

An Assessment of Factors that Affecting Academic Performances of Students': The Case of Assosa General Secondary and Preparatory School, Ethiopia

Zewde Getahun (Principal Researcher)

Adamu Jibat (Co-Researcher)

College of Social Science and Humanities, Department of Civics and Ethical Studies, Assosa University, P. O. Box 18, Ethiopia.

Abstract

The principal objective of this study is to analyze factors that affecting academic performances of students' in Assosa general secondary and preparatory School. This helps to raise a better understanding on the factors that influencing the students' academic performances. The factors subject to analysis include various factors which have been investigated and found to have either direct or indirect effects on the students' academic performance. These are include school environmental factors (like availability of physical facilities, availability of teaching and learning materials), teacher related factors (like teacher qualification, teachers' working conditions and interests), home environmental factors (like parents and community attitudes towards education), students' characteristics (like students attitude and motivation, students' discipline), and lack of good ethics. Besides, the research is conducted based on qualitative methodology especially deep interview, Focus group discussion and document analysis.

Keywords: Factors, Academic Performances, Students', Secondary and preparatory School, Ethiopia.

1. Introduction

Benishangul Gumuz regional state is one of the nine regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The region is located in the western part of the Ethiopia and is bordered by the Amhara region to the north and northeast, Oromia region to the south and southeast and Sudan to the west. The region is comprised of three administrative zones, made up of 20 districts and one city administration. Its capital city is Assosa which is about 679 km west of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The total population of the region, as based on the 2007/2014 census is about 976,000. The population of the region consists of diverse ethnic groups, five of which are indigenous to the region namely: Berta, Gumuz, Shinasha, Mao and Komo. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project is also situated in this region (Benishangul Gumuz Regional Communication Office, 2016).

Asosa woreda is one of the 20 woreda's in the Benishangul Gumuz regional state. It is part of Assosa zone which is bordered by Kormuk and Komesha in the north, by Menge in the north east, by Oda Buldigilu in the east, by Bambasi in the southeast, by Mao-komo special woreda in the south. Assosa general secondary and preparatory school is found in Assosa woreda, Assosa town. The school was established in 1979 and it has about 3,270 students and 126 teachers in 2018 (Interview with School Director, 2018).

Assosa general secondary and preparatory school is one of the government schools which delivering formal education service for communities in Assosa woreda. During 2018 academic year it has about 1,531 male students' and 1,708 female students with 111 male teachers and 15 female teachers. In this school the number of teachers' to students' ratio is 1 to 26. The table shows the total number of students in the school in 2018.

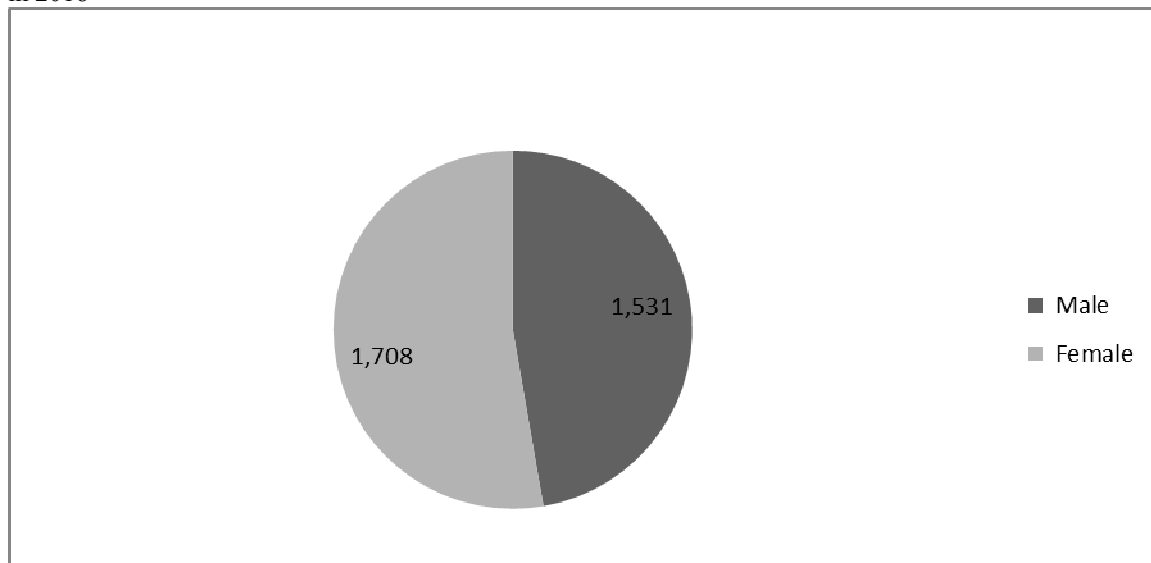
Table 1: Total Number of students' of Assosa general secondary and preparatory school in 2018

