CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The literature part of this study critically examines the research relating to instructional leadership and discusses the issue of school improvement. It elaborates theories and concept of leadership and tries to examine the role played by school principals as instructional leaders. The review also charts the history and evolution of instructional leadership model for school principals. Since being introduced in the early 1980s, principal instructional leadership has continually evolved (Hallinger, 2005). This review examines instructional leadership literature from each decade beginning in the 1980s, followed by the 1990s and concluding with the 2000s.

The second section of the review will detail school improvement. In this second part, the concept of school improvement and the association of the instructional leadership role of principals with school improvement will be dealt with. Following this, training program for principals and the efforts being made for school improvement in Ethiopian Secondary Schools are addressed by the literature review.

2.1. Leadership Issues

2.1.1. Definitions and Concept of Leadership

Before embarking on to the discussion of instructional leadership, it is better to give simple definitions of leadership first. In all of the groups in which we become a member, like sports teams, social club, study group, work unit - there could be a person who is more influential than the others are. The most influential person in these groups is usually called a leader. Leaders are extremely important in a variety of organizational settings. Any organization (both formal and informal) needs leaders to accomplish their
objectives. Indeed, organizations would be less efficient without leaders, and in extreme cases, they would be unable to accomplish goals. Hence, it could be said that an organization without a leader is like a blind-man without a walking stick.

The definition of leadership in literature has been very diverse. To mention few:

- Leadership is the art of influencing others to act in order to accomplish specific objectives.
- Leadership is an attempt at influencing the activities of followers through the communication process and toward the attainment of same goal or goals.
- Leadership is the process of inspiring and empowering others voluntarily to commit themselves to achieving the leader’s vision.

The leadership definition continues to evolve and expand, especially in education. Van de Grift and Houtveen (1999) demarcate educational leadership as the ability of a principal to initiate school improvement, to create a learning oriented educational climate, and to stimulate and supervise teachers to enable them exercise their tasks as effectively as possible. Instructional leadership exemplifies this definition in practice. It consists of principals’ behaviors that set high expectations and clear goals for student and teacher performance. Further, it also includes principals’ actions to monitor and provide feedback regarding teaching and learning, and promote professional growth for all staff members (Edmonds, 1979b; Bossert, Dwyer, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Murphy, 1990;; Blasé & Blasé, 1999a).

In general, leadership involves the exercise of influence on the part of the leadership over the behavior of one or more other people. In other words, leadership essentially involves one person (the leader) consciously trying to get other people (the followers) to
do something that he/she wants them to do.

2.1.2. The Concept, Roles, and History of Instructional Leadership

A. The Concept of Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership is defined as those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning (Flath, 1989). It is the weight given by the school principals to instructional activities. In other words, instructional leadership is the action taken by a school principal in making instructional quality the top priority of the school and attempts to bring that vision to realization. When a principal directs his attention more to the instructional part of his task compared to those managerial or administrative activities, it can be said that he/she is an instructional leader.

Leithwood et al. (in Southworth 2002) also defines instructional leadership as the critical focus/attention by leaders on the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students. It can also be described as the integration of the tasks of direct assistance to teachers, group development, staff development, curriculum development, and action research. It generally encompasses emphasis given to instruction by individuals occupying managerial positions in school. In order to strengthen their instructional leadership practice, school principals should have the required knowledge and skill.

McGuire (2001) states the essential knowledge and skills for effective school principals:

- Leaders know and understand what it means and what it takes to be a leader.
- Leaders communicate clearly and effectively.
- Leaders collaborate and cooperate with others.
- Leaders persevere and take the long view.
• Leaders support, develop and nurture staff.
• Leaders hold themselves and others responsible and accountable.
• Leaders never stop learning and honing their skills.
• Leaders have the courage to take informed risks.

B. The Role of an Instructional Leader

Glanz (2006) argues that the effective instructional leader needs to be able to do three things:

1. Effective principals support teachers, by providing resources to improve instruction. They make an effort to hire experienced teachers who promote student achievement.

2. Effective principals place an emphasis on academics. They set high expectations and standards for student learning.

3. Effective principals improve instructional practices by conducting instructional conferences with teachers, providing staff development, and developing teacher reflection.

When instructional leaders apply theory into practice, they can use these guidelines to be successful instructional leaders.

Bennis’ (2003) leadership theory encompasses aspects of instructional leadership. Bennis argues that leaders create and communicate a vision as one of his four critical characteristics of effective leadership. People are often drawn to leaders because of their ability to be a visionary. Leaders of the future will also engage in creative collaboration. Collaborative teams will rally around the vision and be guided toward the collective goals of the organization. Other characteristics include leaders must have a clear and
distinctive voice, leaders must operate as people of character and values, and leaders must have the ability to adapt to change.

Hallinger (2005) reflects upon the research conducted during the 1980s and 1990s by assessing the instructional leadership role of the school principal. He concludes that instructional leaders:

1. Focused on creating a shared vision. This aligns with much of the general leadership research.

2. Developed a climate of high expectations

3. Guided the continuous improvements of the school

4. Monitored the curriculum and student learning outcomes

5. Created and communicated the school's vision

6. Orchestrated staff development

7. Became a visible presence in the school by modeling the shared values of the school's culture

In conclusion, Hallinger (2005) agrees with Bennis (2003) that leaders cannot lead by themselves. A successful instructional leader needs substantial participation of other educators in a collaborative effort to lead the school toward the shared vision. This conclusion also supported much of Richard DuFour’s (1998) work on learning communities and more recent work on principal evaluation by Nancy Catano and James Stronge (2007).
Many of the earlier researchers sought that the principal become an expert in the curriculum taught at their school. This view transitioned toward the principal leading collaborative teams of expert teachers to improve student learning.

**C. The History of Instructional Leadership (School Principal)**

The position of principal has become a popular topic of research. Owens & Shakeshaft, (1992) explain that superintendent was the focus of most literature on educational administration during the 1960s. In recent years, educational policymakers, funders, and researchers have become increasingly interested in building-level school leadership (kafka, 2009). The first important studies on school leadership were conducted by Bridges (1982) and Bossert (1982). These researchers claim that school administrator research conducted prior to 1982 had little effect upon the field of education (Bossert, 1982; Bridges, 1982;; Halinger, 2005).

Austin (1979) disagrees with this position. He synthesized the research from this period through the 1970s searching for exemplary schools and the reasons for their effectiveness. His findings indicate that there were significant advances in discovering trends underlying effective leadership, although these may not have had an immediate impact upon schools and learning.

Even though some researchers and reform advocates seek to extend the notion of leadership to encompass activities undertaken by teachers, community groups, and site-based teams, school leadership usually refers to the work of the principal (Kafka, 2009). Thus as interest in educational leadership has grown, so has interest in the principalship—a position that is reportedly more difficult, time-consuming, and pivotal today than ever before (Mazzeo, 2003). Current studies and reports on the principalship
often contrast the work of school principals today to that of school principals in the past
and claim that the school principalship in the 21st century is, or needs to be, radically
different from what it once was.

In regards to principal instructional leadership, Austin (1979) frames his findings
around the power of the leader. In the studies that Austin examined, he discovered that
effective principals are a result of what is called expert power. Teachers, students, and
the community view the principal as an expert instructional leader. The second
characteristic is principals all have unusually high expectations for students and
teachers. The third finding is the administration, the community, and the students all
agree on what they want to accomplish. The final finding is school climate must be
open to the idea of collaboration. In conclusion, Austin 1979) writes, “When the
teachers and other school personnel feel successful about education in their school,
children also believe they can achieve and they do” (p.14).

1. The 1980s.

Research about instructional leadership surfaced in the 1980s. Bossert (1982) and
Bridges (1982) explain the need to shift educational research. As a result, the new field
of instructional leadership emerged. Bridges reviewed studies in education

Instead of focusing on past research like Bridges, Bossert (1982) looks ahead to the new
field of instructional leadership as a solution. He explores the need to shift research
away from descriptions of a principal being an educational manager toward how the
results of their actions and behavior effect and impact student learning
Both of these studies opened the door for further research on how a principal’s actions affect the school and student learning. In 1983, Phillip Hallinger developed the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale which he revised in 1987. Since its development, researches have used the tool over 80 times. (Hallinger & Ronald, 2005). Hallinger divides instructional leadership into three main dimensions: define the mission, manage curriculum and instruction, and promote school culture. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale assesses the principal behaviors for each of the constructs. There is further elaboration by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) upon the three dimensions. Each dimension expands into constructs.

i. *Manage the curriculum*: Leaders use a combination of expertise and charisma. These principals are very involved in curriculum and instruction by setting high standards. They often work directly with teachers to improve teaching and learning. In the constructs of this dimension, the leader frames the goals of and communicates the goals.

ii. *Define the mission*: Instructional leaders define the mission by setting goals focused on the improvement of student learning. Principals often communicate the vision, goals, and the mission of the school. In the constructs in this dimension, the leader supervises and evaluates instruction, coordinates the curriculum, monitors student progress, and protects instructional time.

iii. *Promote school culture*: Instructional leaders build culture. They create an arena that develops high expectations and standards for students, as well as for teachers. In the constructs in this dimension, the leader maintains high visibility, provides
incentives for teachers, promotes professional development, and it provides incentives for learning.

