-6 and one also 1-8) are nongovernmental schools. In 2013/14 to 2014/15 the number of primary schools in the woreda has increased to 48 while without any increase in non governmental/private schools. Concerning access to secondary school the number has grown from two in 2010/11 to three in 2011/12 – 2013/14 and increased to four in 2014/15. Out of the four secondary schools almost three schools (Zalambesa comprehensive secondary school, Rigbay Medebay and Sobeya secondary schools) establishment was highly financed by the participation of the community. The total number of primary and secondary schools in the woreda has reached 52 in 2014/15



**Figure 1: number of primary and secondary schools in Gulomekeda woreda (2010/11-2014/15)**

*Source: Researcher compilation from data of woreda education office, 2015/16*

The above figure shows in the two consecutive years (2010/11 and 2011/12) the rate of increase of primary school in the woreda was 0 percent while at regional level the rate of increase is 2.52 percent<sup>1</sup> in the same year. This can be seen rational for primary school because during the time the number of primary school students' enrollment was increasing by 2.79 %<sup>2</sup>. It is also justifiable for secondary schools though number of students was increased to large extent still the existing schools can accommodate it. Compared with the regional average distance (a grade nine student has to go 11.53 Km, and grade 10 student 12.21 Km, grade 11 student has to go 16.56 Km and 17.74 Km) on average to attend public secondary school for which one student is expected to go to get/attend public education it is fair in the local district. However due to the topographic/geographic setting of the kebeles in the woreda still there is an indication for additional need of primary and secondary schools, so that not only to decrease the distance to attend public education but also to balance classroom student ratios particularly in the secondary school which is 1:52 in 2014/15 in the woreda.

#### B) Enrollment

<sup>1</sup> See Education For All National Review Report ,2015

<sup>2</sup> See figure 4.2 for the number of primary and table 4.4 for secondary school students

## Pre primary enrollment

Pre primary schooling is designed for children aged 4-6 so that they would develop social life, experience school life and schooling and to get prepared for their next formal schooling. Data was collected from the woreda education office over the past five years (2010/11-2014/15) and accordingly it shows the gross enrollment rate has increased from 71.6% in 2010/11 to 111.7 % in 2013/ 14 and decreased to 99.5% in 2014/15. In this regard very good improvements have been observed concerning to enrollment.

**Table 1: Number of students enrolled in pre primary school in the local district from 2010/11 -2014/15: Plan and Actual Achievements**

Year	Plan at woreda level			Actual			Completion in % at woreda
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
<b>2010/11</b>	2604	2500	5104	1851	1804	3655	71.61
<b>2011/12</b>	2552	2338	4890	1703	1656	3359	68.69
<b>2012/13</b>	2694	2588	5282	2238	2294	4532	85.80
<b>2013/14</b>	1835	1818	3653	2083	2000	4083	111.77
<b>2014/15</b>	2581	2391	4972	2551	2375	4925	99.05

*Source: Author's compilation from Woreda Office of Education data, 2015/16*

From all explained above what can we say is , although the rate of pre primary school enrollment is getting improved from time to time in the woreda such expansion is carried out often “at the expense of the teaching and learning environment” said an interview respondent<sup>3</sup>. Requested to elaborate further the interviewee indicated that very few resources were made available for providing and ensuring quality of pre primary education. Clear manifestation of such activities include class rooms are without appropriate infrastructures like desks, and are not conducive for teaching and learning process in most schools in the local district and as a result the quality of the program in most schools is found unqualified.

There are a range of empirical studies which clearly supports the relationship between the quality of the physical setting and the achievement of educational outcomes. The less comfortable for children the physical setting is the lower the quality of education and health of students too. Fisher (2005) founds for example fewer discipline and attendance issues and problems in more conducive school facilities.

According to the paper presented by UNICEF (2000) at the meeting of the international working group on education argued that the quality of school buildings, desks and class room quality, availability of clean water all have an impact on the critical learning and teaching process.

<sup>3</sup> Key informant interview with head of woreda education office development planning process owner



Katrien Cuyvers and et al (2011) as well concludes that differences in students' well-being can be linked to the quality of the infrastructure of the schools they attend. Therefore the finding of the assessment in Gulomekeda woreda is in line with the findings of Fisher (2005) and UNICEF (2000) and Cuyvers and et al (2011).



