

Teachers in Politics: Impact of Political Party Membership on Teachers' Freedom and Stability. The Case of Nigste-Saba High School, Adwa, Tigray, Ethiopia.

Berihu Asgele Siyum¹ Mewcha Amha Gebremedhin^{2*},

¹Department of Social Science, Adwa College of Teacher Education, P.O.Box 91, Ethiopia

²Department of Information and Communication Technology, Adwa College of Teacher Education, P.O.Box 91, Ethiopia

* E-mail of the corresponding author: mewcha96@gmail.com

Abstract

This study attempted to explore the main influences of politics on teacher's academic freedom and on the independence of academic institutions. The general objective of this study was assessing the impact of political party membership among teachers on their freedom in the study area. Nigste Saba is a model high school which is selected purposefully from the total three high schools in Adwa town. The study explored the influence difference made on the teachers who are members of the ruling political party and non-members. Moreover, it explored the influence of the woreda on the school and teachers' academic freedom by using census method (86 teacher respondents). The study finds that majority (62.2 percent) of teachers in the school are not members to any political party since they hate politics. But they are obliged to join the ruling party directly or indirectly. Majority of the teachers (68.9 percent) agreed that members of the ruling party get priority in getting benefits from the school. The school is turned in to a center of politics instead of academics. Moreover, the main influences made on teachers who are not member of the ruling party are: intimidated by the school director, intimidated by the woreda educational office, neglected from trainings, victimized during promotion, transfer and other service related issues, delayed documents in transferring from one to another work place and exposed to lack of transparency. Furthermore, the members of the ruling party have also influences such as expending more time to political issues, de-motivated to teach accurately and loose freedom. All these make teachers to hate their profession in the school. In addition, the study finds that in average one teacher who is member of the ruling party paid up to 3 percent of their monthly salary to the party. In general, there is treatment difference between teachers who are members to the ruling party and those who are not. Moreover, Political interference in the affairs of an educational institution destroys teachers' freedom and education quality. Freeing schools from political intervention to do their academic issues independently can sustain academic freedom and quality of education. Furthermore, the discrimination between members of the ruling party and nonmembers should avoid.

Key words: Politics, political party, membership, academic freedom, EPRDF, teachers, influence.

1. Introduction

There is widespread consensus worldwide that improving the performance of education systems is necessary to advance socioeconomic development, reduce inequality, enhance the economic competitiveness of nations and possibly fortify governmental institutions (Corrales, 1999). Education can be thought of as a dynamic process that is rooted in a socio-cultural context (Guta, 2009). Education is one of the main instruments for fostering human capabilities and overall freedoms so that individuals can lead the kind of lives they have reason to value. If we have a well nurtured and balanced education system, then half the task of the country's development is done.

The socio-economic development of many countries has been strongly linked with education. Education is the foundation for optimal utilization of resources through development of human capital. It is the ultimate liberator, empowering people to make personal and social choices. Moreover, it is a tool to enable human being to make all rounded participation in development process by acquiring knowledge, skill and attitudinal change. Education is also one of the basic human rights. According to Mewcha and Ayele (2015), education is one of the most important investments in building human capital in a country and makes a nation technologically innovative and a good path to economic growth. Hence, any nation committed to economic growth and fair treatment of its citizens has to organize and provide an efficient educational system.

However, all the aforementioned benefits cannot be achieved without liberating the stakeholders of education. The teacher is the most important resource in an education system in any society (Ayalew, 2009). The strength

of any educational system, however, largely depends on the quality and commitment of its teachers. The teacher also plays a major role in the delivery of quality education. The teacher is the heart of the educational process and the main determinant of the quality and effectiveness of its results (Ayalew, 2009). Teachers play a decisive role in the fulfillment of educational goals (Ibid). Furthermore, the author argued that to have all these, every educational system should strive to attract qualified people to the profession and to provide them with the best possible working conditions by liberating from any political intervention because education institution autonomy and academic freedom are essential to the advancement, transmission and application of Knowledge (Ekundayo & Adedokun, 2009).