Blase´ and Blase´ (in Geoff 2002) start from the idea that instructional leadership has long been viewed by practitioners as a blend of supervision, staff development and curriculum development. They draw on Sheppard’s (1996) synthesis of the research on instructional leadership behaviors, ‘especially those linked to student achievement outcomes’ which take a broad perspective where in both leaders’ and followers’ beliefs are regarded as important. Sheppard itemizes the following principal behaviors as being connected to teachers’ professional growth and performance:

- framing school goals
- communicating school goals
- supervising and evaluating instruction
- coordinating the curriculum
- monitoring student progress
- protecting instructional time
- maintaining high visibility
- providing incentives for teachers
- promoting professional development
- providing incentives for learning

Ginsburg (1988) concluded that instructional leadership needed to be better researched in order for principals to enhance teaching and learning. Ginsburg also argues that the shortcomings of the research on school effectiveness and instructional leadership, the problems with defining the concept, and the constraints of the principal’s job as it is
typically practiced, all combine to minimize the potential impact of efforts to implement instructional leadership.

Smith and Andrews (1989) assert that principals make a difference as instructional leaders. They conclude that four trends emerged from research during the 1980s. The four trends focus on the interactions between the school principal and teachers. These are:

1. The principal as resource provider
2. The principal as instructional resource
3. The principal as communicator
4. The principal as visible presence

These roles of the instructional leader provide a crucial link between the activity of the principal and the success of the school.

As the resource provider, the principal leads the school by providing the necessary resources to achieve the desired vision and goals. The principal also recognizes that staff members are an important resource of the school and values their contributions. A strong leader uses the resources at hand by delegating some of their power to key people in the organization.

As the instructional resource, the principal facilitates good teaching by staying abreast of the latest instructional strategies and techniques (Smith & Andrews, 1989). Later research argues this point by stating that with the latest academic advancements, teachers are expected to be the experts, while the principal facilitates collaboration and the sharing of best practice. Smith and Andrews go on suggesting that principals also
set high expectations for faculty and staff, and that everyone is a life-long learner.

Principals are ultimately responsible for the improvement of teaching and learning.

As communicator, the principal shares their vision and leads the school in that direction. The principal understands and uses conflict, uses active listening skills, and works with all stakeholders to achieve their vision. Leaders also understand how to manipulate school culture in order to work toward a positive environment. As a culture builder, the principal models teamwork and collaboration (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

As a visible presence, the principal can often be seen out of the office and in the building talking with teachers and students. They become a role model for those around them. By encouraging teachers and making themselves accessible, they promote a positive school culture and climate. Teachers who see the principal in their classroom on a regular basis strike up conversations about student learning and best practice (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

These four trends build upon Hallinger’s three dimensions. The biggest addition is the trend of the principal as a communicator. This trend is more embedded in Hallinger’s dimensions instead of separated. Weick (1982) focuses on principals as communicators. Weick’s work demonstrates the importance of how a principal communicates their goals and vision. Weick describes schools as “loosely coupled” led by principals who value relationships. This is a new way of thinking in schools where teachers and principals are traditionally isolated in their classrooms and offices. The principal uses these relationships to communicate their goals and vision with others. These valued relationships also establish a common language to help bring about collective support toward the goals and visions. (Weick, 1982).
Dwyer (1984) spoke extensively to 42 principals about instructional leadership. The research also included multiple observations. The schools included small and large organizations from urban and rural communities. These schools all had similar elements, which help them be successful. Principals relied on their beliefs and experiences, community input, and their desired goals and vision in order to manage school climate in the structure of the organization to provide successful student outcomes. Dwyer states the following with regard to this:

*These principals assessed their environments, knew their limitations and strengths, and understood the kinds of programs and outcomes they desired for students. They not only saw themselves as pivotal points around which these elements turned, but they believed in their abilities to influence each of those parts. They directed their energies toward improving the social climate of their schools and the quality of the instructional organization.*

2. The 1990s

The 1990s led to a decreased interest in instructional leadership. During this period much of the research focused on transformational leadership (Miles, 2002). Another area that developed during this time was the philosophy of differentiation by Tomlinson (1999). Tomlinson explains that teachers need to differentiate instruction and learning in the classroom.

Leaders for responsive, personalized, or differentiated classrooms focus much of their professional energy on two fronts: what it means to teach individual learners effectively, and how to extend the number of classrooms in which that sort of teaching becomes the norm (Tomlinson, 1999).

Stressing on different methods for the betterment of instruction, other writers also contributed their shares. Glatthorn (1998) focuses on performance assessment and how
it can lead to better instruction. He developed the achievement cycle which is made up of four key elements. These are standards based curricula; performance evaluation; assessment-driven instruction; and authentic learning. This model can then become a framework for an instructional leader to use in a school (Glatthorn, 2000). As a curriculum leader, the principal leads the learning community toward high student achievement.

In the late 1980s, DuFour (1998) shifted the focus away from instruction practices in the classroom to student learning outcomes. Collaborative teams of teachers work and learn together to improve student learning outcomes. Unlike Glatthorn and Tomlinson, DuFour focuses on high performing collaborative teams.

DuFour (1998) believes that principals play a key role in creating the conditions that enable schools to become professional learning communities. Schools should become a place in which faculty members share the decision-making process. A shared vision includes faculty members, rather than excluding them through rules and procedures. Professional development trains the staff and teachers to work in collaborative teams in order to improve student learning.

DuFour also asserts that principals must be the guide as schools move toward professional learning communities. They communicate the importance of the mission and values on a daily basis. Principals create structures in which teachers can be collaborative. Teachers are encouraged to be leaders, as principals trust and believe in the teacher’s ability to guide collaborative teams. Finally, principals must believe that continuous improvement requires continuous learning.
For professional learning communities to be successful, DuFour reasons that professional staff development programs need to be in place. Professional development needs to be sustained over a considerable period. It provides coaching to master new skills that result in reflection and dialogue. Lastly, professional development fosters individual and organizational renewal.

In summary, DuFour’s (1998) research findings significantly impact instructional leadership. Before DuFour, principal instructional leadership focused on the principal becoming an expert resource for teachers (Andrews & Soder, 1987).

3. The 2000s

Much of the school leadership theory during the 2000s is rooted in instructional leadership theory developed during the 1980s and 1990s. Research efforts concentrated around principal leadership influencing student-learning outcomes. Many of the themes are familiar: promoting effective instructional practices, focusing the vision of the school, communication, collaboration, and emphasizing effective professional development. In 2000, Richard Elmore built upon DuFour’s (1998) theory of professional learning communities in his research. Elmore focuses on Hallinger’s (1987) dimension of curriculum and instruction to improve instruction and the role of the leader.

In order for this model to be successful, a principal needs to have a vast knowledge and understanding of curriculum and assessment. Elmore (2000) argues that principals need to “buffer” away distractions from teachers to allow them to concentrate on teaching and learning. In turn, superintendents need to buffer distractions away from the principal, so they can focus on helping the teachers with instruction.
Elmore also believes that schools need to change to a distributive leadership model. By distributive leadership he means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. Distributed leadership has many aspects in common with instructional leadership. This view of leadership stresses the creation of a common culture, and working toward a common goal or vision in order to improve the instruction. Elmore stresses how important collaboration is in the pursuit of academic excellence.

### 2.1.3. The Principalship Today

Goodwin, Cunningham, and Eager in their (2005) review of the history of the secondary school principal, argued that as principals have been asked to do more and more tasks and take on more and more responsibilities. According to these authors, principals’ role has become an accumulation of expectations that have increased the complexity of the position until it has reached a point of division where change is inevitable. In today’s concept, Principals should be strategic, instructional, organizational, political, and community leaders and they should be afforded the autonomy commiserate with their responsibilities. There is no question that principals today are asked to do a great deal—as are schools. The No Child Left Behind Act and similar measures, demands that educators be held accountable for student achievement at a school and classroom level. Principals experience that accountability pressure in deeply personal ways (Shipps & White, 2009).

Yet the history of the school principal demonstrates that although specific pressures might be new, the call for principals to accomplish great things with little support, and to be all things to all people, is certainly not. What is new is the degree to which schools
are expected to resolve society’s social and educational inequities in a market-based environment. As principals are asked to compete for students, parents, and community support, and risk losing students, principals’ individual importance in the success or failure of a school has seemingly increased. Historically, however, the role of principal itself has not radically changed, even as the political environment surrounding it has. The historiography of the school principal ship suggests two reasons why this is the case (Kafka, 2009).

First, principals’ position within district bureaucracies has remained relatively stable. They are neither at the top of the educational hierarchy nor at the ground level, but are somewhere in the middle, answering to district officials, policymakers, parents, students, teachers, and community members—just as they have been, to varying degrees, since the 19th century. Thus although principals’ status and pay rate continue to be higher than those of the teachers they supervise, they remain constrained by federal, state, and local dictates beyond their influence. Second, the fundamentals of schooling have not been changed, and thus neither has the demands placed on principals’ time and attention. They remain managers, administrators, supervisors, instructional leaders, and politicians (Kafka, 2009).

The current market environment may place more emphasis on the political aspects of the Principalship than in the past, but the notion that principals are accountable to, and somewhat dependent upon, public opinion is not new. Indeed, this short history of school principal suggests that today’s focus on individual leaders as enactors of building-level change may yield mixed results. On one hand, principals have often been central to efforts to improve schooling and enact educational change. On the other hand,
principals have historically acted as both part of and in response to existing structures and systems.