Figure 2: Pre primary students in class room

*Photo credit: Woreda Office of Education, 2015/16*

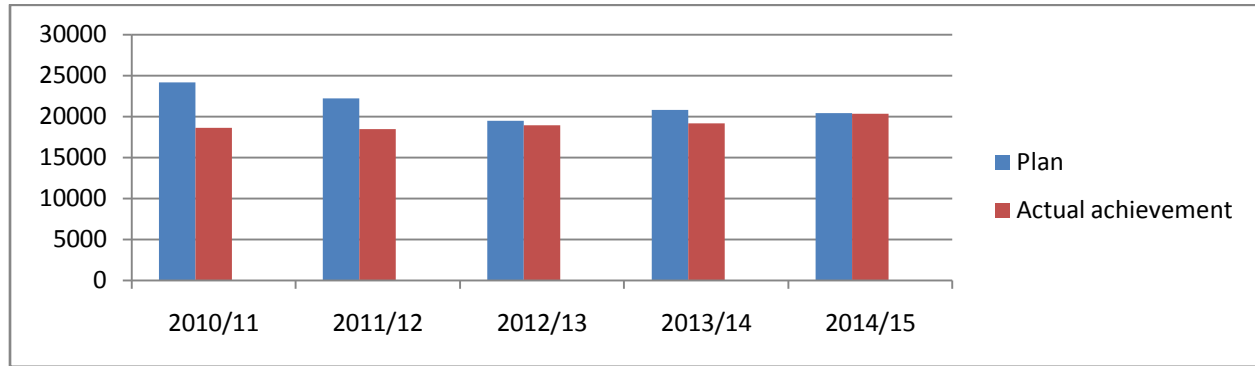
### **Primary school enrollment (1-8)**

Primary education is absolutely critical to a nation's development providing on average the highest public returns to investment for the state. It serves as the bridge to TVET and higher education and a critical driver of economic growth (EFA, 2015). In Ethiopia, primary education is defined as education in grades 1-8, in two cycles 1st cycle (Grades 1-4) and 2nd cycle (Grades 5-8). With regard to primary school enrollment during the starting up of GTP I the Net Enrollment Rate of primary<sup>4</sup> school in the local district was 77.04 percent while the Gross Enrollment Rate<sup>5</sup> was 99.76 percent and this shows that about 22.96 percent students were enrolled not in their right age. However at the end of GTP I improvements have been seen and the number of Net Enrollment Rate have been reached 99.7 % while Gross Enrollment Rate is 103.3% which is similar with 103.84 %<sup>6</sup> of the regional gross enrollment rate in 2014/15.

<sup>4</sup> The NER for primary school as a whole is calculated by dividing the number of students of the correct age enrolled in primary school (for Ethiopia, ages 7-14) by the number of children of school age population (7-14).

<sup>5</sup> GER is the rate calculated by simply dividing the total number of students enrolled in first cycle primary (irrespective of their age) by the total population of 7-14 years old. GER is a crude measure of school coverage.

<sup>6</sup> Explained in the statistical abstract of Tigray region GTP(2016/17 -2020/21)



**Figure 3: NER trend in primary school: Plan and actual achievements**

*Source: author's compilation from the data of woreda education office, 2016*

As indicated in the above figure the woreda had planned to reach the net enrollment of students to 24, 121 in 2010/11 however the actual achievement was remained 18583 and decreased to 18401 in 2011/12 while the plan was 22219. It also shows little improvement in achievement since 2012/13 to 2014/15 from 18930 in 2012/13 to 19169 in 2013/14 and 20297 in 2014/15. However the plan was to enroll 19431 in 2012/13, 20801 in 2013/14 and 20358 in 2014/15. Therefore, concerning to the NER in primary schools in the woreda we can safely conclude that great improvements are in place.

The major reason for the increased level of enrollment rate in the local district is clear that the efforts and political commitments of the government that has been made to correct access to education in rural areas. In support of this justification the EFA, (2015) has to say “in relation to the MDGs the Ethiopian government have intensively invest in ensuring access to education for all. As a result currently access to education to most extent is successful”.

Deolalikar (1997) in his study also found out that an expansion of school facilities and the efforts made to reach the rural areas increases the enrollment of children in the rural section of communities.

### **Secondary school enrollment**

In the Ethiopian education system, the secondary NER measures the enrolment of children of the appropriate age (for first cycle, 15-16 year old and second cycle, 17-18 years old) divided by the total school age population of that age. The plan and actual achievement of net enrolment trend in the last five years of the woreda in both cycles is indicated below.

**Table 2: Secondary school 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle (9-10) Net Enrollment**

Year	Plan			Achievement			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Plan Completion in %
2010/11	1439	1373	2812	584	510	1094	38.90
2011/12	1510	1586	3096	655	637	1292	41.73
2012/13	1467	1597	3064	740	861	1601	52.25
2013/14	1503	1677	3180	877	1020	1897	59.65
2014/15	1352	1486	2838	1040	1237	2277	80.23

Source: Author's compilation from the data of Woreda Office of Education, 2016

Concerning the growth of first cycle secondary school educational enrollment, there were 1094 students in 2010/11; and the number grew to 2277 by 2014/15. This shows that the average annual enrolment growth rate was 40.33 % for the five year period of 2010/11 to 2014/15. However compared to the plan the rate of net enrollment of first cycle secondary school is found below the plan of the woreda. Even then it is better when compared with the regional average of secondary school first cycle enrollment which is rated as 64.72<sup>7</sup> percent however it also indicates the need for more effort to improve first cycle NER in the woreda.

One reason for being below target could be the high the rate of repetition and hence ineligibility in primary school grades (1-8) during the years 2010/11 to 2013/14. It was 26.94% in 2010/11, 28.7 % in 2011/12 and 19.88% in 2012/13<sup>8</sup> and as a result eligibility to the next class and particularly grade nine (9) become low and secondary school enrollment declined. However when the rate of repetition of grade eight is decreased from time to time and reached 2.68%<sup>9</sup> in 2014/15 the net enrollment rate of the first cycle secondary school have been improved and reached 80.23% in 2014/15. Therefore from this we can say that the net enrollment rate for first cycle secondary school has continuously increased during the first GTP and is in a right track.

**Table 3: A trend of secondary school second cycle net enrollment**

Year	Plan			Achievement			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Plan Completion in %

<sup>7</sup> See Tigray region GTP I statistical abstract

<sup>8</sup> See the 2014/15 report of woreda education office

<sup>9</sup> See Woreda education office 2014/15 .It shows the rate of repetition of grade eight declining from year to year and reached 2.68 % in 2014/15 and increases the enrollment rate of grade nine



<b>2010/11</b>	288	257	545	58	53	111	20.37
<b>2011/12</b>	331	277	608	100	79	179	29.44
<b>2012/13</b>	326	398	724	183	232	415	57.32
<b>2013/14</b>	314	364	678	182	195	377	55.6
<b>2014/15</b>	205	221	426	150	160	310	72.77

*Source: author's compilation from the data of Woreda Office of Education, 2016/17*

As can be seen from table 4.4 above over the four years, (with the exception of 2013/14) enrolment rate in preparatory school in Gulomekeda has increased from 20.37 percent to 72.77 percent but still is not as per the plan of the woreda. Except in the two consecutive years 2010/11-2011/12 in both cycles, the average growth rate is higher for girls than boys in the local district. Compared to the average primary school net enrollment during the first GTP which is 89.82%<sup>10</sup> in the woreda the secondary school net enrollment rate is low. The average net enrollment rate during GTP I for secondary school first cycle is 54.55% and the second cycle remains 47.1%<sup>11</sup>.