Greater autonomy in educational matters enabling teachers to become more effectively involved in curriculum development; the acceptance of new day-to-day responsibilities (such as replacing absent colleagues, supervising new teachers, etc.); and the greater demands placed on teachers (in areas such as teamwork, time spent at school, or their involvement in drafting the school development plan or school curriculum, etc.) (EU, 2008). Of course, teachers cannot act autonomously if schools have no autonomy. School autonomy may be said to exist at four main levels. The term full autonomy is used when schools take decisions within the limits of the law or the general regulatory framework for education, without the intervention of outside bodies (even if they have to consult higher authorities). Limited autonomy refers to a situation in which schools take decisions within a set of options predetermined by a higher authority for education, or obtain approval for their decisions from such an authority. Schools are said to be with no autonomy when they do not take decisions in a given area. Finally, a fourth level of autonomy is apparent in the organizational structures of some education systems (EU, 2008).

It is highly desirable for many teachers to think of themselves as autonomous professionals, free from control exerted by colleagues, administrators, the institution or the educational system and able to decide and take action on their own (Ramos, 2006). This is because of that academic freedom is a key issue in democracy. In some countries, it needs to be codified and written into the law, though this alone may not be enough. There are many places where, although this legal guarantee exists, academic freedom is still undermined in practice. Combined with the legal guarantee, it is necessary that academic freedom is exercised in practice, so that citizens can be confident in the skill and impartiality of researchers and academic workers, and of their independence from any kind of political constraint, financial or other pressures. The exercise of academic freedom is closely linked to the very status of teachers (Education International, 2007). Elmore (2010) also strengthen that academic freedom in education has always been and continues to be a critical and irreplaceable component in fostering a participatory democracy and a critically engaged citizenry. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom have similar goals to advance the pursuit of knowledge and the education of students. Moreover, Professional and academic freedom for teachers is also of crucial importance in achieving teaching that is independent of any political, economic, ideological or religious influence, in order to preserve young peoples' right to and democratic exercise of critical creativity (Education International and UNESCO, 2003). However, local administrators and politicians might not be aware of the need to respect the professional freedom of teachers.

Statement of the problem

Incorporating political interests in school decision making can make the business of school difficult to manage (Allen, 2004). As an obvious consequence, the quality of education has gone down. High schools and primary schools teachers in the country are openly required to be members of Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which is the current ruler party. According him, such systematic application of party ideology has seriously undermined academic freedom and quality of education in the country and injected an atmosphere of fear in the education system. He further explained that unless the regime guarantees administrative autonomy to the school institutions and refrains from politicizing education, the quality of education in the country will further deteriorate in the coming years leading to a deeper social and political crisis. In Ethiopia, academic freedom has not guarantee and as in many other countries, governmental power has been used to turn the educational system into an institution that largely serves the interests of state power holders (Human Rights Watch, 2003). There was a lack of transparency in academic staffing decisions, with numerous complaints from individuals in the academic community of bias based on party membership (Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights and Labor, 2011). Moreover, in Ethiopia academic freedom is more precarious. Therefore, all the aforementioned activities are impediments to assure quality of education in the country. Because teachers waste their time in doing unnecessary activities which is more related with political issues rather than academic issues. Hence, the researchers become interested to assess the impact of teachers' membership in political party on quality of education in the study area.

Research questions

This study has tried to answer the following research questions:

- How engaging teachers to political activities endanger quality of education?
- Is there treatment difference among teachers who are members of the ruling party and who are not?
- Does the school free from the intervention of the woreda education office as institution?
- What are the influences on the teachers who are not members in the ruling party?
- What are the challenges teachers faced on their privacy if they are members in the political party?

Objectives

General objective

The general objective of this study is assessing the impact of teachers' membership in political party on quality of education.

Specific objectives

- Identify the influences made on teachers by the woreda leaders or school principal in the study area.
- Examine the effect of political intervention on the quality of education in the study area.
- Assess the treatment difference made on the member and nonmember teachers in the ruling party in the study area.
- Inspect the overall independence and freedom of the school from political control of the woreda office to carry out its responsibility.

Significance of the study

Education is the basement of overall development in any country since it develops human capital. It is impossible to imagine that change has come in one country without expansion of education. But simply expansion education without assuring its quality does not have any effect on the countries' development. It is better to be accompanied by quality. Moreover, effective and quality of education in one country will sustain when the stakeholders became free of from any political intervention. Therefore, a study on impact of teachers' membership in political party on quality of education is one important area to identify challenges faced with teachers in carrying out of their responsibility in the work place. The study could render the following advantages to the study area and other areas with similar problems.