### 2.1.4. Function of the Instructional Leader

Different researchers (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982; Edmonds, 1979a) stress the importance of instructional leadership responsibilities of the principal; however, the consensus in the literature regarding this issue is that it is seldom practiced (Flath, 1989). That is to say, principals spend most of their time dealing with managerial issues. Research conducted by different scholars in the past also confirms this. For instance, Stronge (1988) calculated that elementary school principals spent 62.2 percent of their time on managerial issues and only 11 percent on instructional leadership issues, even after undergoing in-service training on the role of instructional leader. Nevertheless, principals need to make instructional issues the top priority of their agenda. With regard to this, Berlin, Kavanagh, and Jensen (1988) conclude that, if schools are to progress, the principal cannot allow daily duties to interfere with the leadership role in curriculum.

In today’s world, effective principals are expected to be effective instructional leaders. Generally, the following are among the core tasks to be accomplished by a principals/an instructional leader:

- Staff development activities
- Communicating goals
- Providing resources
- Providing incentive to teachers (as a scheme of motivation)
- Supervision and evaluation of instruction
Curriculum development activities

Conducting research (action research)

Development of a positive school climate, and

Creation of links between school and the community

It is the degree of emphasis that the school principal has for the above and related issues that recognizes him as a good instructional leader by his staff members. The more emphasis given by school principals to the above mentioned instructional issues, the better will be students’ result and improved school. Fullan (1991) found in his research that schools operated by principals who were perceived by their teachers to be strong instructional leaders exhibited significantly greater gain scores in achievement in reading and mathematics than did schools operated by average and weak instructional leaders. Put differently, instructional leadership practice of principals has effect on school improvement directly or indirectly. Study by Brookover and Lezotte (1982) presents the role of the principal as instructional leader as the catalyst for school improvement.

Generally the major roles played by school principals as instructional leaders are discussed below:

2.2. Roles played by a principal as an Instructional Leader

2.2.1. Promoting School-wide Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

In the contemporary school system, the society and the government place high demands on teachers. Cuban (1990) asserts that teachers are necessarily at the center of reform for they must carry out the demands of the high standards in the classroom. To meet these demands, teachers are expected to work in an increasingly complex environment.
The task of teacher might not be the mere provision of instruction as some people who are at distant to the profession might guess.

Teachers are required to do many activities, besides teaching and learning. To mention few, organizing and leading classroom, mentoring fellow teachers, participating in CPD planning process, communicating with parents, and so on. Regarding the changing roles of teachers, Gerhard (2010) has the following to say:

*The roles and tasks of teachers have changed and more pressure is put on them. Moreover, highly heterogeneous classes require more differentiation and a variety in teaching approaches and methods.*

Nevertheless, to exercise this and related activities side by side with the day-to-day teaching and learning duties, they need to be professionally skilled, competent and updated with modern technology. They should divorce themselves from the traditional teacher-centered, approach and be acquainted with the contemporary teaching methods. In order to carry out the demands of educational reform, teachers must also be immersed in the subject they teach and have the ability both to communicate basic knowledge and to develop advanced thinking and problem solving skills among their students.

If the aim of school principals is to bring about quality education, they are required to work in collaboration with the school community in order to promote the continuous professional development (CPD) activities in their schools. Research findings indicate that teacher development activities are most effective when carried out collaboratively in an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement. The CPD approach adopted by schools and other institutions should give formal opportunities for collaborative
working. Hence, a school principal as an instructional leader needs to motivate all individuals who are eligible to take part in CPD program and work with them.

According to MoE (2009), the aim of CPD is to improve teachers’ performance in the classroom in order to raise student achievement and learning because, directly or indirectly, there is a link between students’ result and teachers’ performance. CPD is a career long process of improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes centered on the local context and particularly classroom practice. Therefore, attracting, retaining, and developing teachers across the professional life cycle have become policy priorities in many countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/OECD, 2005). Governments in both developed and developing countries are also introducing legislation concerning CPD and linking it to career structure and appraisal.

I. What is CPD?

CPD stands for Continuous Professional Development. As has been asserted by (Ball and Cohen, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Putnam and Borko, 2000), Modern views of professional development characterize professional learning not as short-term intervention, but as a long-term process extending from teacher education at tertiary level to in-service training at the workplace. As some people probably guess, CPD is not confined to the mere training of staff members. It goes beyond the term “training” with its implications of learning skills and encompassing a definition that includes formal and informal means of helping teachers. Fullan (1991) also expands the definition of CPD to include the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s learning from pre-service teacher education to retirement. Put differently, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the process by which a
professional person maintains the quality and relevance of their skills throughout their working life.

Similarly, as to Allen (2009), CPD is the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that teachers gain both formally and informally as they work, beyond any initial training. For instance, in schools, activities ranging from coaching one another and informally supporting fellow-teachers to giving organized formal training can both be considered Continuous Professional Development. In school context, CPD is a record of what teachers experience, learn and then apply. As to Starkey, Yates, Meyer, Hall, Taylor and Stevens (2009), CPD focuses on building existing knowledge, understandings, and aims to ensure that teachers have access to the up-to-date knowledge needed to be effective.

In general, CPD is the activity directed at the improvement of individual’s knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional and technical duties throughout one’s working life. CPD is a necessity and not an optional practice for teachers to enable them professionally active and competent. As to Allen (2009), A CPD may be a requirement of membership of a professional body.

CPD activities need to be conducted on a continual basis from the time of employment until retirement. Since students’ achievement is directly or indirectly linked to teachers’ performances, these front-line actors (teachers) need to be professionally developed and updated with modern technology, which needs serious attention on the part of school principals. Further, it seems reasonable to assume that improving the conditions for
supporting the learning of teachers in school will have an impact on the conditions they provide for their students.

Hence, to strengthen CPD, school principals as instructional leaders need to mobilize entire resources in organizations and motive and collaboratively work with all stakeholders starting from the time of planning till its implementation and evaluation. Because CPD is a joint activity that must include all concerned bodies. Gerard (2010) explains that CPD should be concerned with the development of the staff as a team, as well as with the evolution of its thinking and the practice of individuals. To this end, it is important that a school has a well thought out policy for teacher development and clear strategy for its implementation.

II. Principals’ Roles in Promoting CPD

Continuous professional development is perhaps the key responsibility of an instructional leader. Obi (2002) noted that to be successful as a leader, the principal must give priority to the program of staff improvement, which comprises leadership attention techniques and procedures designed to change the teachers’ role performance. He stated that the principals’ roles in this include: classroom visitation, observations, conferences, seminar, and workshop, professional associations, in-service educational programs etc. As mentioned earlier, CPD includes formal and informal means of helping teachers. So the school principal should assess the needs of their workforces and arrange the support needed formally and informally. Again, they have to be sure that teachers well understood the concept and ready to take responsibility for their own professional development. Because, above all, CPD needs to be based on individual’s
interests. Other activities come next to that. Principals may focus on the following and related activities while promoting CPD in their schools:

**Planning professional development based on teachers’ needs**- It is repeatedly mentioned that school principals should assess the area of needs of teachers before embarking to plan CPD.

**Planning professional development with teachers**- If teachers are engaged in planning their own professional development activities, they are less hesitant when the time for its implementation comes. Therefore, it is advisable for principals to participate teachers in the planning of CPD.

**Provision of useful materials and other resources**- one of the impediments to proper CPD is lack of adequate professional materials to run the activity. Successful school-wide change will not occur without strong resources and support from educational managers. At the end of three years of CPD development, a TDP 1 Impact Study was carried out by Haromaya University (Ethiopia). The study revealed that one of the six major challenges to the implementation of CPD in Ethiopian schools is the total absence or inadequacy of the minimum resources required to run Continuous Professional Development. So school principals need do their best in fulfilling the requires resources.

**Supporting collaborative efforts among teachers**- collaborative working environments is widely considered critical to the creation and maintenance of schools as professional learning communities. Prevailing thought suggests that improved student performance may be fully realized only when teachers routinely function as teams and abandon their traditional norms of isolationism and individualism (Leonard & Leonard, 2003).
Promoting Action research- Principals can promote action research in their schools not only by supporting teachers to do action research but also by doing action research and becoming exemplary to others. Research and reflection allow teachers to grow and gain confidence in their work. Ferrance (2000) explains that action research projects influence thinking skills, sense of efficacy, willingness to share and communicate, and attitudes toward the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues. In short, action research can contribute its share to CPD.

Encouraging Peer coaching- Robbins (1991) defines peer coaching as the process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace. In school setting, senior teachers are expected to observe their fellow-teachers in classroom and give them constructive comments. Hence, as part of the continuous professional development activities, principals need to encourage teacher so that one should coach the job of the other for better instructional improvement.

Using staff meeting as a source of staff development- In school context staff development may refer to the strive for promoting teachers and other personnel’s professional competence by employing methods like workshops, seminar, staff-meetings, etc. Teachers have consistently reported that the attraction and power of staff development lies in the opportunity to be able to discuss ideas with other teachers (Sybouts and Wendel, 1994).
2.2.1.1. The Implementation of CPD in Ethiopian Secondary Schools

CPD is among the issues got serious attention by the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy of 1994. The following statement is put in the policy regarding teachers’ professional development: “The criteria for the professional development of teachers will be continuous education and training, professional ethics and teaching performance” (p.21). The Education and Training Policy (ETP) set high standards for teachers and described a new approach to education. Realizing the key position of teachers in school improvement, Ethiopia developed a program of in service CPD in 2005.

