



Implementation of alternative basic education program in SITI pastoral zone of Somali regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the existing practices and community's perception of ABE program in pastoralist districts of Siti zone, Somali Regional State. Descriptive survey with mixed approach that involved both qualitative and quantitative methods was used as a research design. Participants of the study included ABE students, community representatives, teachers/facilitators and education experts. The findings of the study revealed that ABE programs immensely improved access to basic education to pastoralist children. However, the rapid gains in access to education have been accompanied by questions of quality, retention and relevance. The schools in the zone are characterized with high dropout rate, inappropriate time schedule, poor facilities and poorly qualified teachers. The study forwarded recommendations as to how to increase the quality and efficiency of ABE schools so that the ABE programs in the region can meet the intended objectives.

Keywords: pastoral, relevance, facilitators, ABE schools

1. Introduction

The importance of education has been repeatedly emphasized ever since the ratification of Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR, 1948). The declaration inherently underlines that all human beings regardless of any discrimination have the right to access to basic education. The efforts made so far to include marginalized segment of communities in education at global, national and regional levels are much encouraging, particularly in achieving the Education for All (EFA) targets. Efforts since 2000 to advance education around the world became almost synonymous with ensuring that every child is in school. According to EFA Global monitoring report (UNESCO, 2015) ^[15], despite significant progress, the goal of universal primary education by 2015 has not been met and even the limited aspiration of getting all children into school is unfulfilled. In 2012, nearly 58 million children of primary school age (typically between 6 and 11 years of age) were not enrolled in school (UNESCO, 2015) ^[15].

Ethiopia is trying its best to ensure access to basic education. For example, during the first two Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP I and II) enrolment rates in primary schools had risen from 3 million in 1994/95 to 15.5 million in 2008/09-an increase over 500% (MoE, 2010) ^[11]. However, even if the number of schools, students, teachers and infrastructure are on the increasing trend, there are still a number of children who did not get access to education.

Ethiopia is home to the largest group of pastoralists in Africa, estimated at 12-14 million comprising over 15 percent of Ethiopia's population (Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia (PFE), 2016). The lowlands of the country, which account for almost two-thirds of the national land area are home to more than eight million people who are pastoralists. Notwithstanding the continued efforts being made by the Ethiopian government in building ABE schools as part of its drive towards enhanced education coverage in the pastoralist regions, the achievements realized in terms of

expanding education in those parts remains much to be desired. In this regard, the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) in Ethiopia reported that most government formal schools (in the pastoralist regions) are often empty or abandoned as the education system is not appropriate and pastoralist oriented (CRDA cited in Hill, 2005; MoE, 2011) ^[11]. These and many other related observations reported so far clearly indicated that there remains a gap between the educational development of pastoral communities and the general population of the nation (MoE, 2011) ^[11]. In general, education is not expanding in the pastoralist regions effectively as attested by the schools that have already erected are not being properly utilized.

Most of the statistics and research findings available reveal that pastoralists have been denied access to basic education and record low participation rate in primary education. The Global Education for All (EFA) monitoring report (2015) and other data available in the regions and the country clearly indicate that from the societies who are out of school in Ethiopia, a remarkable share goes to emerging regions. Somali region is an example of an emerging region where pastoralist predominates. In this region, primary school net enrollment ratio (NER) is 84.64 %, which shows almost 15.36 % of children aged 7-14 are out of school (MoE, 2017) ^[11], this is nearly 3.5 million according to 2007 Ethiopian census.

Somali region is the lowest in almost all measures of education quality indicators including access, pupil section ratio, gender parity, pupil teacher ratio, pupil/textbook ratio, sanitation facilities and others. For instance according to the MoE (2017) ^[11] document, nationally pupil section ratios (PSR) is at 55 for grades 1-8. In Somali region PSR is 144. This indicates that children in this region learn in overcrowded classrooms compared to children in other regions. The national pupil teacher ratio, in 2015/16 academic year was 46 for grades 1-8. In this region it is 75. The pupil/textbook ratio is also important assessment of

how much access to learning materials children receive when they go to school. Nationally the pupil/textbook ratio for primary schools is 3.83. This means that, on average, children have access to fewer than 4 textbooks when they go to school. In this regard, Somali region has the lowest pupil/textbook ratio where there is less than one textbook per child (0.59). The region has zero of safe wash facilities, which is the percentage of schools that have a protected water source which is functional and meets demand, and the school has improved toilets and hand-washing.