According to the interviewed officials, among the problems of secondary school enrollment in the woreda includes the shortage of the number of secondary schools and in most cases the schools are located far from villages and students are obliged to move some 9 Km on average to get access to secondary school. However the average school distance is lower in the woreda than the regional average. For example at regional level a grade nine student has to go 11.53 Km, and grade 10 student 12.21 Km, grade 11 and 12 student have to go 16.56 Km and 17.74 Km on average to attend public secondary school<sup>12</sup>.

Attrition rate at earlier classes is also one of the reasons for low level of enrollment in secondary schools in Gulomekeda woreda. In other words those who fail to pass from grade 8 to 9 and 10 to 11 are ineligible to enroll for the next class. According to the data of the office of education of the woreda the rate of repetition in grade 10 for example is increasing from 68.92% in 2010/11 to 82.84% in 2014/15 and those 82.84% are ineligible to continue their education in the woreda. Therefore this can clearly affect enrollment rate in the next class. A study by Tenikue (2007), concludes that eligibility and proper completion of the actual grade increases enrollment for the next grade. This finding also revealed by Suryadarma and *et al* (2006) who argued that attrition during the transition between primary and junior secondary education levels is the main cause for low secondary school enrollment.

The other issue is the poverty in the area and the perception of students towards migration. Due to high unemployment rate and poverty<sup>13</sup> in the area perception of migration is high and

<sup>10</sup> See figure 4.3 , and the average of NER of the five year shows 89.82

<sup>11</sup> The researcher adds the actual achievements of the five years and divided it to five years

<sup>12</sup>See regional education bureau statistical abstract, 2014/15

<sup>13</sup> See Gebrehiwot and Fekadu (2012) in their study entitled "Causes and consequences of out-migration on rural households' livelihood in Gulomekeda district" found poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education the major ones.

considered as a means of livelihood for many families in the district. As a result students drop out of their schooling and migrate to different domestic cities and foreign countries legally and illegally leaving their education and worst is students of secondary school due to their age and hence affect the enrollment for the next year. To substantiate this issue an interview respondent teacher from Yemane Secondary School has put the following idea:

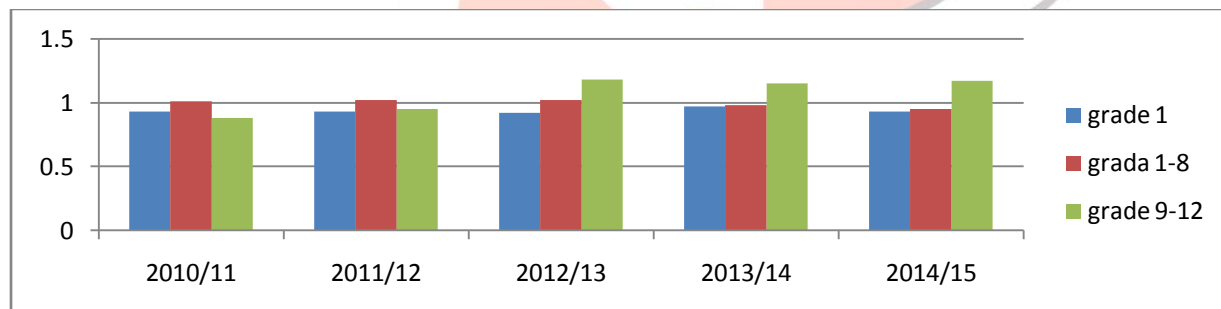
*“Most students in the woreda particularly those in secondary school are waiting for proper time to migrate. What is in their heart all the time is when, how and where to migrate. They wait in schools in one academic year until the right time come which is right time according to them. Then they leave schooling when the assumed right time to migrate comes and affects the enrollment rate of the next class.”<sup>14</sup>*

In line with this, Anjum and Uzma (2007) founds that household income and poverty level are significantly and positively related to child schooling.

## II) Educational Equity in Gulomekeda Woreda

Cognizant of the important role women have to play the government of Ethiopia has put into place a variety of strategies designed to increase female participation rates in education and consequently in the overall development process. Believed that local governance ensures the participation of females and women in general woreda have given big responsibility to build participatory educational and economic systems. In the last few years much effort, time and money was spent in fully apprehending the big picture of girls in Gulomekeda woreda.

The woreda governance has been striving to fill the gender gap and open access to education for girls and women (ensure gender equity) in the education system. Accordingly the following figure shows the rate of participation of female students in Gulomekeda woreda since 2010/11 to 2014/15.



**Figure 4: Equity in terms of female participation in grades one, 1-8 and 9-12 in Gulomekeda woreda. (2010/11-2014/15)**

*Source: author's compilation from the data of woreda office of education, 2016/17*

The above figure depicts the ratio of female educational participation in grades one (1), one to eight (1-8) and nine to twelve (9-12). The rate of participation of female students in grade one in

<sup>14</sup> During in-depth interview with a high school teacher from Yemane comprehensive senior secondary school on miazya, 2008 E.C

2010/11 was 0.93 and it continues the same until 2011/12. However in 2012/13 it decreased to 0.92 and increased to 0.97 in 2013/14 and back to 0.93 in 2014/15. Accordingly in grade one the average rate of female educational participation has been found still less than those of male participants figured as 0.93 percent though to smaller extent the variation with male is observed.