According to the MoE document (2009), at the heart of this new approach was the promotion of more active learning, problem solving, and student centered teaching methods. The policy clearly indicated that emphasis should be given to upgrading and updating both in pre-service and in-service teachers. It was recognized that teachers were the key to school improvement. A CPD Guideline was produced outlining the new strategies and courses developed for the induction of newly deployed teachers and for CPD priority programmes (MoE, 2009).

It is also indicated in the document that the newly deployed teachers were expected to work through a two-year induction program, produced at the national level and supported by mentors. These mentors were selected from experienced members of staff in the school. The expectation was that these groups would meet at least once every two weeks.
It is also mentioned that all other teachers were expected to carry out the CPD program produced at national level. This program consists of three course books, which teachers worked through in small groups within a school or cluster of schools. Each course consisted of 3 units covering aspects of teaching and learning and school ethos. The groups were designed to be led by facilitators, usually selected from experienced members of the school staff.

In addition to this, the Ethiopian government gave responsibility to local and regional educational authorities, such as Wereda Education Offices, Zonal Education Departments, and Regional Education Bureaus. These bodies always have a number of supervisors and education experts on their staff. It is the responsibility of these experienced professionals to give help and advice to teachers in schools, colleges and universities on matters to do with subject knowledge or teaching methodology (MoE, 2009).

**Types of Professional Development in the Ethiopian Context**

In Ethiopia, continuous professional development can be placed into two categories (MoE, 2009b), updating and upgrading.

- Updating is a continuous process in which every professional teacher participates during their career as a teacher. It focuses on subject knowledge and pedagogy to improve classroom practice.

- Upgrading is the process by which teachers can choose to participate in additional study outside their regular work as teachers at appropriate times in their career, e.g., convert a certificate diploma to a diploma of the first degree or first degree to master’s degree.
Professional Competencies of Ethiopian Teachers

In the Ethiopian context, teachers are expected to have the following professional competencies, which are to be achieved through CPD:

• *Facilitating students leaning*: Outlines how teachers plan, develop, manage, and apply a variety of teaching strategies to support quality student learning.

• *Assessing and reporting students learning outcomes*: describes how teachers monitor, assess, record and report student learning outcomes.

• *Engaging in continuous professional development*: describes how teachers manage their own professional development and contribute to the professional development of their colleagues.

• *Mastery of Education and Training Policy, curriculum and other program development initiatives*: describes how teachers develop and apply an understanding of ETP to contribute to curriculum and/or other program development initiatives.

• *Forming partnership with the school community*: describes how teachers build, facilitate and maintain working relationships with students, colleagues, parents and other care givers to enhance student learning.

According to MoE (2009b) following pre-service and induction professional training, each Ethiopian teacher and instructor has a professional, personal and civic responsibility to undertake continuous Professional development through his or her career. Each school teacher must take part in planned CPD activities for a minimum of sixty hours each year. These hours should be used flexibly to address the various CPD priorities which impact upon the work of the individual teacher or institution.
It is also indicated in the above source that each teacher is required to keep a portfolio of CPD on the following activities:

- individual CV (personal and professional data and qualifications)
- individual CPD Action Plans
- evidence of all the CPD activities which have been undertaken by the individual teacher in the last three years
- feedback from mentors/facilitators
- teacher’s self-reflections on progress
- annual appraisal reports
- record of Professional competencies achieved
- other evidence of personal development activities undertaken
- school programs – that are not a part of the mandatory sixty hours
- examples of examination results with an analysis
- examples of lesson plans with evaluations

In order to assess the implementation of CPD program and the role played by different bodies, impact study was carried out by Haromaya University, Ethiopia in 2008. Accordingly, six major challenges were identified. For the convenience of this study, the investigator mentions three of them as follows:

1. Failure to synchronize the career structure and the CPD values and activities- even though it was stated in MoE (2009b) document that it is the civic and professional duty of all educators to engage in Continuous Professional Development, most teachers were found to attach less or no value to the CPD program.

2. CPD facilitators’ high turn over
3. Total absence or inadequacy of the minimum resources required to run CPD. It was stressed in MoE document that the resources for CPD come under two main headings, human resources and support materials. However, the provision of these resources was found to be inadequate, which is an obstacle to the implementation of CPD.

Finally, the cases of the target secondary schools of SNNPR (in Gedeo and Sidama) are also similar to this. There were limited in-service trainings for teachers. The following were among the school level specific bottlenecks to the implementation of CPD, as to Wirak, Getachew…, & Tilahun (2005) report on SNNPR schools:

1. There was need for more in-service training
2. Teachers without additional training are using traditional pedagogical methods
3. Long distances to wereda centers, feeling of isolation

2.2.2. Communicating School Goals and Vision

School principals communicate school goals or visions in many different ways. Among these are communicating goals through faculty meetings and Departmental chair meetings. They communicate them through individual meetings such as follow up conference to classroom observations. Frequent communication of school goals by instructional leaders promotes accountability, a sense of personal ownership and instructional improvements. Skillful leaders focus attention on key aspects of the school’s vision and communicate the vision clearly and convincingly.

The function of communicating school goals refers to the ways the principal expresses importance of the school goals to staff, parents and students. This can be achieved through the use of formal or informal communication channels. With regard to the communication of school visions and goals, Hoy and Hoy (2003) explain that principals
have to communicate clear vision on instructional excellence and continuous professional development.

School principals must be sure that teachers are considering them as good instructional leaders. Therefore, they need to understand when this happens. Smith and Andrews (1989) write that teachers perceive their principals to be strong instructional leaders when they communicate school goals through:

I. Interacting with them on their classroom performance,

II. Being accessible to discuss instructional matters,

III. Allowing teachers to try new instructional strategies by letting them know that it is okay to take risks, and

IV. Clearly communicating a vision of the school

On the top of this, principals can use faculty or staff meetings to communicate school goals and vision to the school community.

Sheppard (1996) made it clear in his study that communication of school goals by the principal has a significant positive relationship with teacher classroom innovativeness, which in turn can contribute to school improvement. He found out that, at the high school level, communication of school goals by the principal accounted for the largest amount of variance in classroom innovativeness. He discovered that communicating school goal, framing school goals, and promoting professional development together amounted for 57% of the variance in classroom innovativeness. The more innovative a teacher is the better he contributes to the effectiveness of school improvement.
The communication of school goals by the principal gives confidence to teachers to use more reflection, which may lead to teachers adjusting their instructional techniques to address different learning needs of students (Blasé & Roberts, 1994).

2.2.3. Providing Resources

Among the roles played by the school principal is the allocation of more resources to the instructional activities. Those who work in schools as teachers and associate staff, school premises, furniture, books and equipment all provide some of the means by which we transform our hopes and aspirations for children’s education into daily learning opportunities and experiences and, beyond that, into the longer-term outcomes of schooling (Thomas and Martin, 2003). As indicated elsewhere in this paper, the prime and crucial activity of a principal should be instruction or teaching and learning. Hence, school principals are required to exercise their responsibilities for resource management by giving due attention to the instructional aspect.

Principals influence attention on instruction by supporting teachers with necessary resources. Providing resources includes more than just the provision of financial and material resources. Duke (1987) includes the following activities under resource provision:

1. Scheduling
2. Developing the school calendar
3. Hiring and correctly placing teachers
4. Adopting textbooks, and
5. Purchasing necessary materials to support instruction
Lack of resources may hamper teachers not to use different instructional strategies in their strive to bring about quality education. If this is the case, principals also phase challenges and may not achieve their objectives for school improvement.

Providing resources is viewed by teachers as effective leadership by principals (McGhee and Lew, 2007). That is to say, those principals who gave more attention to instruction in the provision of resources were viewed by teachers as strong instructional leaders. Similarly, Smith and Andrews (1989) discovered that majority of strong instructional leaders were given positive ratings as resource providers when they were seen as:

- Promoting staff development activities for teachers
- Possessing knowledge of instructional resources
- Mobilizing resources and district support to achieve academic goals, and
- The most important instructional resource in school

2.2.4. Providing Incentive for Teachers (Motivation)

All good schools are likely to have staff members who are motivated to do their best. Sometimes people are surprised why some schools are staffed by highly motivated, energetic persons while others are not. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) have the following to say regarding this: “Very likely, the principals of good schools have a high level of personal motivation and have discovered ways of capitalizing upon motivated staff members and maintaining their motivation at high levels” (p.130).

Different organizations use incentives such as praise, good working conditions, material rewards, pride in work completed, emotional attachment to the organization, and positive working relationships with colleagues to motivate employees. Providing
incentives for teachers is a strategy principals can use to motivate teachers to change their instructional practices. Principals provide incentives by giving formal awards and using public or individual praise for teachers (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Naturally, people seek recognition and like admiration for tasks, they do. Praising teachers in front-of their peers can be effective because it encourages improvement by all teachers. In relation to this, Blasé and Blasé (1999b) have the following to say:

Praise significantly affected teacher motivation, self-esteem, and efficacy. It also fostered teacher reflective behavior, including reinforcement of effective teaching strategies, risk taking, and innovation/creativity. "My principal's praise gets me searching for new and innovative things on my own".

As to Hallinger and Murphy, most teachers do not receive sufficient monetary compensation for what they do in the classroom. Recognizing teachers for their classroom performance provides an incentive for improvement and continued growth. In most cases, school principals lose invaluable contributions of their staff members for not giving simple rewards to their staff. It is wise for school principals to sometimes consider that the responses of teachers to those rewards may by far exceed the remuneration given to them.