To redress such poor educational statistics specially on access, a national strategy for alternative basic education (ABE) has been in place since September 2006. The strategy aims to develop a well planned, organized and coordinated alternative basic education system that will provide opportunities for out-of-school children, especially those between the age of 7 and 14, to have access to good quality basic education (ABE Strategy, 2006). The ABE program is an intervention that resulted from a study conducted in 2000 by the Ministry of Education called "Alternative Routes to Basic Education" that recommended a focus on enhancing the ABE program as articulated in the ESDP II (2002/03 – 2004/05). In addition, the government, through its policy framework, had made it clear that ABE is to be mainstreamed as an integral part of the education system in emerging regions.

In order to respond to the educational needs of pastoral and semi-pastoral areas, Somali region has adapted and implementing ABE program. The conducive conditions have boosted enrolment statistics in the region. ABE has contributed about 4 to 5 % of the gross enrolment rate (GER) of primary education in the country while in Somali region ABE centers contributed to more than 41% of the regional gross enrolment (MoE, 2013/14) [11]. In some zones of the region like Siti zone that are dominated by pastoralists, ABE centers cover 58% of schools in the zone (Drought Assessment Report Siti zone, 2017). ABE program is thus, a timely demand that Somali regional education bureau is implementing as an integral education strategy to expand basic education for marginalized pastoral children.

However, no matter how ABE centers increased access to education to pastoralist children, they have huge problems of efficiency. For instance, as indicated in Somali Region Education Bureau (SREB) Annual Abstract (2012/13), the regional dropout rate for first cycle primary school was 27 %. These problems need to be addressed in order for Ethiopia to catch up with Strategic Development Goal (SDG) that focused on quality and equity. Hence, the EFA review report suggested that, improving completion of primary education through the provision of quality education must continue to be prioritized in Ethiopia's post-2015 development agenda (EFA National Review Report, 2014).

Given such problems in efficiency, therefore, it was essential and timely to study some of the problems related to the implementation practices of ABE program at the ground in line with the guiding principles and strategies to make basic education delivery responsive to pastoralist needs. As far as the present researchers are concerned, there are only few studies conducted so far on the aspects of pastoralist education in Ethiopia, while studies on relevant cases of the pastoral Somali region, particularly, remained very scanty. Among others, Abdilahi (2014) conducted comparative

study on implementation of primary education in Somali and Southern Nations and Nationalities People Regional State (SNNPR), which revealed poor performance of Somali region in implementing primary education as compared to the SNNP Region. Napier (2012) studied ABE system in Somali Region in relation to resource allocation which he concluded that lack of sufficient government resources contributed to the low quality, low status education system in the region. The present study, however, focused on beneficiaries/ pastoral communities/ perception of the relevance of ABE centers. More specifically, the study aimed to assess how pastoralist communities are valuing the relevance of ABE programs in fulfilling their educational needs. Moreover, this study tried to suggest some workable strategies and mechanisms to address the gaps.

The general purpose of the study was to assess how pastoral communities that include teachers, students, and parents value the provision of ABE in their neighborhood. Accordingly, the following basic research questions were formulated to be answered in the course of the study.

1. How is ABE being implemented in Siti zone of Somali region?
2. How do teachers, students, and the whole community value the existing implementation of ABE program in the Zone?
3. What strategies should be designed to address constraints in implementing ABE program in Somali region?

2. Research Design and Methodology

In this study, mixed approach that involved both qualitative and quantitative methods was used. As Creswell (2003) described mixed methods approach as the name suggests is used where quantitative and qualitative methodologies are combined in carrying out a study.

Somali regional state has nine zones. Among these zones Siti zone was purposively selected for two reasons. First, the zone is dominated by pastoralists. Second, the zone had taken longer time in providing ABE programs compared to other zones in the region. This zone has seven woredas /districts, among which three woredas (Afdem, Shinile and Meiso) were sampled purposefully for the reason that these districts are dominated by pastoralists. From these districts, 30 % of the ABE cluster centers (5 from Afdem district, 4 from Shinle district and 2 from Meiso district) were randomly selected as participant. Since the schools at each cluster centers are homogeneous, five schools (3 from Afdem cluster, 2 from Shinle cluster and 1 from Meiso cluster) were selected using simple random sampling technique. Then all ABE facilitators/teachers in the respective schools were taken as participants. Similarly, eight students from each school were selected as participant for focus group discussion. The facilitators helped the researchers in selecting students (grade 3 and 4) who they think were more mature and could express their ideas freely. Furthermore, five parent teacher association (PTA) members from each school were selected as FGD participants. These people were assumed to represent the pastoral community. To have the views of the education experts in the region, three cluster supervisors and three education officials one from each district were purposively selected as research participant. The total participants of this research included 42 ABE facilitators, 48 ABE students, 30 PTA members and six education experts.