Concerning to grades 1-8 female educational participation in Gulomekeda woreda figure 4.4 shows during the years 2010/11 up to 2012/13 is even beyond male counter parts showing progress from 1.01 to 1.02. However in the years of 2013/14 to 2014/15 the rate decreased to 0.98 percent and 0.95 percent respectively. As a result the average ratio of gender parity index remained 0.99. When we see it with the regional average it has been found to be similar. Because the regional gender disparity index was 1 in 2010/11 and 0.99 in 2014/15<sup>15</sup>. However it is slightly lower comparing with the national targets indicated in GTP I for grades 1-8 which is figured as 1:1<sup>16</sup>. In grades 9-12 female enrollment rate is increasing and the average rate of female educational participation for grades 9-12 over the five years is 1.06% in the woreda.

From this the researcher fairly conclude that while the average gender disparity index in grades of 1-8 is 0.93% and shows female students are less than male students, however in secondary schools it is found that female students are more than male counter parts. In general the above result implies that participant the state of educational equity is getting improved and to better extent is females' secondary school participation in the local district.

One reason for the better attendance of female students in secondary school and not primary is related with personal and institutional conveniences. According to an interviewee respondent from the woreda education office<sup>17</sup> for example in primary schools female students are exposed to house works since they are attending school being with their families. Hence due to overloaded house works and parental bias female students decide to drop or fail to promote to the next class. Where as in secondary schools due to lack of secondary school in their locality they are supposed to learn being in rent house outside their localities and are free from overloaded house works.

This finding is supported by the situation analysis of the Ethiopian Ministry of Women's Affairs (2006) which indicated that boys and girls do not get equal opportunity and treatment with regard to household task assignments and study time, in which females are expected to undertake huge amount of household activities and they have more little time to study than boys and this is more hard in primary school level while they are with their families.

The other uppermost reason is also related with the government's institutional policy of affirmative action particularly given to female students in grades eight, ten and twelve. According to the interviewee respondents<sup>18</sup> they explained that it is due to the affirmative action opportunities and particularly the lower entry requirements that let the participation of female

<sup>15</sup> See Tigray region GTP I statistical abstract, it has been found that the GDI for primary school during the first GTP was 0.99 in 2014/15 decreased from what it was 1 in 2010/11 and referred as successful.

<sup>16</sup> See Education For All ,Ethiopia National Review Report (2015)

<sup>17</sup> Key informant interview with woreda education office , development plan process owner head on miazya 11,2008 E.C

<sup>18</sup> Key informant interview with woreda education office , head of development plan process owner on miazya 11,2008 E.C

students higher than male in the secondary school level. Interviewee respondent students<sup>19</sup> also supports this in addressing the question how much effective is affirmative action in increasing female educational participation in her school. Onsongo (2009) in studying “the role of affirmative action in access to secondary and university admissions” has also found affirmative action has been used to increase women’s access to secondary and university admissions in Kenya Uganda and Tanzania.

### III) State of Quality of Education in Gulomekeda woreda

Using the quality improvement packages designed by the Ethiopian government as a standard here is a brief analysis of the state of quality of education in Gulomekeda woreda.

#### A. School leadership, procedure and organizational improvement program

The main objective of this program is to improve and enable schools to have best trained school leadership, best procedure and organization. Accordingly, as a matter of principle and standard all the schools in the woreda should have principals, vice principals and one to five cluster supervisors<sup>20</sup> and a participatory governance system.

**Table 4: Principals, vice principals and supervisors by sex**

Position	Number of male and female principals, vice and supervisors				
	Number of principals	Sex		Percent	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Principals</b>	52	44	8	84.32%	15.68 %
<b>Vice principals</b>	26	22	4	84.62%	15.38%
<b>Supervisors</b>	10	10	0	100%	0%

*Source: author’s compilation from data of woreda education office, 2016/17*

Table 4.5 shows that all schools have principals and out of them 44 are male and the rest 8 or 15.68% are female principals for which the participation of females in school leadership is lower than the regional average explained as 33.75%<sup>21</sup>. Besides to it depicts all schools in the woreda have no vice principals<sup>22</sup>. In regard to supervisors there are 10 supervisors one for five schools which are referred to as “clusters” and females are less than male school heads and almost non in supervisor positions.

<sup>19</sup> An interviewee grade 11 students from Yemane comprehensive secondary school assures it is supporting a lot

<sup>20</sup> Key informant interview with woreda education office , head of development plan process owner on miazya 11,2008 E.C

<sup>21</sup> See Gulomekeda woreda office of education GTP I report(2015)

<sup>22</sup> See table 4.5 ,the total number of the vice principals are 26 while the number of schools in the woreda remain 52

The qualification levels of almost all of the school heads in the woreda has been found below second degree and which is against the national standard<sup>23</sup>. This affects principals' decision making process and democratic content of school environment<sup>24</sup>. Regarding this an interview respondent from a primary school director<sup>25</sup> was asked to express on whether he is qualified in educational leadership or not. The question was extended to specify the extent to which principals were engaged in short and long term trainings in order to develop their qualification in the area of school leadership in the woreda. Accordingly he said that “almost all of the school principals in the woreda have no specific qualification concerning to school leadership rather than short trainings in the woreda”. The results of the above analysis implies that almost half the schools in the woreda are not equipped with the required leadership; the existing leadership in the woreda is not a qualified in educational management and planning and women empowerment in school governance is not yet ensured and this has been severely affected educational management and development in the local district.