Blase and Roberts (1994) found that principals motivate teachers to try instructional strategies through rewards such as praise and material rewards. Rewards were found by the authors to positively affect 38 percent of responding teachers by increasing their use of innovative ideas within the classroom. Similarly, 37 percent of teachers noted that the use of rewards increased levels of time on task.

So a school principal as an instructional leader need to identify the motivation level of his/her staff and use various mechanisms to stimulate them. Motivation is more of
intrinsic by its nature. What is expected of a principal is doing his/her best to motivate the work force if they want them put forth their knowledge and efforts for the attainment of the required organizational goals.

2.2.5. Supervision (evaluation) of Instruction

The supervision of instruction by the school principal is among his roles as an instructional leader. As an instructional leader, he needs to follow up the day to day activities of teachers and supervision is the major instrument for this. The instructional leader’s repertoire of instructional practices and classroom supervision offers teachers the needed resources to provide students with opportunities to succeed.

A study of primary school effectiveness in Burundi documents a strong and significant relationship between the frequency of teacher supervision by the school principal and student achievement: student test scores rose as the number of times the school principal visited the classroom increased (Sindhvad, 2009). Frequent teacher supervision improved the punctuality of teachers and their adherence to the curriculum, which in turn produced higher scores (Eisemon, Schwille, & Prouty 1989). The principal as a leader helps teachers use current research in best practices and instructional strategies to reach school goals for student performance. The prime target of supervision is to bring about instructional improvement by promoting teachers’ competence.

Unlike the traditional system of supervision where principals and supervisors occasionally (perhaps once in a semester) enter classrooms and supervise teachers, modern supervision requires school principals to observe the activities of teachers on a continual basis. Sybouts and Wendel (1994) explain that formal evaluations that are
generally based upon one or a few classroom observations have a limited influence upon development. In theory, formal evaluation of teachers by principals and other supervisors is a powerful means of promoting professional growth.

Principals can increase their value as supervisors through many actions, such as being consistent and honest with staff, being available to provide assistance, stating expectations clearly, showing appreciation for positive results, seeking opinions from staff, and basing performance on first-hand information. Supervisors must inform employees about their level of performance, point out what actions can be taken to improve performance, and provide direct assistance for the improvement of performance (Sybouts & Wendel, 1994).

Supervision is a professional, continuous and cooperative exercise that covers all aspects of the life of a school. Duke (1987) also defines supervision as “All efforts to monitor teacher performance” (p.104). It includes principals’ observation teachers in the classroom, conducting an instructional conference, and using professional development for classroom improvement. As to Hallinger & Murphy (1985), Supervision provides a way for principals to monitor instruction. However, the monitoring or supervision of teachers should be immediately followed by an instructional conference or the post-observation behavior.

Teachers want to have the instructional conference with the principal to get feedback on their performance and rectify their weakness and continue with their strengths. As indicated by (Blasé & Blasé, 1998, & King 1991), instructional conferences with teachers have an effect on teacher classroom instruction. So the focus on supervision
by principals should not only be confined to observing teachers in the classes but also needs to include having instructional conferences with the supervised teacher.

Visiting classroom is a supervision strategy that has positive effect on teachers. In this strategy, principals can use both formal and informal visits to classrooms to learn what teachers are doing, to assess whether sound instruction is being delivered, and to interact with teachers. Blasé and Roberts noted that visibility was related to using new teaching strategies, considering different teaching techniques, to address the needs of students, and increasing levels of instructional time on task. They stressed that visibility had these effects on teachers because of increased interaction, feelings of trust, feelings of respect, and more opportunities for teachers to express themselves.

In spite of its merits, classroom supervision/observation of teachers by principals has some demerits. As indicated by the findings of research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (2004). Some behaviors of principals were found to have a negative effect on teachers. These behaviors included discounting teachers’ needs, isolating teachers, withholding resources from teachers, spying on teachers, overloading teachers, criticizing teachers, threatening teachers, giving teachers unfair evaluations, and preventing teacher advancement. In this study, it was found out that teachers’ creativity was limited by the above mentioned behaviors.

2.2.6. Curriculum Development Activities

Curriculum development is among the major activities of an instructional leader. Research has shown that the most important role of the principal centers on curriculum and school improvement. The school principals should know that the existing
curriculum is in agreement with the needs of the students or the community. They need to assess this on a regular basis.

Curriculum can be defined as the total learning experience of pupils under the auspices and guidance of the school. Tanner and Tanner (1995) define curriculum as “plan or program of all experiences which the learner encounters under the direction of a school” (p.158). Generally, it is the totality of the experiences of children for which schools are responsible. It consists of an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under the guidance of the school. From the definitions, it can be deduced that curriculum is a planned activity comprising content and the experience of the learner. This valuable experience should be designed and developed jointly. It is a cooperative process involving all, who have an influence on the instruction. Hence, school principals need to involve staff members, pupils, parents and appropriate lay citizens in the development of curriculum at the school level.

Staff involvement is essential if curriculum improvement is to become a reality (Telfer, 2010). The school administrator who fails to recognize this concept will in fact fail to provide the instructional program to meet the challenge of the changing social, political, and economic order of modern times. Daily, school leaders face problems for which they must find answers or provide solutions. These problems may include developing an in-service education program for their building, selecting new text materials, or charting the course of the social studies program (Telfer, 2010).

School principals as instructional leaders are required to involve the staff and the community in the planning, implementation and evaluation of curriculum. They also
need to examine political, social, economic, technological, and environmental factors having, influence on curriculum design.

2.2.7. Promoting Action Research in School

Unlike the traditional approach of acquiring knowledge using various means like insightful observation, experience, and intuitive learning (all of which are unscientific), the contemporary approach to problem solving relies on the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Action research is one of those terms that we hear quite often in today’s educational circles. Typically, action research is undertaken in a school setting. It is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion components of the “research.”

Action research provides teachers and administrators with an opportunity to understand what happens in their school. This process establishes a decision-making cycle that guides instructional planning for the school and individual classrooms. Creating the need for research and establishing an environment for conducting classroom action research is the responsibility of a school administrator. A principal’s support of any new initiative is crucial in order for the practice to be sustained and influence student learning.

Often, action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. In a school environment, the term action research is the research that teachers carry out to examine their teaching processes and the results of these processes with the primary focus of improving their instruction. As one of their major roles, principals need to promote the practice of
research in general and that of action research in particular. To make this operational in their schools, principals need to fulfill the following:

- First, they themselves need to have the skill and knowledge of conducting research and updating themselves with the new and modern technology. Before urging others towards the activity, it is wise to evaluate oneself on this basis as an instructional leader and take the necessary remedial action.

- Second, they need to encourage their staff to jointly do action research on sensitive educational problems. The encouragement ranges from giving the required technical assistance to the provision of the necessary financial and material resources. In some schools, it is not uncommon to observe the principals urging teachers to conduct research but retreat when the question of financial or material support comes. Those leaders need to know that school effectiveness can best be achieved through the actions taken based on research findings. Further, the provision of technical assistance is very important especially in aiding the newly employed teachers.

- Thirdly, principals need to organize special occasions (for instance workshops and experience sharing programs) on which teachers share the findings of their research with other staff members. This allows for constructive comments and also encourages others to conduct research on any topic of their interests.

- Lastly, principals need to choose some research works that can serve as exemplary and reward. It is better if they also cite those works as example on different occasions so that the staff members will be motivated.
2.2.8. Development of a Positive School Climate

School climate is an important ingredient that relates to the productivity and well-being of staff members, parents or guardians, and students. The principal more than any other individual is responsible for the climate in the school. As an instructional leader, he is the key figure in promoting an academic learning environment within the school that is conducive to student learning. Promoting an academic learning climate, according to Murphy (1990), has to do with the behaviors of the principal that influences the norms, beliefs, and attitudes of the teachers, students, and parents. Since good teacher morale and high student achievement go hand in hand, the school principal has to make the school environment conducive and motivate teachers on their job to indirectly promote students’ achievement.

Different terms have been used to denote school climate in literature. These are climate, environment, culture, job satisfaction, morale, and ethos (Sybouts and Wendel 1994). At times, the terms mean the same or similar things; at other times, they are used to portray variations or distinct differences of people’s senses and feelings about the school. So different writers use the terms differently based on their interest and experience. Keefe (1989) refers to climate as group perceptions of school characteristics.

In this study, these two concepts are interrelated. However, school climate focuses on keeping the overall safety of the school. It is concerned with school wide issues. For instance, the school principal’s ability to protect instructional time, his ability to make the climate convenient for teachers, students, parents, and the whole community. Likewise, school environment stresses more on students. For example, motivating
students in their lessons, making the school campus safe and free of unhealthy conflicts, keeping the school campus neat and attractive for teaching and learning, increasing teachers' commitment for the betterment of students. Generally, in this study the two concepts are used interchangeably, with minor differences between them.

Research indicates that schools, which were effective in their overall achievement, were found to have a better school climate. Such schools create a climate where all children could learn. In relation to this, Edmonds (1979a) stated in his research findings that schools that were effective had a climate of expectation that all children would succeed to high levels. He further indicated that teachers provided support and instill confidence in students’ abilities to achieve academically.

Put it differently, in the effective school, there is a safe and orderly environment conducive to teaching and learning. Further, there is a climate of high expectations for success, in which the staff believes that all students can succeed. Murphy (1990) puts as follows the role of principals in developing school learning climate:

*Principals foster the development of a school learning climate conducive to teaching and learning by establishing positive expectations and standards, by maintaining high visibility, by providing incentives for teachers and students, and promoting professional development.*

So one of the major roles of school principals is creating a conducive school climate, which promotes transparency and hard working. Promoting a positive learning climate, according to Weber (1996), comprises the expectations and attitudes of the whole school community. Indeed, of all the important factors that appear to affect students’ learning, perhaps having the greatest influence is the set of beliefs, values, and attitudes
that administration, teachers and students hold about learning. Leaders promote a positive learning climate through different ways.