Instruments of Data Collection

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were employed so as to secure appropriate and sufficient data from respondents.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed for 42 ABE facilitators /teachers comprising both closed and open-ended items. The questionnaires were developed by the researchers following procedures that started from collecting large number of statements relevant to issues to study. The aim of the questioners was to explore facilitators' views about ABE implementation, students attendance and major challenges they faced in the process. In fact, since these facilitators are selected from the local community, they can be taken as part of the local community unlike teachers in urban formal school structure. The questionnaire is originally prepared in English and later after piloted it was translated to Somali language by language experts and educators for the purpose of clarity and to make them easily understood by the respondents. Before collecting the actual data, pilot test was conducted on one of non-sampled pastoralist woredas. The purpose of conducting pilot test was to check out items that were difficult, vague and ambiguous and it is one of the best ways of improving the instrument for data collection procedures.

Interview Guide

Semi structured interview was used to generate data from six education bureau experts. In this study, the focus of the interview was to understand how these experts monitor, supervise and perceive the existing ABE programs and solicit their views regarding best practices and suggestion for future implementation.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus group discussion (FGD) was employed at six sampled ABE schools to generate data from local communities and ABE students. Six FGDs were held independently for students and local communities/PTAs. The aim of the focus group discussions with ABE students and PTAs were to strengthen the opinions obtained from informants by other data collecting instruments. The suitability of the FGD for students and community members was based on the basic assumption of involving people who have shared experiences; benefits and perception towards the ABE program. This particular data collection method was used because it followed pastoralists' social rules of dialogue and interaction, and respected their integrity and confidence. It was also in line with their traditional mode of information gathering. Relevant documents (reports, records, minutes, etc) were also reviewed to support the data obtained by questionnaire and FGDs.

Different data analysis techniques were employed based on the specific nature of the data. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentage and mean. The qualitative data collected from students, PTA representatives and education officials through focus group discussion and interview were analyzed using thematic analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The result was obtained from 42 ABE facilitators/ teachers, with mean age of 30 years (SD = 6.5) and six years of

teaching experiences (SD = 1.8). The majority of them (93%) were males with educational qualification of grade 10 or less. Most of ABE students (72%) were males with age ranging from 11 – 14 years. Similarly, 70% of PTAs were males 66% being illiterate. In this section of the paper, both the quantitative and qualitative data are discussed concurrently.

ABE Implementation Status in Siti Zone

The first research question addressed the status of ABE program in the zone with particular emphasis to access, participation/enrollment, dropout rate, provision of facilities, and quality of ABE facilitators/teachers. The results show that among the existing 3100 schools in the zone, 180 (58%) are ABE schools. In some districts of the zone, ABE schools cover more than 75% of the total schools. This indicates how ABE schools are playing a significant role in creating access to basic education to pastoralist communities. In fact the rate of expansion of ABE schools is faster than that of formal schools (FS) in the region. The information obtained from the regional education bureau demonstrate this fact. See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Trends in Expansion of Primary Education in Somali region

No of schools	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	20010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
ABE	782	1268	1950	2495	2361	2212	2002
FS	229	435	682	810	944	1110	1199

Source: SREB Annual Abstract 2013/14.

Table 1 above indicates that in the years between 2006/7 to 2013/14 ABE schools have grown almost by double as compared to formal schools. This implies that ABE schools have contributed a lot to ensuring access to basic education in the region as a whole.

In line with the expansion of ABE schools, students' enrollment is increasing from time to time. National data indicates that enrollment rate increased in the region since the launching of ABE programs. National data (MoE, 2010) [11] indicate that largely pastoralist developing regions of Somali and Afar have shown the highest average annual growth rates of primary school enrolment of 16.7% and 17.5% respectively since 2004/05. This figure is higher compared to a national average of 12.6% (MoE, 2010) [11]. However, the enrollment rate is not as expected. For example, in 2015/16 academic year, Siti zone was expected to enroll 98,069 students. Nevertheless, it achieved only 48% of the target planned to reach. The reason for this underachievement was that ABE schools were closed due to drought in that academic year. The schools were not functional the following academic year too due to community's mobility pattern. Similarly, significant number of children remain out-of-school either due to dropout or closed ABEs. Consequently, gross enrollment rate of this zone is far below the expected target figures.