Grade	Male	Female	Total
9	520	659	1,179
10	449	549	998
11	269	182	451
12	293	318	611
Total	1,531	1,708	3,239

Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the above data shows the total numbers of female students' are greater than that of male students'. The following figure shows that the total numbers of female students' and male students'.

Fig.1: Total numbers of female students' and male students' in Assosa general secondary and preparatory school in 2018



Source: School Director Office, 2018

As researchers had observed in the school, there has been low academic performance of students' which shows that there are problems which have caused poor performance of academic achievements students'. Thus, the researchers are interested in finding out factors that affecting academic performances of students' in the school. So, this research will help to reveal which factors may be affecting academic achievements of students' in the school. For example the following table is show the academic performance of students' on national exam of grade 10 and 12 in 2017.

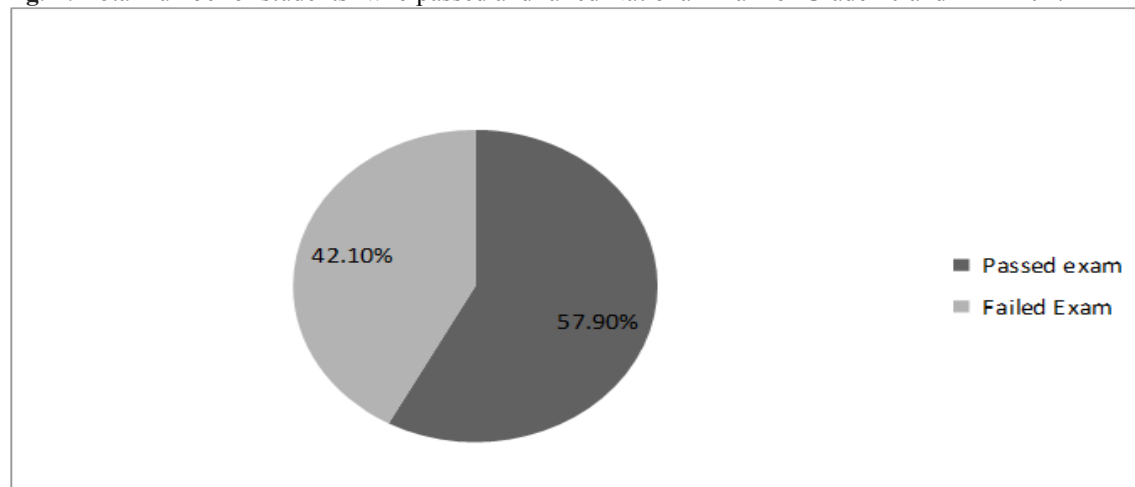
Table 2: Rate of students' that passed National Exam of Grade 10 and 12 in 2017

Grade	Passed			Failed		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
10	36.3%	35.3%	35.8%	63.7%	64.7%	64.2%
12	79.3%	80.7%	80%	20.7%	19.3%	20%
Total	57.8%	58%	57.9%	42.2%	42%	42.1%

Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the data shows there were low academic performances of students' on national exam. For example, in 2017 about 64.2% of grade 10 students were failed national exam while about 20% of grade 12 students were failed national exam. In addition, the following figure show that the total number of students' who passed and failed National Exam of Grade 10 and 12 in 2017.

Fig. 2: Total number of students' who passed and failed National Exam of Grade 10 and 12 in 2017



Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the above data shows from both grade 10 and 12 students' who had taken national exam of grade 10 and 12 in 2017, about 42.1% of students' were failed which was one indicator of low performance of

academic achievements of students' in the school.

2. Literature Review

Education is recognized around the world as a basic prerequisite for development. For any nation to achieve economic, socio-cultural, technological and political development, the education of its citizens should be of great concern to the development planners of that nation. Millennium Development Goal number two seeks to ensure that all nations achieve Universal Free Primary Education by 2015. This is because leaders from around the world realized that provision of education was one of the benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty (UNICEF, 2000).