Weber mentioned that leaders promote a positive learning climate by communicating instructional goals, establishing high expectations, for performance, establishing an orderly learning environment with clear discipline expectations, and working to increase teacher commitment to the school. Hence, however alert and skillful they are, school principals cannot envisage positive school climate by themselves alone. It requires the commitment of the whole school community in the process.

Purkey and Smith (1983) also mentioned in their study the four process variables that defined the school climate and culture. These include collaborative planning and collegial relationships, a sense of community, clear goals and commonly shared high expectations, and order and discipline. To ensure a real and positive school climate, these entire variables need to work jointly.

2.2.9. Linking the School to the Community

One of the major tasks of an instructional leader is creating a good linkage with the local community because schools exist in the heart of each community. Adelman and Taylor (2008) concede that schools are more effective and caring places when they are an integral part of the community. This contributes to enhanced academic performance, fewer discipline problems, higher staff morale, and wide use of resources. School-community links are mutually beneficial relationship in which the principal can play a leading role. The nature of the relationship between the school and the community ultimately has an impact on the learning that takes place in the school and the community. If properly approached, community members can do a lot for school. For
instance, they take part in school management functions, in contributing resources, in recruiting volunteers, in contributing their ideas and labor.

Parents and the community can take part in different school committees like parent teacher association, school improvement committee, school fund raising committee, school day program coordinating committee and the likes. Schools can hardly meet their target without involving the community in school activities. Good school principals use community partnership as a strategy for school improvement. The report of the study conducted by Sanders and Harvey noted that high performing schools make use of their communities and reach out beyond the schools’ walls.

Further Studies conducted in the United States showed that strong district involvement in curriculum and instruction that supports principals’ instructional goals is one aspect of an effective school (Leithwood, Strauss, & Anderson, 2007). However, district involvement (as mentioned by the above writers) is dependent upon the principal’s power within the district. In addition, they explained that principals of effective schools are effective within the community. They understand community power structures and maintain appropriate relations with parents.

The community can also help the school by contributing financial and material resources. This is particularly the case in some rural areas where the government’s budget is minimal to support schools. Experienced principals use community as a source of resource for their schools and find various means to attract them to the school compound. However, what should not be overlooked is that school-community relation is bidirectional. That is to say, schools should not solely seek support from the
community. They should also be ready to support the community in their day-to-day life. For instance, community members may give financial and material support to schools. Likewise, schools can go as far as the parents and the community and teach the people. The topic of their teaching could be based on the objective reality of that community. It can be about HIV/AIDS, malaria prevention, environmental protection, constructing roads, clearing rivers. Hence, in order to get support from the community, schools must go out of their walls and reach out the surrounding people to lend a hand.

Recruiting volunteers is another area of community support for the school. Sometimes, there might be a shortage of workforce to run some activities in the school. In such case, the community can help the school in finding out individuals who are voluntary be recruited and help the school with minimum payment.

Community members can also contribute their own labor and ideas for the betterment of the school. In some local areas (Example Ethiopia) parents and the community assist with constructing schools, repairing classrooms, constructing houses for teachers and so on. They further help schools by taking part in labor education program together with teachers and students. The good ideas and constructive comments of the community are also the invaluable assets to schools.

Hence, in order to ensure the provision of proper instruction and implement the school improvement program, school principals need to collaborate with, parents and the local community. For parents, collaboration with schools can strengthen their children, their families, their schools, and the community in which they live. Sanders (2001) also found that school-community partnership activities were variously used as strategies for
student and family support, school improvement, and community development. Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in education also underscore the value of the partnership and importance of community involvement for more effective schooling. What school principals should bear in mind as instructional leaders is that community involvement and partnership are two similar but different concepts. These are discussed under the following subtopic.

**Models of parent Involvement and Partnerships**

“Parent involvement” and “school-family-community partnerships”, as to Baum (2003), both refer to attachments between schools and family members, neighborhood residents, local businesses, community associations, churches, nonprofit organizations, and the like. The phrases lack precise meanings and often are used similarly, but they carry different connotations. Epstein’s (1995) catalogue of types of parent involvement helps identify different emphases among a variety of connections. Her six types of involvement can be grouped into three types of partnerships between schools and parents or other community members.

The first is tacit partnerships, in which parents and teachers engage in parallel, complementary activities without contact. Parents or other adults can contribute to children’s education by raising them lovingly and consistently, providing a secure home, feeding and clothing them, and attending to their health and development. These actions prepare students for teachers’ efforts at school. In addition, parents can assist children with schoolwork. In doing so, parents not only help children to learn what teachers teach, but they also value learning and know things that matter at school.
In a second type of partnership, individual parents meet, talk, and make formal arrangements with individual staff members. Parents and staff can communicate about school policies and activities, educational goals, assignments, and children’s progress. They can discuss what a child should learn, how teachers and parents can help, and how the child is getting ahead. In addition, parents can volunteer. Besides helping instrumentally, volunteering shows teachers and students that parents share responsibility for education.

These two types of partnerships, more often called “parent involvement” than “partnerships,” occupy familiar ground Epstein (1995). They are formed in the school’s terms, with parents supporting school programs. Parents, educators, and school reformers readily endorse such cooperation. A third type of partnership, actively involving parents or community members in school practices and decision making, stakes out largely new ground. A group of parents or an organization may take authoritative, influential roles with schools, with the arrangements outlined in explicit and elaborate agreements.

Epstein continued discussing that one subtype puts parents in school decision-making roles. They can participate in entities established by the school, from PTAs to advisory committees and site-based management teams. These may be concerned with policy, personnel, budget, or curriculum. Some school systems have advisory or decision rules for parents. In addition, parents can create organizations to express their concerns, set their own agendas, and advocate for policies or programs at schools or in the system. Thus parents can introduce practices that improve children’s learning. In addition, they show their children that they care about education and model adults who take
leadership. Significantly, in exercising power, parents may challenge teachers or administrators (Epstein, 1995)).

The other subtype extends beyond parents’ roles as parents to their roles as community members and includes other individual and institutional community members. Epstein emphasizes how communities can give schools resources for programs, largely an extension of volunteering. These relationships may be purely altruistic, or community partners may get something in return. For example, businesses, churches, or nonprofit organizations can give schools resources and gain customers, members, or publicity. Service agencies can join with schools to form full-service schools; while helping schools educate children better, agencies get more clients (Dryfoos, 1994).

However, in addition to giving schools community resources, other relationships of this subtype get community actors influence over the school or gain resources for community use. Schools can include community members Building the Education Field in advisory committees or site management teams Epstein (1995). Community members can organize to improve schools and invite staff to participate. Community members can teach students in the school or the community. Further, Epstein discusses that schools can provide services to community groups, neighborhoods, or institutions, from cleanups to fund-raising. Whatever the formalities, opening school boundaries to outsiders creates a potential to change school practices, depending on actors’ interests, resources, and relations with the school.

Educators rarely think of this last type of partnership as “parent involvement.” Often they reserve “partnership” for relations with community donors. Parents and community
members speak of “involvement” in decision making, and they are especially likely to think of “partnership” as a means of influencing the school for their children’s benefit and that of the community Epstein’s (1995).

Thus, the three types of partnership vary in explicitness, membership, purpose, member obligations, and power and status relations. They range from occasional parental or community assistance to a school to ongoing powerful collaboration between staff and parents or community members. One could plead for these partnerships as a means of constructing a coherent education field in a turbulent environment, but according to Baum (2003) advocates put forth more immediate justification. The focus of attention here is on community expectations and arguments for connecting with schools.

2.3. The History of School Directors/Principals’ Training and the Strive for School Improvement in Ethiopian Secondary Schools

2.3.1. The Training of School Directors/Principals (Instructional leaders) in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the training of Directors/principals is related to the beginning of teacher training and the teaching profession. Following the introduction of modern education (1908), the tasks of school management and inspection were more or less handled by expatriates. Among teachers assigned to teach in different schools, few were gradually selected using different criteria and trained and assigned as school principals. This was practiced for many years in the past and is still true today (Ethiopian Ministry of Education, 2006).

The establishment of modern education also necessitated the training of principals and educational inspectors. In Ethiopia local sources indicate that the training of school
directors and inspectors was interrelated and the following can be cited as examples (MoE, 2006):

1. **1956-1962** - During this period, to address the serious shortage of inspectors, the training program, was arranged for the trainees. The duration of the training program started in 1956 was one year. Upon successful completion, the graduates were not only assigned as inspectors but half of them were posted as primary school directors. So it is possible to say that the value of having trained educational managers was realized as early as that in Ethiopia. For this reason, the training program was better known as Director-Inspector program. This training program continued for seven consecutive years (1956-1962), during which a total of 124 Director-inspectors graduated.

2. **1963-1981** - This was the time when the term inspection was replaced by supervision. During this period another training program was arranged for supervisors. The trainees were drawn from different provinces of the country and all previously trained inspectors were among those chosen for the training. It was one year training and after successful completion half of the graduates were assigned as supervisors and the other half were posted as school directors; in the manner done during the inspection. The program was conducted through two types of delivery modes; i.e. as resident students until 1969 and as summer (long rainy months) as of 1969. The training of supervisors (and school directors) continued until 1973. After 1973, the training program was discontinued for five years and restarted in 1979.