- Introduce better perspectives that politicizing education has adverse impact on quality of education.
- Assist concerned bodies to education in the area to integrate relevant objectives of problem solving based on the findings in the study
- Inspire future research activities over crucial factors focused on the study in relation to politicizing education.

Moreover, the findings/outcomes of this research will inform and assist the various government agencies especially educational offices and enable them to consider politicizing education in the study area.

Scope and limitation of the study

This study specifically focuses on analyzing the impact of teachers' membership on political party on the quality of education in the study area. The specific study area is Nigste-Saba high school which is found in Adwa town, Tigray, Ethiopia. Accordingly any of the analysis and the findings of the study are specific to the study area. Therefore, the findings of this study may not represent or correspond to other high schools of the region. Thus, because of the scope the findings of the study are limited to that school only. Methodologically, the research employed both qualitative and quantitative method to analyze the collected data. The content scope is impact of teachers' membership on political party on the quality of education. Therefore, conclusions and recommendations are limited to the teachers' membership on political party on the quality of education. The study area is selected due to the previous knowledge of the researcher about the political membership of teachers in the school.

2. Methodology

Data Type and Sources

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data. In this research basically, primary data source was employed to gather first-hand information to achieve the objectives of the research. Secondary source was also considered for gathering certain secondary information in order to consolidate the first-hand information. Data obtained from respondents through questionnaire and focus group discussion were the sources of primary data.

Thus, the primary data was gathered through the use of the following methods.

- A. Questionnaire: the total population is 86 teachers. Thus, the researcher takes all these teachers using census study. Generally, 86 questionnaires were distributed for the respondents/ teachers. The structured questionnaire was employed to collect quantitative data from the high school teachers.
- B. Focus group discussion: Focus group discussions were organized with all department heads and unit leaders. The number of participants in the focus group was 8 persons.

Research strategy and design

There are four high schools in Adwa town. These are Nigste-saba number one high school, Nigste-saba number two high school, Tadelech high school and Dr. Tsegay high school with 86, 61, 56 and 52 teachers respectively. From all these four high schools Nigste-saba number one high school is the famous and model high school. Therefore, the researcher believes that taking this model high school purposefully will support to carry out the objectives of the study. The total populations of this study are 86. Since the population is manageable, it is census study. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative method. In the data collection the study used individual unit.

Data collection

Information regarding all aspects of teachers' freedom from politics, independence of the school from political influence and stability of teachers out of politics, treatment difference on teachers among members of the ruling party and nonmembers was mainly gathered from the focus group discussions and questionnaire. Background information for discussions on conceptual issues, conditions of teachers in politics was gathered from secondary sources in order to consolidate the first hand information.

To collect data through questionnaire, the researcher distributed the questionnaire himself to the high school teachers. Since the respondents are manageable and found in a one working place, the researcher did not hire enumerators at all. The researcher had arranged time schedule for focus group discussion and conducted it after data was collected from the teachers through questionnaire.

Data processing and analysis

The information collected from data sources was organized and statistical computations were made to explore the inherent relationships among the different variables. Responses from the teachers are fed into a computer and analyzed using SPSS version 16.0 software. Simple quantitative analysis techniques such as percentage and frequency distributions are employed. Finally, the results are summarized into tables so that the analysis and meaningful interpretation of results are made to draw conclusions and implications.

3. Summary and Discussion

This chapter analyzes and discusses the major findings of the research based on the data collected in the study area. It presents using tables and percentages to show the influence of political party membership among teachers on their freedom in the study area. The total respondents for this study were 83. But the paper analyzed data that were gained from 73 respondents because the 10 questionnaires had not returned in time and they were not considered for analysis.