### B. Teacher development improvement program in Gulomekeda woreda

Teachers serve as key educational inputs whose qualification, subject mastery, pedagogical skills, attitudes towards the profession of teaching, and their commitment to the teaching profession play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education at all levels. In Ethiopia, in the past five years, huge efforts have been made to increase the skills of teachers and provide options to upgrade qualifications and the same is in Tigray region<sup>26</sup>. As part of the regional and national efforts the local government of Gulomekeda woreda also strives to meet the national requirement for teachers to each at respective level. The following is presented as a simple indication of the trends of teacher qualification development efforts in the woreda.

**Table 5: Teachers and their qualifications in grades 1-8 in Gulomekeda woreda**

Number of Teachers in Grades 1-8					
Year	TTI	Diploma	First Degree	Second Degree	Total
2010/11	159	360	-	-	519
2011/12	163	392	-	-	555
2012/13	157	380	33	-	570
2013/14	103	396	74	-	573
2014/15	64	401	137	-	602

*Source: author's compilation from the data of woreda office of finance and planning, 2016*

<sup>23</sup> See Education for All national review report (2015), It indicates schools to have two vice principals and principals trained in educational management.

<sup>24</sup> During in depth interview with primary school teacher, from Addis Alem primary school, said school leadership violates teachers autonomy and in most cases not elected based on merit and hence undemocratic school environment most of the time

<sup>25</sup> During in-depth interview with primary school directors of Tsahwa primary school and Addis Tesfa Primary school told the researcher that beyond short trainings he had no special qualification and the other principals in the woreda also too.

<sup>26</sup> See Gulomekeda woreda education office GTP I report (2015), since 2010/11 to 2014/15 16327 teachers get educational opportunities in Tigray region



As one can understand from table 4.6 during the first years of GTP I particularly from 2010/11 to 2011/12 only TTI and diploma holder teachers were serving in primary education in the local district. However from 2013/14 to 2014/15 the number of first degree holders has been increased from 33 in 2013/14 to 137 in 2014/15. In general the total number of first degree holders in primary school has been increased from 0 in 2010/11 and 2011/12 to 244 in the three consecutive years in the woreda. This shows that on the one hand there are efforts of upgrading of teachers from TTI and diploma levels to have first degree though the researcher is unable to find a concrete data on how many are trainings through in service or other ways.

On the other side it also implies since 2013/14 to the end of GTP I the woreda start to give emphasis for teachers quality and as a result start recruiting teachers with first degree for primary school. Besides to it also shows while the number of TTI holders is decreased from 163 in 2011/12 to 64 in 2014/15 at the same time the number of diploma holder teachers is also increasing from 360 in 2010/11 to 401 in 2014/15. This can be taken as a positive practice of teacher development program in the district. However the number of diploma holder teachers is not increasing in similar rate with the rate of decrease of TTI holder teachers and this can manifest the kind of turnover in the sector. Therefore, it is safe to say that while the local government is doing well in building of the capacity of teachers and being improved from time to time the local government is also challenged with teachers turnover that is also negatively affected the development of the sector in the woreda.

**Table 6: Teachers and their qualifications in grades of 9-12**

Number of Teachers in Grades 9-12					
Year	TTI	Diploma	First Degree	Second Degree	Total
2010/11	-	7	75	-	82
2011/12	-	5	138	-	143
2012/13	-	5	159	1	165
2013/14	-	9	150	-	159
2014/15	-	6	107	-	113

*Source: Data from woreda education office and researcher compilation, 2016*

The above table indicates the level of first degree holders are increasing from time to time in the woreda. The numbers in the table show that the increasing trend of first degree holder teachers from 82 in 2010/11 to 113 in 2014/15 though ups and downs with the numbers in the middle are observed. Accordingly the number of first degree holders expected to teach in secondary school has been reached 94% in 2014/15. Besides to, it also shows still there are teachers with diploma in secondary schools while there are no second degree holders in the woreda in contrast to the regional average of 4%.

From this it is fair to conclude that to meet the national standard of teachers' qualification for general and preparatory secondary schools the woreda is still left behind. According to Education for All (EFA) national reviews report (2015) the national standard in general secondary (9-10) and preparatory (11-12) level teachers are required to hold a subject-area-specific bachelors and masters degree, respectively.

### C. School curriculum improvement program

Educational planners usually consider the pupil-teacher ratio, classroom –pupil ratio, pupil-text book ratio as some of the most common education indicators for educational quality. There are two views on pupil teacher ratio: On the one hand, the lower the PTR the better the opportunity for contact between the teacher and pupils and for the teacher to provide support to students individually and thereby improve the quality of education.

On the other hand, very low PTR may indicate inefficient use or underutilization of teachers resulting in low efficiency. However, low or high PTR alone does not explain the quality of education because quality of education depends on other factors such as mode of delivery, commitment, qualification of teachers, the supply of educational materials, and other issues. However though not sufficient these indicators are considered as necessary for setting minimum standards and ensuring educational quality around the district.

**Table 7: description of Teacher-Pupil and class room - student ratio of Gulomekeda woreda in comparison to regional status**

Academic year	Indicator	Grades			
		Grade one	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	Grades 9-12
2011/12	Teacher-Pupil	1:42	1:41	1:45	1:40
	CR-student	1:41	1:41	1:50	1:58
2012/13	Teacher-Pupil	1:39	1:40	1:42	1:31
	CR-student	1:39	1:39	1:47	1:62
2013/14	Teacher-Pupil	1:40	1:40	1:42	1:31
	CR-student	1:34	1:40	1:42	1:31
2014/15	Teacher-Pupil	1:40	1:40	1:42	1:31
	CR-student	1:39	1:39	1:47	1:52

*Source: author compilation from the data of woreda office of education, 2016/17*