The above information indicates that the training program for school principals was used to be given in connection with educational supervision/inspection. What needs
to be realized in relation to this is that in the past Ethiopian supervisors/inspectors devoted most of their time to non-instructional activities. Ethiopian Ministry of Education (1987) writes that from among fifteen tasks listed to be performed by the office of inspectorate at various levels; those that have direct relevance to professional and pedagogical assistances were found to be only three. Those three points focusing on professional and pedagogical assistances were in-service training, establishment and strengthening of model schools, and the planning of instruction (MoE, 1987). All the rest (80%) inspectors were pre-occupied with administrative, financial, and property and utility management.

The school principals/ Directors were also not exceptions to this. As to the experience of the investigator, during the years 1975-1990 (the time of the previous government/ Dergue), school principals were mostly engaged in administrative political, and similar non-instructional duties and minimum weight was given to the academic activities. Every Tuesday and Thursday principals stayed in school campus only until the break time. After the break, they go to run political related activities in their locality. Besides, staff meetings were conducted now and then.

Even though the intensity is minimal, today also school principals are not free from this. The strategy designed by the government to upgrade school principals’ qualification from B.A. to M.A level is very encouraging but still they are not free of political pressure. As one of a staff member in the target schools said, “No matter how qualified you are, you will never be assigned to the principal’s position unless otherwise you are politically affiliated/committed to the local political bodies.”
3. The Trend After 1994

In Ethiopia, decentralization of the management of the education system is identified as a key strategy as indicated in the 1994 Education and Training Policy and further confirmed by proclamation No. 41/1993 (Ethiopian MoE document, 2009). As indicated in the document, decentralization of educational management that is underway demands capable educational leaders at federal, regional, zonal, district and school levels of the education system. Similarly, it is also indicated that the planning and execution of different projects and programs carried out by the MoE and Regional Education Bureaus require qualified professionals in education leadership and supervision. In relation to these, the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia article 3.8.3 (TGE, 1994) clearly states that ‘Educational management will be democratic, professional, coordinated, efficient, and effective’.

In addition, the Ethiopian teachers’ development program, Blueprint (MoE, 2007) acknowledges educational leadership and supervision as professions by their own with established theories and practices. It is further indicated that those who assume these roles should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to exhibit proper professional ethics that necessitated at national regional, zonal, Wereda, and school levels.

Following the formulation of the new education and training policy (1994) and the decentralization of educational management, the training of school principals was given special attention. The Educational Administration training program for secondary school principals, which was previously launched by Addis Ababa University (AAU), was more strengthened and widened its horizon to other
universities in the country. The program was even revised and modified, to address the existing educational issues in the country. So in the year 2002, the training program was renamed as “Educational Planning and Management” (EdPM) and some additional courses were also included in the curriculum.

As to the experience of the investigator, one of the reasons for substituting the name educational planning and management for educational administration was the intention of producing educational leaders and cope with the growing number of educational institutions in the country. That is to say, the former graduates of the educational administration Department were used to be assigned only as school principals while the new graduates of educational planning and management could fit any position. For instance, graduates of EdPM Department were assigned to serve in wereda education offices, zonal education desks, and regional education bureaus and some were still assigned to serve as secondary school principals.

**The Profile of School Directors/ Principals**

As indicated in the blue print of MoE, the principalship should be based on the teaching profession and needs to have its own ethics and training. Hence, in addition to the empowerment of their teaching profession, school principals are expected to arrange schools in such a way that schools can address diversified interests, suitable to provide quality education, and become places where the real democratic leadership is exercised. To involve teachers in research activities and use the findings of the research in solving educational problems, principals need to prepare long and short-term school development plans and have the required knowledge and skill to give clear direction for the implementation of the programs. They also need
to link their knowledge and skill with appropriate professional ethics and show that practically.

Required Skill and Focal points of the training

Generally, as mentioned earlier, educational leadership is a profession with its own having established theories and practical principles. Hence, in Ethiopia, professionals who are assigned to the leadership position are those who are trained in this profession (p.30-31). As a result:

- Those who are assigned as first cycle primary school (1-4) directors have at least a diploma and successfully completed primary school directors’ training.
- Those who are assigned as second cycle primary school (1-8) directors need to have at least a first degree and successfully completed primary school directors’ training.
- Those who are assigned as secondary school (9-12) directors need to have at least second degree and have educational administration as one of their training areas. In addition, they are expected to successfully complete secondary school principals’ training program.

Strategy and content of the training are targeted at developing educational professionals’ knowledge and practice in the area of constitution, policies and strategies. Generally, they focus on decentralized educational leadership, strengthening school improvement program, and empowering and supporting teaching-learn activities.
To produce strong educational leadership and management having the required knowledge and skill, and loyal to their citizens and the country as a whole, special attention is given to the pre-service training program.

**Educational Leadership and Management (LAMP) Program in Ethiopia**

This program was designed to achieve two major objectives (MoE, 2006). These are:

1. To make the decentralized educational leadership and management effective and develop capacity of school principals, supervisors, Wereda education office and regional education bureau experts on educational planning preparation and implementation.
2. To develop skill of school principals and supervisors in teaching-learning activities, educational leadership and support system.

The program was launched based on the problems identified through the training need assessment and capacity analysis and leadership types required to be practiced in schools. Trainees who successfully completed the program were given equivalent certificate. Based on the certificate the trainees used to be assigned as school principals, compete for different positions, and get or renew job permit.

*The duration of the training program:*

1. For vice principals- they are trained for one year in the summer program and posted to primary school vice principal position
2. Primary school directors-Trained for two consecutive years in the summer program and awarded primary school principal’s certificate.
3. Secondary school principals- The get three consecutive years training and awarded a higher diploma for secondary school principalship.

4. Training for supervisors- This is similar to the training provided to school principals/directors in each stage. However, supervisors were not provided with certificates upon completion of their training, unlike principals.

To make the program practical, universities were given the responsibility of training secondary school principals and supervisors while teacher training colleges took the responsibility of training primary school directors and supervisors (MoE, 2006).

Currently, to upgrade the educational level of secondary school principals, MA training program has been launched in three modes-regular program, extension/evening program, and summer face-to-face program (Ethiopian MoE, 2009).

As mentioned somewhere in this paper, the Blueprint specifically states that who will become secondary school principals should be MA holders, who successfully completed professional courses offered for principals. With this rationale in mind, information from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) discloses that currently, about 1200 secondary schools require principals and supervisors trained at MA level. Likewise, an estimated 14,000 primary schools (grades 1-8) need qualified principals and supervisors at BA level and about 10,000 lower primary schools (grades 1-4) need principals and supervisors with diploma (p.1).

To wind up, the training of school principals and supervisors in Ethiopia has gone through different stages and passed through ups and downs. The task began by few laymen with minimum resources is currently being handled by educated...
professionals throughout the country. Put another way, a remarkable progress has been made in the area of principals and supervisors’ training; though, as indicated earlier, the number of school principals is not in proportion with the fast growing number of schools in the country.

**School Improvement and Partners Taking Part in it**

According to the report of Plan International Headquarters (2004), ‘School improvement’ means making schools better places for learning. This relies on changes at both school level and within classrooms, which in turn depend on schools being committed to fulfilling the expectations of children and their parents. In other words, school improvement refers to a systematic approach that improves the quality of schools. Similarly, Barnes (2004) refers to school improvement as “The process of altering specific practices and policies in order to improve teaching and learning. In short, the main target of school improvement is an activity targeted at improving teaching and learning so that better students’ achievement will be exhibited. As indicated in the previous sections, the focal concern of school improvement is to enable students to achieve better results.

Sammons and Hillman (1995) also define school improvement focusing on its program aspect. They refer to school improvement program as a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools. As it could be observed from the above definitions, the major focus of school improvement is to make certain adjustments or changes for better to the teaching-learning activities or tasks that are directly or indirectly related to the instructional practices in school.
The other person to define school improvement is (Jerald in Burkett, 2009). In his words, District or school improvement is a “continuous institutional process rather than a sporadic set of activities or isolated projects.” In the previous sections, it is also stated in this paper that one of the features of school improvement is that it is a continuous activity. It should not be considered as something that we begin once and take a rest somewhere in between the activities. Therefore, sustainability is said to be an aspect of school improvement.

To envisage the real improvement of their schools, instructional leaders need to have a vision. Because without a concept of where we are trying to get to, the verb ‘to improve’ has no meaning (Potter and David, 2002). The instructional leaders (school principals) should also monitor the progress and know where they are now in relation to their vision, plan and identify means of getting from where they are towards where they want to be, and use performance indicators to track the progress of school improvement over time (Potter and David, 2002).

However, the strive for school improvement is not only limited to the efforts of instructional leaders. It needs the endeavor of all who are engaged in the school improvement program. So who are the individuals taking part in school improvement? What roles do they play in the school improvement program? The following sections shortly present this issue.