Among others, Academic performances of students' are used to measure quality education. The academic performance of students can be measured in terms of past examination performance and performance in midterms (Tan & Yates, 2007). According to Martha (2010) academic performance can be measured in terms of performance in tests and course work. The most significant and suitable way to measure the performance is the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

However, there are different factors that affect quality education in general and academic performances of students' in particular. Different Researchers have shown that environmental factors, parental or family related factors and students' related factors such as lack of students' motivation towards learning and indiscipline have adverse effect on learners' academic performance (Selden, 2006)

In addition, Smith, Lee, and Newmann (2001) analyzed the teaching method and its influence on student academic performance. This study was carried out to analyze whether didactic or interactive teaching method was more effective towards academic performance and the results yielded that interactive teaching method associated a better gain in test scores. Also Mercanoilglu (2010) conducted a research to examine whether time management practices are predictors of academic performance of students or not. Finally, he investigated that time management has direct implication on academic performance of learners.

Kwenda (2011) examined the factors affecting student's performances and used demographic administrative data collected for five consecutive semesters at a state supported regional university in the south-western part of the United States. Based on the findings, it was found that an additional day of missed classes increases the odds of failing the course by 50 percent.

Thus, there are different factors that can affect the academic achievements of students which some of them are addressed by this study.

3. Methodology

The research is basically used a descriptive research design since it investigated the current status of the problems. It adopted qualitative approach with deep interview, focus group discussion and document analysis methods of data collection. According to Singh (2006), qualitative data provide useful and in-depth answers to the research question for decision makers and information users. Thus the study targeted on students' of Assosa general secondary and preparatory school. The primary data was obtained from students', teachers' and parents of students through focus group discussion, interview and observation. Document analysis was also other source of information. Simple random technique was used in collecting data from key respondents that include teachers, students and parents of students. Finally, the qualitative data obtained through interview have been analyzed in the form of discourse analysis and narration, and described qualitatively in sentence form. Data obtained from document review was analyzed using descriptive statistical technique, and its results are presented in tabular and graphic forms with due discussions.

4. Result and Discussions

The main aim of this study is to assess factors that affecting academic performance of students' in Assosa secondary and preparatory school. According to the data shows during the academic year of 2018, the academic performances of the students' are very low. For example the following table is shows the academic performance of students' in Assosa general secondary and preparatory school in 2018.

Table 3: Number of students' who had scored more than 50% and less than 50% in all subjects/ courses in 2018

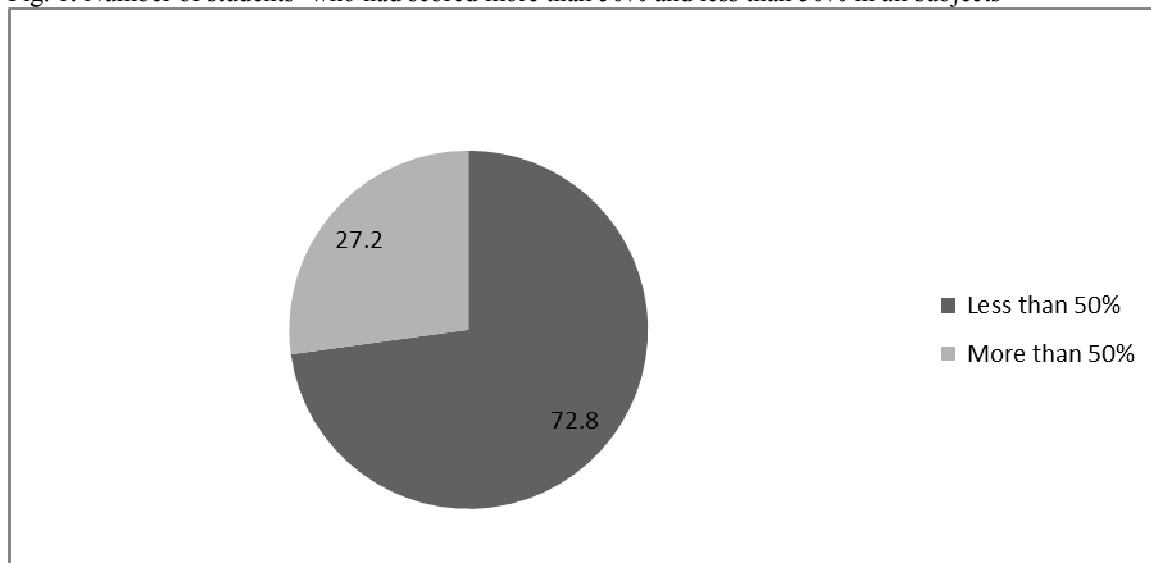
Grade	More than 50%	Less than 50%
9	22.7%	77.3%
10	22.48%	77.52%
11	45.8%	54.2%
12	17.8%	82.2%

Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the above table most students' (72.8% of total number of students) have scored less than 50% in all subjects/ courses they had taken while only about 27.2% of total number of students have scored more than 50% in all subjects/ courses. The following figure show number of students' who had scored more than 50% and

less than 50% in all subjects.