Table 3.1: Experience and age * membership to political party

Variables	Cases	Membership to political party			
		Yes	No	Total	
Age	≤ 30 years	Fr.	16	20	36
		Prt.	44.4	55.6	100
	31-40 years	Fr.	7	11	18
		Prt.	38.9	61.1	100
	41-50 years	Fr.	3	10	13
		Prt.	23.1	76.9	100
	> 50 years	Fr.	2	5	7
		Prt.	28.6	71.4	100
Experience	≤ 5 years	Fr.	6	7	13
		Prt.	46.2	53.8	100
	6-10 years	Fr.	12	16	28
		Prt.	42.8	57.2	100
	11-15 years	Fr.	1	5	6
		Prt.	16.6	83.4	100
	> 16 years	Fr.	9	18	27
		Prt.	33.3	66.7	100
	Total	Fr.	28	46	74
		Prt.	37.8	62.2	100

NB. Fr. = Frequency Prt. = Percent

According to Table 3.1, more than half of the teachers (62.2 percent) are not members to any political party. The youngsters (≤30) who joined to membership of the political party are 5.5 percent higher than the age of 31-40 years; 21.3 percent higher than the age of 41-50 years and 15.8 percent higher than the elders (>50). This shows us comparatively the youngsters are more likely to involve in the membership of political party. Majority of the youngsters are not jaded to do political activities in the school while majority of the adults and elders are exhausted to exercise political activities and involve in to the membership of any political party. Regarding to the experience, teachers with less experience are more likely to join to the membership of political party than teachers with more experience. But teachers who have more than five year experience decrease their number to join political party membership. From this we can understand that since teachers with less experience are not staying in the job for long period of time, they are not bored to do political activities. Generally, the youngsters and teachers with less experience are joined to political party membership more than other teachers. This shows us they are hopefully expected to come in different position if they would stay in the membership. Because, Table 3.2 shows us there is high correlation between position and membership to political party. However, majority (62.2 percent) of teachers in the school are not members to any political party. The main reason which the teachers do not want to join to political party is that they want to stay free from politics. Furthermore, most of the teachers believe that exercising political activities in academic institutions hinder to deliver their mission. Thus, most of the teachers dislike carrying out political activities in the school.

Table 3.2: Position * membership to political party

Variables	Cases	Membership to political party			
		Yes	No	Total	
Position	Department head	Fr.	6	1	7
		Prt.	85.7	14.3	100
	Unit leader	Fr.	5	4	9
		Prt.	55.5	44.5	100
	No position	Fr.	16	41	57
		Prt.	28.1	71.9	100
	Technical assistant	Fr.	1	-	1
		Prt.	100	-	100
Total	Fr.	28	46	74	
	Prt.	37.8	62.2	100	

Which Political party are you?	EPRDF	ARENA	Other	Total
	Fr.	28	-	28
	Prt.	100	-	100

NB. Fr. = Frequency Prt. = Percent

Table 3.2 shows that majority of department heads and unit leaders (85.7 percent and 55.5 percent respectively) are members to political party. All of them are members of the current ruling party EPRDF. However, majority (71.9 percent) of the teachers without position are not members to any political party. The department heads who joined to membership of the political party are 30.2 percent higher than the unit leaders and 57.6 percent higher than the teachers without position. Moreover, the unit leaders who joined to membership of the political party are 27.4 percent higher than the teachers without position. This indicates that when the hierarchy of position increase, it is obvious that the membership to political party would grow up. As indicated above, majority of teachers out of position are not members to any Ethiopian political party. The reasons which most of them preferred to stay away from political party membership are: disliking politics and feeling of aversion, desire of freedom and desire of watching independent academic school free from any political activities. From the members of the political party all of them (100 percent) are members of the ruling party. Results of the focus group discussion are also support this idea. This indicates that there is no favorable condition that permits teachers to be members of other opponent political parties instead of the ruling party in the school. Thus, the freedom of teachers to join the political party they want and the political right of teachers to choose is denied.

Table 3.3: Interest of membership, problems on nonmembers and benefits on members of EPRDF

Variables	Cases	Fr.	percent
Problem on the non-member teachers	Yes	46	62.2
	No	28	37.8
	Total	74	100
Occurrence of the problem	Always	13	28.3
	Usually	11	23.9
	Sometime	17	36.9
	Rarely	5	10.9
	Total	46	100
Interested on the membership of political party	Yes	27	36.5
	No	47	63.5
	Total	74	100
Did you join by interest to EPRDF?	Yes	22	78.6
	No	6	21.4
	Total	28	100
EPRDF members get priority In upgrading & training	Yes	51	68.9
	No	23	31.1
	Total	74	100
Occurrence of the priority	Always	21	41.2
	Usually	11	21.6
	Sometime	15	29.4
	Rarely	4	7.8
	Total	51	100