The rapid gains in access to education have also been accompanied by questions around quality and retention, particularly of girls. The dropout rate at study districts for the year 2015/16 indicates 17%, 11% and 16% for Afdeem, Meso, and Shinile districts respectively. However, the districts education office officials had acknowledged the dropouts only 6 to 8%. There is inconsistency when crosschecked with other data available and officially shared.

Therefore, it is assumed that to some extent this may reflect the reality at the ground, though the researchers still doubt its accuracy being this data was not official. To have a better picture of dropout in the region, ABE facilitators were asked about their opinion as to how they rate the dropout trend. Accordingly, 54.8% of them responded that the drop out trend is high.

Facilitators/teachers are an integral part of ABE program. They are essential for the successful realization of the objectives of the program. Facilitators are para professionals, selected from within, the respective community. The required level of qualification to be considered for ABE program varies. In the sampled districts, 62% of the facilitators are grade 10 or below. Only 26.2% of them have certificate. As a part of General Education Quality Improvement program (GEQIP), to ensure the provision of quality primary education, the region is working hard to upgrade primary school teachers from certificate to diploma level. However, as the academic background of ABE facilitators does not allow them to upgrade either to certificate or diploma level, their completion of general education (grade 10) was found to be sufficient. However, it is imperative to up-grade the educational level of ABE- facilitators in order them to be in line with Ethiopian education standard.

Other than their low educational qualifications, ABE facilitators in the zone do not have special trainings about teaching methodologies that help them teach the children of pastoral nomads. The task of facilitators at ABE schools is multi-faceted. It is not restricted to teaching and learning activities. ABE facilitator are expected to examine and analyse their social, economic and political factors so as to make instructional programme of schools more relevant to the needs of the community. They should also be able to learn, and even to create, new and improved methods of teaching which would enable them to help the students bring about desired behavioural changes as designed in the ABE curriculum. Facilitators at ABE schools are also expected to be role models, development workers, mobilizers and change agents in their community. To accomplish these roles, facilitators need to take special training that empowers them to accomplish the roles. Furthermore, low salaries and lack of incentives immensely deprived the dedication of facilitators.

School facilities are other important issues that add quality and relevance to ABE program. In this study, availability of textbooks, teachers' guide, basic educational materials and availability of relevant learning environment were investigated. In this regard, most of the surveyed schools were delivering education under tree shed, shelter, or in a room made of local materials called "Girgid". The ABE facilitators also mentioned that there is huge shortage of text books, teachers guide and other facilities. The national data of the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2017) ^[11] revealed that in Ethiopian Somali region text-book students ratio is less than one.

To summarize, ABE schools in Ethiopian Somali region are increasing from time to time. Students enrollment in the region boomed since the start of ABE program. However, the schools are characterized with high dropout rate, poor facilities and poorly qualified teachers. These factors may impact the ABE provisions negatively unless immediate interventions are taken.

Valuing the relevance of ABE Programs in meeting communities need

Any education program need to be relevant and should meet the educational needs of the local community. In this regard, the present study asked how much ABE schools are fulfilling the needs of the local community as perceived by the community themselves. The focus of the FGDs with PTA and ABE students was how the schools improved access to education, reduced home school distance and fulfilled their educational needs in general. Accordingly, about 64% of the facilitators responded that ABE schools ensured access to basic education and resolved home school distance. Relatively small percentage of respondents (42.9%) responded that ABE schools fulfilled learning needs of parents and their children.

The successive focused group discussion conducted with PTAs and students were consistent with the quantitative ratings of teachers and educational statistics of the region. That is ABE schools ensured access to basic education for both boys and girls. Both parents and students showed their appreciation in getting school around their village. They confirmed that distance is not major problem as they travel a minimum of 30 minute and maximum of an hour to reach to the nearby school. Children also expressed that playing with friends and learning is the most enjoying part of the school program. Some FGD participants stated that ABE schools helped them in getting food and getting learning opportunity in their village that has never been before. DFID (2011) ^[4] also showed that ABECs are successful in extending access to education for hard to reach groups. The access to education increased not only enrollment but also reduced distance from school, one of the main reasons parents mention not to send their children, especially girls to schools.