Fig. 1: Number of students' who had scored more than 50% and less than 50% in all subjects



Source: School Director Office, 2018

Therefore, the above data have assured that the academic performance of students' were very low. According the data collected from school teachers, students and parents of students the following factors were identified as basic factors that could affect the academic performances of the students' in the school. These were: lack of interests of students' towards learning, problem related to English language, not attending class, not doing class activities and home works, depending on others students during exam (cheating exam), lack of punctuality, lack of interest of teachers toward teaching, lack of good ethics and behaviors of students, lack of family control and support for students', students' stress due to lack of job opportunity after they had completed their education, lack of giving enough tutorial class, lack of quality of school facilities (like lack of enough reference book, chair and table, black board and laboratory equipment.

In addition factors such as wasting time on unnecessary activities like looking game/ film, playing pool/ with friends, etc., lack of effective school discipline policies, having different addicted behavior like alcohol, chat, smoking cigarettes/ shisha, etc., lack of student-centered approach during teaching and learning process, lack of teacher feedback mechanisms on students activities, lack of methodology of teaching (problem on how to teach), lack of enough subject knowledge of teacher, lack of effective continuous assessment, problems related to government policy (giving more rights for students), wrong students' beliefs toward education (believe as educated people are poor), teachers' miss behaviors, problem related to large class size and problems related to school leaders and administrations were mentioned as factors that affect academic performance of the students' in Assosa secondary and preparatory school.

Lack of motivation of students' towards learning

According to Zepke and Leach (2010) explained motivation can be intrinsic motivation which refers doing something because it is inherently enjoyable and interesting, and extrinsic motivation which refers to doing something because it leads to a separate end outcome. He suggested that students are more likely to be intrinsically motivated if they can develop a sense of belonging within their institution. The need for students to develop a sense of competence seems to be particularly important and institutions should give their students the opportunity to increase perception of their competence at the earliest possible opportunity.

Respondents explained that lack of motivation of students' towards learning are highly affected the academic performance of learners. In addition, there are factors that might also affect student intrinsic motivation. For example, students may have started to feel about the future employment opportunities after completion of their education and lack of job opportunity is one factors that resulted in lack of motivation of students' towards their learning. Other respondents said, due to some students' have no motivation towards learning they did not want to attend class, did not participate on class activities/ class work and home works which directly affect their academic performances.

Lack of motivation of students' also related with Lack of punctuality. Most of the key informants said, due to students are less motivated towards their learning most of the time they were not punctual. Some of them have stressed due to lack of job opportunity after they complete their education. Some of them are seems hopeless and had wasting their time on unnecessary activities like disturbing in class, looking film, playing pool, etc. Still other students' were engaged themselves in to addicted behavior like alcohol, chat, smoking cigarettes/ shisha, etc. And, some respondents argued, academic freedom in school provides students with opportunities to over act

and not participate in class activities. The rates of passive students' become increase and increasing from time to time which have negative impact on their academic performances.

Problem related to English language

About 380 million people around the world were using English as a native language and 250 million people using English as a second language. While the number of people who are learning English is an even bigger figure. According to the estimation of English cultural council, the number of people around the world who are learning English reaches 1 billion and about 1.5 to 2 billion people are in contact with English. By 2050, half of the world's population will be proficient in using English (Jiao, 2013).

English language is become dominant or official language in over 60 countries and is represented on every continent. It means English is used in every country, across the globe, more or less. Most of the scientific, technological and academic information in the world is expressed in English and over 80% of all the information stored in electronic retrieval systems is in English. In a practical sense, the knowledge of English is essential. In terms of the appreciation of language and literature, knowledge of English is extremely important in understanding some of the best writings offered (Raja, 2012).