Table 4.8 depicts that the teacher-pupil ratio in grade one was 1:42, grades 1-4, 1:41, grades 5-8, 1:45 and grades 9-12, 1:40 in 2011/12. Concerning to Student –class room ratio in the woreda is also in grade one it was 1:41, grades 1-4, 1:41, grades 5-8, 1:50 and in grades 9-12 it is 1:58 in 2011/12. Showing little improvement the teacher-pupil ratio has become 1:40 in grades one, 1:40 in grades 1-4, 1:42 in grades 5-8 and 1:31 in grades 9-12 in 2014/15. Whereas the class room - student ratio in grade one, and one to four the ratio is 1:39, as well as 1:47 and 1:52 in grades 5-8 and 9-12 respectively in 2014/15. At regional level the average class room –student ratio at primary school is 50 and 56 in secondary school, whereas the regional average teacher –pupil ratio is remained 50<sup>27</sup>. Therefore in all circumstances the local district is at better position compared with the regional figures.

<sup>27</sup> See Tigray region’s GTP I statistical abstract (2015) explains the average pupil –class room ratio in primary is school 50 and 56 in secondary school. It also explains the average teacher –pupil ratio as 50.

**Table 8: shows the ratio of text book -student and desk student in Gulomekeda woreda**

Academic year	Indicator	Grades			
		Grade one	Grades 1-4	Grades 5-8	Grades 9-12
2011/12	Text b – student	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:1
	Desk- Student	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:5
2012/13	Text b – student	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:1
	Desk- Student	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:4
2013/14	Text b – student	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:1
	Desk- Student	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:4
2014/15	Text b – student	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:1
	Desk- Student	1:4	1:4	1:3	1:4

*Source: author's compilation from the data of woreda office of education 2016/17*

Here table 4.9 shows in 2011/12 except in grades 5-8 the text book –student ratio were 1:1 whereas 1:2 in grades 5-8. In the same year the desk –student ratio was 1:4 in grades 1-4 and 1:5 in grades 9-12. In 2014/15 it also continues in a similar trend except in the reduction of desk student ratio to 1:4 in grades 9-12. Taking in to consideration the above data in terms of equipping schools with text books particularly in grades (5-8) and desks in grades (1-4 and 9-12) the woreda is left behind and great efforts are required.

#### **D. ICT expansion program**

The Government has made considerable investment in ICT infrastructure, especially at secondary school level. Currently at national level 71.6% of secondary schools are equipped with plasma TV and 26.1% have access to internet services<sup>28</sup>. In Gulomekeda woreda out of the 4 secondary schools only one (*Zalambesa* comprehensive secondary school) has access to internet service. Concerning to plasma television except *Zalambesa* comprehensive secondary school all the rest has no plasma television services. *Sobeya* and *Rigbay Medebay* have not equipped with electric power infrastructure while the problem in *Yemane* comprehensive secondary school is related to technical and commitment problems<sup>29</sup>. These results are great implications of how the woreda is left far in achieving the expansion of information and communications technology in schools.

In general the researcher conclude that despite the significant investments in quality inputs like teachers, books, buildings, due to various reasons like, poor equipment of school facilities and school environment , low number of females in leadership positions, weak leadership and management capacities at institutional and school level, limited availability of teaching/learning materials and access to information and communication technologies quality of education is not yet ensured in the woreda. This is because different “effective school” literatures identify key

<sup>28</sup> See education for all national review report (2015) and GTP I statistical abstract

<sup>29</sup> key informant interview with woreda education office member on miazya , 12, 2008 E.C told the researcher

characteristics of schools which deliver improved student outcomes when compared with schools with similar student cohorts. School infrastructure has been identified as one of the influences on education outcomes.

Keating et al (2003) for example argues that once a student's socio economic background is excluded, the main factors impacting on education outcomes are curriculum, teacher quality and the quality of the teacher-learner relationship, and school organization, management and resourcing. UNICEF (2000) also supports the finding claiming the quality of administrative support and leadership is another critical element in school because teachers need governments who are supportive of education systems and respecting teachers' autonomy, professionalism and developing inclusive decision-making processes.

#### IV) Educational Efficiency

Efficiency in education can be explained by students' rate of dropouts and rate of repetition, rate of success, rate of total stay in one class, rate of first cycle promotion, rate of second cycle promotion and others. This clearly indicates that when the degree of educational wastage is high the efficiency of the system becomes low and vice-versa. The effort to make an educational system efficient and effective therefore limits itself the extent of minimizing the degree of wastage rather than eliminating it. In its latest Education Sector Development Program (i.e. ESDP IV exist from 2010/11-2014/15), Ministry of Education has set clear targets of reducing dropout rates at all levels irrespective of the sex of students. In this medium-term plan, the government aimed for dropout rates across primary at 1%.

To assess educational efficiency in Gulomekeda woreda the study has looked on two indicators particularly rate of students' dropout and rate of students' repetition. This is because data were not available for making trend analysis on the other indicators of educational efficiency in the local district.

##### i) Students Dropout Rate in Gulomekeda Woreda

**Table 9: Rate of dropout in primary school (1-8)**

Year	Dropout rate			
	Male	Female	Total	In %
2010/11	252	152	404	1.76
2011/12	212	96	308	1.36
2012/13	101	67	168	0.77
2013/14	63	37	100	0.48
2014/15	79	58	137	0.65

*Source: author's compilation from the data of woreda finance and planning, 2016*

The above table 4.10 based on 2010/11 to 2014/15 data, displays the rate of dropout of students from grades one to eight in Gulomekeda woreda. Accordingly, the rate of dropout is falling from

1.76 in 2010/11 to 0.48 in 2013/14 and shows some increase in 2014/15 figured 0.65. This indicates the woreda's primary education is efficient since the rate of dropout is found low. This is because the index of the educational wastage is one when the system is "absolutely" efficient and in the woreda is even below one and hence is efficient. When we compare it with national standard set in ESDP IV (2010/11-2014/15) the achievements of the local district in reducing dropout of students in primary school is found efficient. However comparing it with the regional average which is 0.25<sup>30</sup> dropout rate educational inefficiency of the primary education in the woreda is also found slightly higher and recalls for extra efforts.