Table 3.3 shows that teachers with opposite political views are exposed to different problems in the school. Even though most of the teachers agreed that the influence made on the nonmember teachers is happened sometimes, the teachers who agreed jointly always and usually are more than 50 percent. This threatened to stand academic institutions independently from politics and to assure quality of education. Most of the teachers (63.5 percent) are not interested to be members to any political party since they hate politics and they need freedom while some teachers (36.5 percent) are interested to join political party membership. The main reason which these teachers want to involve in the political party is to bring change by involving in to the political action. But most of the teachers are not agreed with this idea. Few teachers stated that they joined to get some benefits. When we see the members of EPRDF most of them (78.6 percent) have been joined by their own interest in the membership while some of them (21.4 percent) are not based on their interest. From this we can understand that there are teachers who are obligated to be members of the ruling party in the school. Furthermore, majority of the teachers (68.9 percent) agreed that members of the ruling party get priority in getting benefits from the school. Most of the teachers (41.2) agreed that members of the ruling political party get the benefits always. From this we can understand that nonmembers to the ruling political party do not get benefits like training, upgrading their education etc. Thus, they indirectly obligated to join the ruling political party in order to get advantages and benefits provided in the school. Therefore, this is an influence on teachers' academic freedom and the right to choose.

Table 3.4: Financial influence of teachers' membership on politics

Variables	Cases	Fr.	Percent
Do you pay fee to the party?	Yes	23	82.2
	No	5	17.8
	Total	28	100
Does payment this amount of money affects your life?	Yes	20	86.9
	No	3	13.1
	Total	23	100
Salary (Gross)	maximum 3665	minimum 1000	mean 2600
Amount of payment to the party	maximum 109	minimum 15	mean 56

Table 3.5: Influence on evaluating teachers' activity in the school

Variables	Cases	Fr.	Percent
Activities assessed based on membership to the ruling party	Yes	55	74.3
	No	19	25.7
	Total	74	100
Evaluate the occurrence	Always	29	52.7
	Usually	10	18.2
	Sometime	14	25.5
	Rarely	2	3.6
	Total	55	100
Conduct meetings related With political issues	Yes	41	55.4
	No	33	44.6
	Total	74	100
If conducted, how often?	Always	10	24.4
	Usually	10	24.4
	Sometime	20	48.8
	Rarely	1	2.4
	Total	41	100

Table 3.4 indicates that almost all teachers who are members of the ruling political party pay from their salary to the party. In average one member pays 56 ET Birr per month or 672 birr annually. This is big amount for high school teachers. Moreover, most of the teachers advocates that payment this amount of money to the ruling party from their salary has influence on their life and it is a big crisis to their economy.

Moreover, as indicated in Table 3.5, the work of teachers are not assessed based on the activities they carry out in the school. Membership to the ruling party has a lion share to be seen as a good worker in the school. Majority of the teachers agreed that assessing activities based on membership is happened always in the school. This indicates that political activities get due emphasis more than the academic issues. Furthermore, majority of the teachers agreed that they do conduct meetings related with political issues. But this happened some times in the school. Even though it is happened sometimes, most of the teachers advocate that attending such kind of meetings is boring. Many teachers agreed that they feel bad to attend it since they have no interest. Moreover, some teachers stated that they are obligated to attend such kind of meetings.

Table 3.6: School freedom from intervention of the woreda office

Variables	Cases	Fr.	Percent
The school is free from Political intervention	Yes	21	28.4
	No	53	71.6
	Total	74	100
Academic freedom is essential To the quality of education	Yes	63	85.1
	No	11	14.9
	Total	74	100
Does nonmembers to the ruling Party appointed in position?	Yes	29	39.2
	No	45	60.8
	Total	74	100

Table 3.6 shows us most of the teachers indicate that the school is not free from the political intervention. This indicates that the school has problems to carry out its academic responsibility. Teachers mention some problems which indicate that the school is not free from political intervention. These are: department heads and unit leads need to be members of the ruling party, teachers have been nagged to join the ruling party, nonmember teachers are discriminated to get benefits, political activities are exercised in the school, evaluating teachers' activity based on political activities and frightening nonmember teachers which is contradicted with Ramos (2006). Academic freedom is essential to the education quality. Most of the teachers believe that education quality will assured when teachers became free from political activities. They explained that to teach effectively, to have confidence, to use time appropriately on academic issues, to carry out responsibility transparently and to help students, teachers should be free from any political burdens. However, most of the teachers (60.8 percent) in the study area agreed that nonmembers to the ruling political party have not chance to come in the position. This does not mean necessarily there is no anyone in the position if he/she is not member of the ruling political party. As indicated in Table 3.2 there are few teachers in the position who are not members of the ruling political party. But the school preferred to bring in the position from the members. The school director is also appointed by the woreda office and is expected to become the loyal member of EPRDF. Because of that beyond the academic responsibility he has political responsibility to persuade teachers.