In Ethiopia, English has been taught as a subject for students starting in primary school since 1994, when a new education policy was implemented. In addition, in secondary and preparatory school all subjects are taught in English language except one or two subjects which are given in native language. Also at higher institution all Universities in Ethiopia are using English as the language of instruction. Thus, English can be considered as the language of academia, and therefore, English proficiency is a necessity for success at all level of education. Most of informants have described about problem related to English language at their school. He argued that inconsistent language teaching practices make the effectiveness of English language acquisition in the younger grades often inconsistent. These inconsistencies can make success in the higher levels of school more difficult for students, because they do not have the English language skills necessary to succeed.

Other respondents said, "The influence of English language dominance on non-English speaking countries like Ethiopia may be contrary to the influence on English speaking countries. Its negative impact may be more than positive impact. The benefits brought by English are that people from different countries can communicate with each other freely. However, language is not just a communication tool; it is also the carrier of culture and signs of identity. Also it was one factor that negatively affects the academic performances of students".

Lack of interest of teachers toward teaching

Regarding to lack of interest of teachers toward teaching, respondents explained that teachers' working conditions are not comfortable and there are interferences from outside (politics) on academic freedom. Even a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified but works under unfavorable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his or her work. The low status and morale among teachers is a normal phenomenon. This leads to reduced productivity. Teachers attitude towards their work, the student, their classroom management and their interaction with student become decrease due to it lost attention from communities as well as government. In comparing with other government workers like for example Bank workers, medical doctors, political leaders, etc. nothing is given to teachers as a privileges'. The responsibilities given to teachers and their rewards are unparallel which made teachers feel dissatisfied which have a great impact on the academic achievement of the students. Due to the economic status of teachers are very low in relation to other government workers, sometimes teachers are forced to do other jobs to get extra money which may detract them from the time and energy they spend in the classroom which could have negative impacts on academic performance of students. In addition, lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitude can also affects the performance of the student.

Lack of family control and support for students'

According to the data obtained from respondents' lack of family control and support for students' have implication on academic performance of students'. Directly, the interests of parents' and aspirations of their children's education can determine student performance. A positive attitude of the parent and moral support build a psychological stability in the students and psychological valuables create an impact on the student's performance in academics. For example, students' who are encouraged in their work by their parents seem to be at an advantage both in relatively high scores than those that are not encouraged. In addition, parents' economic and cultural status can affect student's academic performances. In fact, poverty can affects academic performance of students' negatively. A students' who cannot afford basic needs such as food, clean water; clothes, proper housing, and sanitation cannot concentrate on their studies due to these problems.

Lack of good ethics

Most of the respondents agreed on the relationship between indiscipline and under achievements of students' performances. They explained that the issue of students' discipline in their school is very questionable and become problem. The negative behavior cited by respondents were lateness to school, lack of respect to teachers, demonstrated by being rude, not completing assignments, involvement in sexual relationships, not obeying the bells and unexplained absenteeism. Majority of the students showed a negative attitude towards learning. Most

of them do not regularly ask questions during the lessons; do not consult teachers outside classroom and do not usually complete their assignments on time. Hence, it was logically concluded that most students do not find interest in the learning process.

Lack of school facilities

The data collected from respondents show that there are problems related to physical school facilities which include attractive classrooms, desks, chairs, tables, black board, chalk, stationeries', laboratories, libraries which have direct negative impacts on academic performances of students. For example, students' cannot concentrate on their studies when there are lacks of enough classrooms which leads to overcrowding and leads to poor performance.

Lack of methodology and knowledge of subject Matter

Lack of methodology and knowledge of subject matter of teachers are also raised as basic factors that affect academic performances of students'. Respondents explained that quality education requires quality teaching force and highly qualified teachers is most capable of helping their students learn, have deep mastery of both subject matter and pedagogy. But some of teachers in the school have problems related to methodology of how to teach and knowledge of subject matter of what they teach which has negative implication on academic achievements of learners. In addition, academic and professional qualifications of teachers were also crucial factors in influencing academic performance of students. For example, regarding to teacher qualification in Assosa secondary and preparatory school about 78.6 % teachers have first degree while 19.8% teachers have only second degree. The following table shows teacher qualification in Assosa secondary and preparatory school in 2018.