No matter how ABE schools benefited the community in improving access, enrollment and reducing home-school distance, the participants questioned its relevance in meeting their needs. They frequently raised their concern in regards to the relevance of the curriculum and its implementation strategies.

Relevance of curriculum

There are mixed ideas and understandings among participants regarding the relevance of the ABE curriculum. The findings showed that most of the teachers 16 (38.1%) acknowledged the relevance of the curriculum to the local context. To the contrary, interview with some supervisors revealed that the curriculum is not relevant to the livelihood of Somali pastoralist community. They think that it was adapted from curriculum designed for urban settings. On other hand, one education bureau official explained that there is no separate curriculum designed for ABE schools. Rather it is directly taken from the existing formal school curriculum. The regional bureau officials insist on the appropriateness of adopting the formal school curriculum to ABE schools on two grounds. First, they believe that the formal curriculum is pastoralist oriented since it targeted 85% of Somali pastoral population. Second, ABE learners could easily transit from the ABE to the formal schools after learning the same curriculum. PTA members and students were less inclined to express their opinion about the relevance of the curriculum. They preferred to talk about issues of the ABE program delivery.

ABE implementation Strategies

This part is aimed to assess how much implementers and end users/community are perceiving ABE implementation strategy. Accordingly, the researchers identified eight items related to ABE policy and existing implementation practices.

ABE program strategy advise ABE schools to have flexible school calendar. In this regard, the majority (73%) of facilitators responded that the ABE school calendar in their area is inflexible. It does not suit the life style and needs of people in that area. Subsequent FGD with PTAs and interviews sessions with education officials confirmed that ABE schools calendar does not change with seasonal change and mobility of the local community. Rather, ABE schools are managed to fully comply with formal school calendar. One education expert from Afdem district stated that 1. one ABE schools, formal schools in the district need to follow flexible calendar. He stated, "many children leave school by 10.30 am, even though they are expected to stay until 12:00am. The reason is that the time around 10:00 am is "Berqa", time of releasing cattle. Parents come and take their children out of school during Berqa. The community always need their children to look after the livestock and fetch water. That is why parents frequently complain about this fixed time schedule.

Most people understand flexibility in terms of school timetable only. However, flexibility goes beyond that. For instance, PTA representatives raised the issue of high mobility periods or seasons. Accordingly, the time line exercise revealed that during rainy seasons, which extends from mid-June through September, communities usually settle to their original location. This period marks the wet season whereby pastoralists are settled to original location rather than moving. The months of October and November are only favorable if enough rain received during previous months particularly in August and September. Water and animal feed could be stored that help pastoralists to use in October and November for some times. February and March months are said to be very dry season for which Site zone pastoralists are most often move in search of water and pastors every year. From the above timeline, it is easy to understand the periods pastoralist communities are available to receive education or other social service at their location. The participants demand the ABE time calendar to be flexible in line with the seasonal change. High dropout rate and absenteeism of students from ABE schools could be attributed to lack of flexibility. Similar studies in pastoralist education revealed that inflexibility of school calendar causes high dropout and low enrolment of pastoralist children (Jackson, 2011; UNICEF, 2009) ^[14, 22]. From the findings above, it is easy to conclude that flexible calendar that responds to either the school time table or the seasonal change is not implemented. Although this problem is understandable, alternative approaches are not practiced. Rather ABE schools are forced to follow formal school calendar which is contrary to ABE program rationale.

The other complain of the community members is shortage of qualified and motivated teachers. One community participant said, " buildings and sophisticated facilities are not our problem. What matters is having qualified and committed teacher from our community". Regarding qualifying teachers, one supervisor stated that ABE facilitators have undergone short term (15 days to one month) pre-service training. Since they do not get any

refreshment training, they have weak capacity in the use of teaching aids, preparing teaching sessions, or lesson planning. The supervisor added that lack of incentives (salary increment, transport, skill upgrading, housing) are deterrent for ABE teachers motivation and performance. Poor selection process of facilitators also played a role in diminishing quality. In some instances false certificates of teachers; absence of entrance examination; favoritism based on clan affiliation - rather that merit are all features of selecting ABE school facilitators. All such factors, undoubtedly negatively influence the quality of ABE program. The local communities perception to ABE program is also another factor that deter them from sending their children to ABE schools. FGD participants viewed ABE programs as an inferior rather than equivalent to formal school structure. They claimed that ABE programs is of low standard as compared to formal school programs. The FGD participants also viewed that ABE program undertaking currently in the area is considered as second option and a bridge to cover the gap rather than as an integral strategy to reach marginalized children. The reason they provide for such perception is that ABE schools are not functional throughout the academic calendar since learning is most often times disrupted by seasonal mobility. Teachers' poor qualification and less responsiveness to the needs of pastoralists were the other justifications given by participants to consider the ABE program as inferior.