Woreda teachers' association is also not active to protect teachers' freedom from political influence (see Table 3.7). Majority of the teachers (55.4 percent) agreed that the woreda teachers' association is very week to protect teachers. This indicates that this association is not powerful to protect teachers and it is incapable to pursue its responsibility. Majority of the teachers agreed that political issues get due attention when they take part with the woreda educational office. This indicates that the woreda educational office works on political issues even if its responsibility is educational issues. Therefore, the woreda education itself is not free to pursue its responsibility and we can understand that the top government officials intimidate their subordinates. Moreover, the relationship between the woreda education office and the high school teachers is week. This shows us there is a gap between both of them. These are the stakeholders of educational sector. To assure education quality and to address educational problems both these stakeholders should work cooperatively. However, this cooperative working is not happened in the high school. Furthermore, most of the teachers agreed that academic decisions in the school lack transparency. In one academic institution every teacher should know decisions made in the school transparently. But in the study area teachers are suffering from lack of transparent decisions in the school. In the absence of transparency teachers cannot motivate to work and they do not love their job. Thus, this affects the quality of education in the study area.

Table 3.7: School relationship with woreda office and strength of the woreda teachers' association.

Variables	Cases	Fr.	Percent
Strength of the Woreda Teacher's Association to protect teachers From political intervention	Very strong	4	5.4
	Strong	7	9.5
	Weak	22	29.7
	Very weak	41	55.4
Issues get due attention when you take part with the woreda educational office	Political issues	40	54.1
	Educational issues	29	39.1
	Both	5	6.8
Your relationship with the woreda educational office	Very strong	2	2.7
	Strong	14	18.9
	Weak	35	47.3
	Very weak	23	31.1
Transparency in academic staffing decisions in your school	Very good	8	10.8
	Good	12	16.2
	Fair	15	20.3
	Poor	24	32.4
	Very poor	15	20.3
	Total	74	100

Table 3.8: Influence made on teachers who are not members of the ruling party.

Variables	Response (%)					Total
	SA	A	UC	D	SD	
Intimidated by the school director	21.6	36.5	16.2	17.6	8.1	100
Intimidated by the woreda educational office	27	24.3	23	16.2	9.5	100
Neglected from trainings	35.1	20.3	23	13.5	8.1	100
Considered as enemy	23	23	20.2	18.9	14.9	100
Forced to transfer to unwanted place	14.9	16.2	23	18.9	27	100
Victimized during promotion, transfer and other service related issues	25.7	28.4	21.6	13.5	10.8	100
Delayed documents in transferring from one to another work place	14.9	35.1	21.6	14.9	13.5	100
Exposed to lack of transparency	27	33.8	14.9	10.8	13.5	100

* SA= Strongly agree A=Agree UN=Uncertain D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree

Table 3.8 shows that teachers who are not members of the ruling party are influenced in different ways in the school. As indicated in the above table majority of the teachers agreed that nonmember teachers to the ruling party are intimidated by the school director. Thus, nonmember teachers are not free in the school since the director pressurizes them. The intimidation on the nonmember teachers is not only come from the school director but also comes from the woreda educational office. Majority of the teachers agreed that nonmember teachers to the ruling party are intimidated by the woreda education office. Therefore, nonmember teachers to the ruling party are burdened both by the school director and woreda educational office. This is dangerous to the academic freedom of teachers in the school. Moreover, majority of the teachers agreed that nonmember teachers to the ruling party are neglected from trainings. This indicates that training and other benefits are given to the members of EPRDF primarily. This creates discrimination among teachers who have the same contribution for the school. Therefore, nonmember teachers cannot work using their maximum effort in the school since they are neglected from benefits. In addition to this, nonmember teachers to the ruling party are considered as enemy in the school. Even though teachers have constitutional right to stay free from politics, nonmember teachers do not feel freedom whenever they considered as enemies of the ruling party (EPRDF).