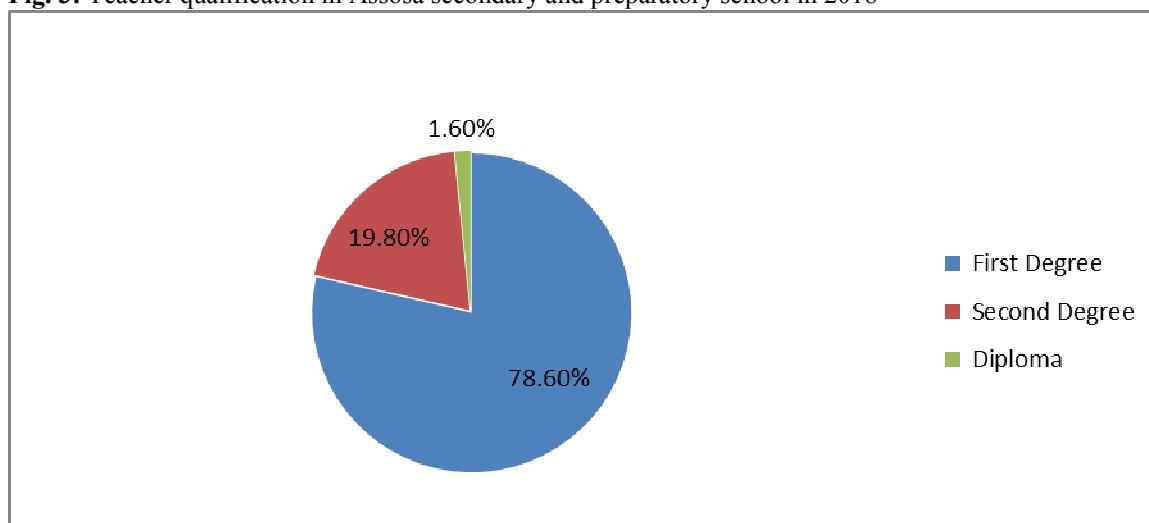
Table 4: Teacher qualification in Assosa secondary and preparatory school in 2018

Qualification	Male	Female	Total
Diploma	2	0	2
First Degree	87	12	99
Second Degree	22	3	25
Total	111	15	126

Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the above data shows the numbers of teachers who are diploma holders are very low which accounted about 1.6%. The following figure shows teacher qualification rate in Assosa secondary and preparatory school in 2018.

Fig. 3: Teacher qualification in Assosa secondary and preparatory school in 2018



Source: School Director Office, 2018

According to the above data the number of diploma holders (who have less teaching qualification and below standards) teachers are about 1.6%. However, according to respondents explained that the issue of teachers' qualification is not such great factors that affect academic performances students. Rather, lack of teachers' motivation toward teaching is highly affecting academic performances students than that of their academic qualification.

Lack of giving enough tutorial class

According to data obtained from respondents, lack of giving enough tutorial class for learners is among other factors that affecting academic performances student at the school. Most of the time due to work over load of teachers and lack of teacher interests due to no payment for extra teaching such as giving additional tutorial for learners, it contributes to low academic performances student in the school. On the other hand, lack of students'

interests to attend tutorial class was also play a great role for their academic achievements. In addition, the culture of depending on others during exam (cheating exam) was also another factor that contributed to low academic performances. Due to some students have hope to do exam from their friends, they do not show interests to attend tutorial class. Thus, lack of effective school policies has also share for over all of low academic performances of the students’.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From this study the academic performances of students’ become negatively affected due to lack of motivation of students’ towards learning, school facilities related factors, teachers’ related factors, family and community related factors and lack of good ethics.

The teacher related factors found to affect academic performance negatively are inspection and supervision of teachers which is infrequent and teachers’ attitude towards the students’ and performance which was found out to be wanting. Parental attitude towards education depicted by lack of concern in their children’s school work, poor attendance to school functions, poor relationships with child’s teachers and failure and failure to motivate them through rewards; parents low level of education and others can negatively affect students’ performances.

Students’ characteristics include their negative attitude towards learning depicted by their failure to ask questions in class, consult teachers outside classroom and complete assignments and their indiscipline which sours their relationship with teachers and parents besides wastage of precious instructional time.

The school should find means/ donors like from University and different NGO to establishes equipped libraries and science laboratories in schools where students can do further reading and gain practical experience in science subjects.

The ministry of education should establish guidance and counseling and reference centers in various localities to advise parents and secondary school students on the importance of academic excellence.

The schools should prepare good ground to get guidance and counseling services from different concerned bodies in order to be empowered and to be provided with trained personnel capable of handling academic problems and to help students make proper life goals and assist them to deal with frustration.

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