**Table 10: students' dropout rate in secondary school (9-12)**

Year	Dropout Rate in percent			
	Male	Female	Total	%
2010/11	102	73	175	5.39
2011/12	120	84	204	5.96
2012/13	47	53	100	2.86
2013/14	50	32	82	2.43
2014/15	27	19	46	1.45

*Source: Author's compilation from woreda office of finance and planning, 2016/17*

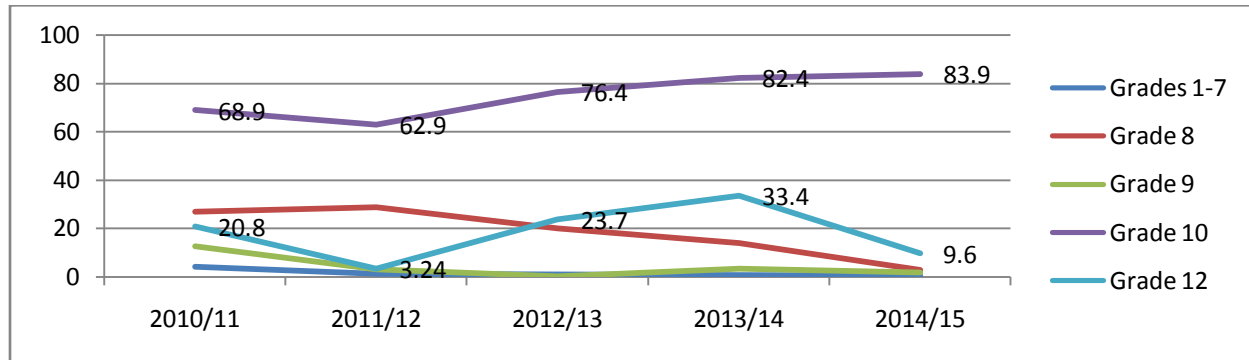
From the above table one can easily conclude that the rate of student dropout has decreased from 5.96 % in 2011/12 to 1.45% in 2014/15. The total numbers of students' drops out decreased from 204 in 2011/12 to 46 in 2014/15. However comparing this with the stated average regional dropout rate figured as 1% and with the possible educational wastage which is 1 it is fair to conclude secondary school in Gulomekeda is somehow inefficient hence educational wastage is observed.

#### ii) Students Repetition in Gulomekeda Woreda

Repetition is defined as a year spent by a pupil in the same grade and doing the same work as in the previous year (Brimer and Pauli 1971). Nationally the repetition rate target set in ESDP IV was 1% as a result by 2012/13 the average for all primary education stood at 7.9% and the regional average remained 1.9% by 2014/15. At woreda level the repetition rate for grades eight, ten and twelve is high where as there are improvements in the other grades.

<sup>30</sup> See Tigray region GTP I evaluation statistical abstract (2015), bureau of finance and planning



**Graph 1: trend of rate of student repetition**

Source: researcher compilation from the data of woreda education office 2015/16

The data in graph 4.1 shows the rate of repetition in grades 1-7 is decreasing from time to time. It has decreased from 4.11 % in 2010/11 to 0.29 in 2014/15. The graph also indicates though not in similar rate the repetition rate of grade eight students in the woreda is decreasing from 26.9% in 2010/11 to 2.68 % in 2014/15. Besides to, it also indicates throughout the first GTP the rate of repetition in grades eight, ten and twelve stood rated 2.68%, 83.9% and 9.6%<sup>31</sup> respectively. As a result in grades eight, ten and twelve educational inefficiency is observed although as what Chantavanich, Chantavanich and Fry (1990) has called “wastage of a certain magnitude is inescapable”.

All in all in assessing/ measuring efficiency based on drop out and repetition rates the researcher found that moderate rates of drop out in grades ten and twelve and slightly high repetition rates in grades eight, and higher repetition rates in grades ten and twelve. Asked about how inefficiency had come on specific grades while low dropout and repetition rate in other grades across the woreda an interview respondent<sup>32</sup> has pointed out that “it is the way of evaluation that makes difference”. According to him grades eight, ten and twelve are not that much on the direct control of the school administration and the way of examination is a centralized one while in other grades teachers are intervened to pass their students indirectly. This is because teachers get their evaluation and promotion based on how many of their students pass and fail and therefore no one is ready to be his evaluation bad, hence they tend to let every student to pass without mastering the actual grade.

Yaikob (2014) strengthens this finding arguing that there countries that appear to believe that repetition creates more problems than it solves and therefore follow a policy of automatic promotion. Accordingly, pupils proceed to the next grade even when they have not mastered the material of the previous grade. As a result the researcher concludes that educational inefficiency and wastage is observed in the above mentioned grades. This is because the educational system in these grades is unable to hold either to continue or promote to the next classes. In line with this finding Brimer and Pauli, (1979) for example noted that “failure to hold children within the system and in inefficiency in the achievement of objectives” is indicators of educational wastage.

<sup>31</sup> See graph 4.1, in 2014/15 the rate of repetition for grades 8,10 12 were 2.68,83.9 and 9.6 respectively

<sup>32</sup> In -depth interview with a secondary school teacher from Yemane comprehensive senior secondary school, on April, 22, 2016

## V) Challenges of the local government in Ensuring Educational Sector Development

Benefits that accrued from the implementation of decentralized local governance, the study findings show that there are challenges affecting the implementation of decentralized local governance in the district level.