Nevertheless, education bureau experts do not agree that ABE schools are inferior to formal school systems. For instance, interview with Meso district education office expert stated that ABE schools are equivalent to formal schools. He argued that ABE strategy does not have any problem by itself. The problem is failure to implement the strategy. The capacity to respond to the learning needs of this target population is one of the key assignment of the ABE implementation.

Strategies needed to address constraints of ABE program

In Somali region ABE program is considered as effective strategy to increase access to basic education for hard to reach children. The greatest limitations of the program is lack of responsiveness to the needs of the local community. Enrollment in the districts are not as expected. Absenteeism and dropout rates are also high. The community reflected that ABE schools in their localities are characterized by inflexible schedule, poor infrastructure, and poorly qualified and motivated teachers. These factors made the local communities to consider the ABE program as inferior to the formal school structure. To redress these problems, participants were asked to suggest strategies to be designed in order to make ABE program effective, efficient and relevant to the needs of the community.

Accordingly, participants repeatedly raised the issue of flexibility of the program. They said that the program should be adaptable to their living conditions. In terms of fixing school timetable, community members suggested teaching at night time so that they can use their sons and daughters for domestic activities during the day time. To solve mobility related problems during the dry seasons, the community members suggested employing mobile facilitators that move with them during the dry season. The researchers interviewed one of the regional education bureau expert for the feasibility of this suggestions. The

expert expressed his concern of implementing the suggestions on two grounds: poor electric power supply at night and lack of committed facilitators, low salary and poor incentives provided to facilitators. The expert has also raised other concerns of the implementation of ABE including conflict between clans (eg. that occurred some times in Meso woredas bordering area with Oromia and Issa clan), prolonged drought and water shortage and above all parents unwillingness to send all school age children to the nearby ABE centres.

4. Conclusions

In Somali region ABE program has enabled pastoral children to have access to basic primary education. The proximity of the ABE schools to the learners' homes enabled parents to send their children to school. However, the schools could not increase enrollment rate as expected and planned by the region. For example, in 2015/16 academic year out of the expected of 98,069 students to be enrolled in Siti zone, only 42% of the plan (50,656) students enrolled in the program. Although conflicting figures of dropout rate is reported, it can generally be said as high. Poor infrastructure, insufficient and low quality teachers, and rigid academic calendar conspired to make the ABE program inefficient and ineffective. Their greatest limitations though was that the school schedule not being responsive enough to the demands of parents and students alike. In this study, flexible school calendar that was one of the rationals of ABE innovation was found to be nonexistence throughout. Moreover, local communities participants perceived ABE programs as inferior, less equivalent and of low standard as compared to formal school programs.

5. Recommendation

Based on the major findings obtained, discussions made, and conclusions arrived at as indicated above, the following points are recommended for promoting the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of ABE program in the region.

1. The study shows that flexible calendar that is the inherent part of ABE program is nonexistence. Therefore, the study recommends that Regional education bureau and other partner organizations like NGOs should seek ways to adapt the flexible school calendar that respond to seasonal changes, mobility pattern, and life style of pastoral communities.
2. The study revealed that no special organ is responsible to attend ABE implementations in the region. This has negatively affected its success and viability. Therefore, it is recommended that special department that monitor ABE schools should be established at regional and Woredas level. This department is expected to listen to and respond for pastoral communities educational needs. The department is also expected to conduct need assessment and identification, and conduct regular consultation with local people to fix the school timetable and calendar according to the needs identified.
3. More than all other inputs, the qualification and commitment of facilitators/teachers is indispensable to effective learning to happen. Therefore, it is recommended that mechanisms should be in place that enable facilitators to improve their qualification through different mechanisms including distance learning and in service training. Moreover, Quranic school teachers

(Maclin) usually travel with the community when communities move to another location. If these teachers are trained on modern education, they could contribute a lot by reducing shortage and capacity problems of ABE teachers.

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