Another influence burdened on nonmember teachers to the ruling party as opined by the teachers is victimized during promotion, transfer and other service related issues. Majority of the teachers agreed that this is visible problem in the study area. Among the influences made on the nonmember teachers however, pressure on

teachers to transfer to another place is not seen as problem. As rated in Table 3.8 dalliance of documents in transferring from one to another work place is also influence made on the nonmember teachers in the school. Most of the teachers explained that nonmember teachers suffered from document dalliance when they change their work place. This indicates that because of the political view teachers have they do not get the service appropriately from concerned body. Moreover, majority of the teachers opined that nonmember teachers to the ruling party are exposed to lack of transparency in the school. This indicates that decisions made in the school are not disclose to the nonmember teachers and school principals are not openly discuss with the nonmember teachers.

Table 3.9: Pressures made on teachers who are members of the ruling party

Variables	Response (%)					Total
	SA	A	UC	D	SD	
Loose freedom	29.7	20.3	16.2	21.6	12.2	100
Expend more time to political issues	40.5	20.3	16.2	14.9	8.1	100
Demotivated to teach accurately	27	27	20.3	13.5	12.2	100
Feel reluctant to work	23	32.4	23	12.2	9.5	100
The school is turned in to a center of politics instead of academics	40.5	23	12.2	10.8	13.5	100

SA= Strongly agree A=Agree UN=Uncertain D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree

Table 3.9 shows that the pressure or influence of politics is not only on the nonmember teachers of the ruling political party but also on the member teachers because teachers who are member of EPRDF did not escape from the burden of politics. Most of the teachers agreed that members of EPRDF have not freedom in school. There is influence on the member teachers to do political activities in the school. Moreover, most of the teachers agreed that they expend more time to political issues instead of academic issues. This indicates that teachers especially members to EPRDF kill their time in doing things which have not relation with academics. Therefore, most of the teachers opined that such kind of activity discouraged teachers to teach accurately and they feel reluctant to work in the school.

In general, most of the teachers agreed that the school is turned in to a center of politics instead of academics. This indicates that the school is carrying out political responsibility that is not concerned to it. Thus, education quality do not get due emphasis since the school is engaged in to political activities.

Table 3.10: Teachers' feeling towards their profession when political issues are exercised in the school.

Variables	Cases	Fr.	percent
Your feeling towards	I hate my profession	42	56.8
Your profession	I love my profession	15	20.3
	I have no feeling	17	23
	Total	74	100

Table 3.10 shows that majority of the teachers hate their profession when political issues are exercised in the school. Many of them explained that if they did get other opportunity, they would leave their job because of political interventions made on the school. Therefore, most of the teachers in the school are not happy with their job. In absence of teachers' satisfaction and freedom it is impossible to assure quality of education by any means. Ayalew (2009) argued that strength of any educational system largely depends on the quality and commitment of its teachers. The teacher also plays a major role in the delivery of quality education. He further explained that the teacher is the heart of the educational process and the main determinant of the quality and effectiveness of its results.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

Politics and education are two different concepts. Off course, education has a great contribution on politics through generating good politicians and political institutions can help also education through providing materials and designing curriculum. However, intervention of politics on educational institutions and its activities make schools to carry out wrong responsibility and to forget their mission.

There is a significant correlation between political party membership and position in the study area. Department heads and unit leaders are more likely involved in to the political party membership while teachers who have not position are not more likely involved in to the political party. Therefore, teachers are used their political membership as a way to get position. Most of the teachers are not interested to join any political party membership because they dislike politics and they want freedom. Thus, majority of teachers in the study area are not members of political party. From the teachers who joined to political party membership there is no one who joined to opposition parties rather all of them are members of EPRDF. Thus, there is no room for teachers to enjoy their political rights guaranteed by the constitution.

Teachers with opposite political views are exposed to different problems in the school. Moreover, they do not get benefits like trainings and upgrading their education. These benefits are deserved to members of the ruling party and members get priority in getting other benefits from the school. Thus, nonmembers are indirectly obligated to join the ruling political party in order to get advantages and benefits provided in the school. This is an influence on teachers' academic freedom and the right to choose. Thus, quality of education is endangered. Members of the ruling political party pay 672 birr annually to EPRDF. This is a big amount for high school teachers. Therefore, payment this amount of money to EPRDF from their salary has influence on their life and it put down crisis on their economy.