- **Financial Challenges**

Respondents reported that resources allocated to the educational projects in the woreda have never been adequate. The government usually provides a ceiling point from which they have to budget for their plans. This means that woreda are given limitations on how much they should budget for and they must adhere to these ceiling points as one of the criteria for their plans to be approved by the central government.

One respondent commented that: *“the local government may have more socioeconomic needs (educational expansion in this case) than those budgeted for, but since the central and regional governments have limited resources, it makes a limit on how much should be allocated to the local government. It cannot make it open for each woreda to plan and budget without ceiling points”*. Besides to a key informant respondent from the woreda education office also expressed concern about inadequate financial resources. According to him “due to financial limitations the need to equip schools with infrastructure and build additional schools and especially secondary school for which we have shortage has been postponed”.

- **Lack of good governance and over politicization of the educational administration**

Though in principle decentralized local governance has designed to enhance and expand democracy at the grassroots level by allowing community members to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation process of their own socioeconomic needs and priorities but in practice it becomes a night mare in Gulomekeda woreda key informants, particularly those of teachers and farmers reported that still there is a big problem of good governance. They have explained that “we are forced to do while it is not our interest is, they don’t want to listen us” a teacher interviewee from Addis Tesfa said. They mentioned that the main challenge of ensuring socioeconomic development and particularly education and agriculture in the local district is lack of accountability, responsibility, transparency and local democracy as expressed by one of the key informants in explaining the state of lack of good governance in the area:

*“Most of the time the environment of schools in the woreda affected by politicization of each and every activity and no more academic freedom is witnessed .*

In support of the above view an interview respondent has asserted that the absence of institutional transparency he explains for example that selection of a school director, and vice principals are not merit based rather the so called political loyalty and is negatively affecting the democracy in the education sector in the woreda. Besides the researcher had also approached primary and secondary school students for in depth interview about good governance in their schools and all stated that also teachers who are unresponsive and undemocratic in their school.

- **Teachers turn over as a challenge in the Woreda**

The other point raised by school directors and woreda officials is that teachers’ turnover is a serious challenge in Gulomekeda woreda. What fuels high rates of teacher turnover in schools in

Gulomekeda though it is another point of research area and needs detail exploration is that the poor working conditions that make it difficult for them to teach and their students to learn. These include school leadership, collegial relationships, and elements of school culture, as well as the perception and culture of migration due to the poor salary scale of teachers.

According to the respondents teacher turnover is affecting educational achievements in the woreda on two grounds. When experienced and qualified teachers leave the sector and less qualified teachers replace them, the effect on students, schedules and courses and hence educational quality and development in general is negatively affected. In support of this finding, Tewedaje (2014) found out that teacher turnover in government secondary school many effects: instructional activities were disrupted and unqualified teachers were assigned as replacement; As a result, students did not get the proper guidance and knowledge that correspond with their level. Betru (2014) also found that due to teachers turnover students achievement was deteriorated, school programs were disturbed qualified and experienced teachers were replaced by non-qualified and non-experienced teachers, and finally quality education deteriorated.

- **Weak teachers' commitment: As another challenge**

Teachers' commitment was also the one identified as a major challenge for ensuring educational development. This was proved true that due to various reasons the majorities of teachers, students and woreda officials expressing that they are de-motivated and are not interested with the profession and this is affecting quality of education in the woreda as well. This finding collaborates with the findings of Kitila A.K. Mkumbo (2012) a study conducted in Tanzania.

- **The Ethio Eritrean War**

The Ethio Eritrean war and hence its extension of closed and hostile border relations have been stated as a challenge of education and educational investment in the woreda. According to the informants the war affects educational sector indirectly by affecting the local economy and lead to poverty. As a result to escape poverty in the area students drop out their education and besides to it also make private investments on education nonexistent in the local woreda

## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the following conclusions can be drawn from the research study:

- In general the researcher has concluded that access to education, students' enrollment, and females' educational participation has been improved in the local district.
- However due to poor educational management both at school and woreda, lack of good governance in schools, limited availability of inputs like text books, desks, access to ICT , teachers turnover and lack of teachers commitment educational quality and educational efficiency are still at infancy and due to cannot be possible to claim educational sector development is ensured in Gulomekeda woreda
- After considering the different data collected through document analysis and interviews the researcher has concluded that the challenges hindering educational and agricultural sector developments in the woreda include teachers turn over, lack of good governance and

politicization of the education, low teachers' commitment, drought and the Ethio Eritrean war are the major challenges.

## RECOMMENDATION

- So that quality education is promoted in the local district all the stakeholders in the education sector like parent teachers association and Kebele education and training board members should get empowered through providing opportunities for effective participation than mass mobilization and public consultations. This would help the local governance to ensure accountability of stakeholders and enhance school and community participation in resource utilization decisions and resource generation.
- The woreda governance should fill positions for school leadership and management based on the principle of merit and merit only. Therefore there must be a move towards depoliticizing the school environment and make sure that effective and democratic leadership to prevail in schools.
- The local governance should have to focus on creating conducive school environment like fulfilling physical school infrastructures and software like proper toilet for male and female students, clean water and other (entertainments for teachers) so that teachers' turnover is minimized and commitment will get improved.
- The local governance should have to focus on effective capacity building trainings for planners of local educational policy and implementers so that policies and strategies will properly implement. This capacity building supports the local government's initiatives to strengthen the planning, management, and monitoring capacity of local educational policies and projects.
- The woreda governance should deal with the poverty and migration perceptions through awareness development and creating employment opportunities and vocational skill development and training centers to youths like TVET centers in consultation with different stakeholders' for which their origin is from the area.

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