The work of teachers is not assessed based on the activities they carry out in the school. EPRDF members have been seen as good workers in the school. This indicates that political activities get due emphasis more than the academic issues. Even though the main objective of the school is to achieve education quality and exercise academic issues, political activities are exercised frequently. As academic institution the school is not free from the political interventions. Thus, the school has problems to carry out its academic responsibility appropriately.

The school is not free from the woreda political intervention. Political intervention on academic institution deteriorates education quality. This is reflected in the study area because teachers have been nagged by the woreda to join EPRDF, nonmember teachers are discriminated to get benefits, political activities are exercised in the school, evaluating teachers' activity based on political activities and frightening nonmember teachers. As a result, teachers are not teaching effectively, they lose their confidence, they do not use their time appropriately on academic issues and they are not able to help their students. Thus, teachers have not academic freedom and the school is not independence from political burdens. Moreover, the woreda educational office itself is not free to pursue its responsibility because it is doing on political issues even if its responsibility is educational issues.

There is no strong institution which protects teachers' freedom from political influence. Off course, there is woreda teachers' association which is expected to carry out this responsibility but practically it has symbolic power and it is week. Moreover, the relationship between the woreda education office and the high school teachers is week. In addition, teachers are suffered from the transparency of academic decisions.

Teachers who are not member of EPRDF have been influenced in different ways. The main influences made on teachers are: intimidated by the school director, intimidated by the woreda educational office, neglected from trainings, victimized during promotion, transfer and other service related issues, delayed documents in transferring from one to another work place and exposed to lack of transparency. This is dangerous to the academic freedom of teachers in the school. Furthermore, there is also influence on members of EPRDF. They have not time freedom and they are busy in doing political activities. As a result, they become reluctant to teach appropriately.

Generally, all the political activities exercised in the school make teachers to hate their profession. Therefore, most of the teachers in the school are not happy with their job. Thus, quality of education is deteriorated.

Recommendation

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- The main purpose of schools is to achieve quality of education and take out the society from illiteracy. If schools are engaged in to political activities, they will not achieve their mission. Therefore, the regional government and the woreda government shall leave schools free from any political interventions to do their academic activities.
- Even though all teachers are needed to be members of EPRDF, more than anything department heads and unit leaders are more needed to be involved in to the ruling political party membership. Moreover, EPRDF members have great opportunity to come in position. Therefore, the woreda should stop its influence made on the school director and the school director should select department heads and unit leaders freely based on performance and skill of teachers rather than membership to EPRDF.
- Teachers in the school are not interested to join any political party membership because they dislike politics and they want freedom. But, they are nagged to be members of EPRDF day and night. Therefore, the regional government and the woreda government should let teachers to stay free from political party membership. When the burden of politics on teachers decrease, teachers become free to carry out their responsibility and education quality would sustain gradually.
- Providing advantages for some teachers apart from others create bad feeling on those who did not get advantage. Especially, making discrimination among teachers based on membership to EPRDF endangered education quality in particular and existence of the school in general. Bearing this in mind, the school should provide equal opportunity to all teachers to get the benefits. When trainings and other benefits has come, it should be provided for the right person rather than providing for EPRDF members.
- It is obvious that teachers have lower salary. From this income EPRDF let member teachers to pay money for party consolidation. Instead of helping them through providing different incentives the party is harming the teachers via exploiting their money. Therefore, EPRDF should stop collecting money from teachers.
- To assure the independence of schools and academic freedom of teachers the woreda government should stop exercising political activities and conducting political meetings in the school. Moreover, the school should evaluate teachers based on the performance they have and based on the tangible things they do.
- The woreda government should stop to politicize the woreda teachers' association which is expected to protect teachers' freedom. Moreover, the association should get strong to oppose the interventions of the woreda government that are pressurizing high school teachers.
- In general, there are different intimidations made on nonmembers of EPRDF and there is a big burden on members of EPRDF in the school. All the political burdens made in the school are deteriorating education quality. Therefore, regional government and woreda government should exercise their political activities out of school and they should make follow up on how the schools are active in assuring education quality. Moreover, EPRDF itself should exclude teachers from joining to its membership.

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