**Partners in School Improvement**

Everyone involved in or interested in the work of the school has a role to play in the process of improvement planning. In the school self-assessment process and improvement planning to be successful, it must involve all school partners. The most
effective school improvement plan results when principals; teachers; students, through school councils and other groups; parents and other community members work together as a team (Ethiopian MoE, 2011). Generally, for a successful and effective school improvement process the involvement of all the stakeholders needs to be meaningful. The following are the major ones:

i. **Meaningful student involvement**- This evolves from a growing awareness among students and educators that young people can and should play a crucial role in the success of school improvement (Fletcher, 2005). He also explains that a number of recent accounts have featured educators refuting the misconception that engaging students as partners in school change is about “making students happy,” pacifying unruly children, or “letting kids run the school.” Research shows that when educators work with students in schools – as opposed to working for them – school improvement is positive and meaningful for everyone involved. Fletcher also puts that: “At the heart of meaningful student involvement are students, whose voices have long been silenced”.

Schools in different countries have their own mechanisms to involve students in different school activities. In Maryland, a local school board has engaged students as full voting members of the school board for more than 25 years. In California, a group of students led a district-wide evaluation of their teachers, curriculum, facilities, and students. In Washington, schools rely on students to teach younger students, their peers, and adults in most grades across the state (Fletcher, 2005).

In spite of the evidence, researchers and advocates still find that students are continually neglected, and sometimes actively denied, any sort of role in their school improvement
programs. Paulo Freire (in Fletcher, 2005) argued that learning must be rooted in the experiences that students come from. School is an example of an experience that students have in common; and yet, despite experts’ calls for meaningful student involvement, there is no widespread effort to engage students in school improvement. As Michael Fullan writes, “When adults think of students, they think of them as potential beneficiaries of change… they rarely think of students as participants in a process of school change and organizational life.” Meaningful student involvement authorizes students and adults to form powerful partnerships to improve schools (p.4).

As per the observation of the investigator, it cannot be said that students are actively and fully participating in the school improvement program in schools under study. They are only made to take part in activities/meetings through a single representative (example: student council). Watt (2008) put this concept in his report as follows:

While many schools demonstrate a commitment to student representation, this often relies upon more ‘traditional’ mechanisms such as student councils, health, forum, peer mentors and peer counselors. This does not guarantee their meaningful involvement in school affairs. However, it may be argued that there is a danger that such approaches can establish a sub-set of ‘chosen’ students who may not necessarily represent the views and needs of all their peers and that some students effectively remain disenfranchised.

Hence, if a real school improvement is the target of principals and all the concerned school communities, full involvement of students in this activity is mandatory. However, this may not take place overnight. It needs a gradual practice and convincing all concerned about its merit. Schools should also need to detach themselves from the traditional approach and value the meaningful participation of students in decision-making.
For Fletcher, meaningful student involvement is the process of engaging students as partners in every facet of school change for strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy. Instead of allowing adults to tokenize a contrived “student voice” by inviting one student to a meeting, meaningful student involvement continuously acknowledges the diversity of students by validating and authorizing them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge, and experiences throughout education in order to improve schools. Simply involving students is not inherently meaningful. The following points explore when student involvement is meaningful in contrast to when it is not meaningful (Watt, 2008).

**When is student involvement meaningful?**

- When students are allies and partners with adults in improving schools.
- When students have the training and authority to create real solutions to the challenges that schools face in learning, teaching, and leadership.
- When schools, including educators and administrators, are accountable to the direct consumers of schools – students themselves.
- When student-adult partnerships are a major component of every sustainable, responsive, and systemic approach to transforming schools.

**When is student involvement not meaningful?**

- When students are regarded as passive recipients in schools, or as empty vessels to be filled with teachers’ knowledge.
- When the contributions of students are minimized or tokenized by adults by asking students to “rubber stamp” ideas developed by adults, or by inviting students to sit on committees without real power or responsibility.
When student perspectives, experiences or knowledge are filtered with adult interpretations.

When students are given problems to solve without adult support or adequate training; when students are trained in leadership skills without opportunities to take on real leadership roles in their school.

Generally, students’ involvement should not be something overlooked in school improvement program. Besides taking part in different activities, students can serve as a bridge between school and the community. Meaningful involvement leads to students taking a great interest in their academic achievement, improves students’ relationship with teachers, and helps them to exercise leadership.

**ii. School Head-teachers (Principals)**

Education research shows that most school variables, considered separately, have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass.

Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal (Wallace Foundation, 2011). This is to say that school principals are key figures that coordinate all resources and intermingle different activities in schools, which lead to school improvement.

As has been mentioned in the Education Improvement Commission handbook (2000), principals are the key players in the school improvement process. They play a wide variety of roles to ensure that the improvement plan and its implementation
are successful. One of their most important responsibilities is to ensure that improvement plans reflect the characteristics of their own school and its community.

Although teachers are at the heart of leadership capacity, principals hold a special position in schools. They have access to the larger school system, a claim to organizational and historical authority, and the pressure to meet teacher, parent, and student expectations. They build trust, focus the school, convene and sustain the conversation, and insist on the implementation of policy and practice. As long as we have schools that need to be improved or improvements that need to be sustained, the role of the principal will be important (Lambert, 2003).

As has been underlined by Hargreaves and Fink, Leithwood, Jantzi and McElheron (in Day & Kenneth 2007), nothing terminate an ambitious school improvement effort faster than a change in school leadership. That is to say, if schools alter their current visionary change-oriented leaders/principals, who direct them to enhanced success there is a possibility for them to halt their strive towards better school improvement.

As indicated, school principals play a key role as a partner in school improvement. The major target of school improvement is the achievement of students, which is made practical by a competent principal, besides the presence of other human, financial, and material resources. Schools that make a difference in students’ learning are led by principals who make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of staff and in the learning of pupils in their charge (Edmonds, 1979a; Murphy and Hallinger, 1992; Ribbins and Burridge, 1994).
Generally, school principals have many roles to play in school improvement. To mention few, involving school community, parents, and the wider community in school improvement affairs, facilitating communication in school, directing all resources to the improvement program, facilitating teachers’ development program, establishing and working with the school improvement committee, and the likes.

iii. Teachers as Partners in School Improvement

Teachers are the prime and foremost actors in the teaching learning process, which is the core element of school improvement. In school activities, teachers are involved in different management positions, besides teaching, and this means that they should be equipped and empowered, if the aim of the school is to bring about improvement or change for better.

For instance, teachers play roles in different sections and school committee positions like PTA, School improvement committee, Department head, PTA, school discipline committee, school improvement committee (SIP), co-curricular committee, etc. As has been indicated by Reynolds (2005), improvement towards effectiveness will have to lean upon teachers’ willingness to adopt a different cultural, as well as organizational, view on their own profession. It is clear that school improvement is mainly determined by classroom effectiveness, which brings the teaching/learning process into the center of the improvement process. Regarding the role of teacher in SIP, Education Improvement Commission (2000) writes the following:

*Since the ultimate objective of school improvement planning is to improve the level of student achievement, the person who has the greatest impact on students during the school day—the teacher—plays several critical roles in the school improvement planning process.*
According to the Ethiopian MoE document (2011), the involvement of teachers in the process of assessment leading to improvement planning will be most effective where the school already has established structures for professionals to meet for the development of their professional knowledge and competence. The roles that can be played by school staff to support the process of self assessment and school improvement planning and strategies are also clearly put in the document.

### iv. Parents as Partners in School Improvement

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2011 (section 1118) requires parent involvement policies that include a variety of actions and processes. Every school and districts need to comply with the regulation for parent involvement as prescribed this Act. Because children benefit academically when parents and educators work together. They also feel safe when they observe their parents working with the school community at school. If parents are regularly involved in school activities, students feel safe on their lesson, they will be punctual to school, develop a positive attitude to the school and the school community, etc.

The contribution of parents ranges from parent involvement in the instruction of their own children, at one extreme, to direct participation in school decision making, at the other (e.g., Epstein, 1996). This can empower the final result of students, at which the school improvement is targeted. No matter the student population, involving parents primarily in the instruction of their own children is most likely to contribute to children’s learning (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998).

To ensure parents are informed about and involved in their children’s education, schools must improve their partnerships with parents. A good way to do this is to
involve parents in the improvement process (MoE, 2003). For instance, schools benefit when they include parents in the decision-making process. When parents provide their opinions and preferences regarding issues under consideration, they are more likely to buy-in to school policies and initiatives (Davis, 2000). When parents are aware of the complexities of running a school, they are often more supportive. Additionally, parents can help the school reach out to other parents, share ideas, and gather input because they have informal access through extra-curricular activities and neighborhood connections.

The analysis of (Institute for Policy Studies/IPS in U.S. Department of Education report, 2007) survey identified “parents as decision-makers” as the area most in need of improvement across the schools surveyed. Based on this information, individual schools began considering how to get parents more involved in school decision-making; the district started reviewing its parent involvement policies and supports; and, for its part, the Indiana Partnerships Center undertook a review of its leadership training. To achieve their school improvement objectives, schools need to have parent involvement policies and engage parents in different school improvement duties, which enable them to win the attention of students and gain the willingness of parents.

Even though both school leaders and parents are responsible in forming good partnership between them, school leaders need to take more initiative in this regard. In support of this idea, Lowa School Boards Foundation (2007) reports the following: “The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders”.
v. Community as partners in School Improvement

Community involvement has been a central theme in educational reform. Today, community involvement has taken on renewed significance in configurations and discussions of school improvement (Sanders 2003). In the previous times, community involvement was considered as gaining financial or material support from the community. But today, financial or material support is one aspect of community involvement in education. It goes beyond the mere seeking of benefit from the community. It is rather a mutual benefit between the two, community and school. Among the other activities of community members at the school / district level are participating in different management positions (for example PTA, SIP committee, KETB, WETB, etc.), contributing their effort and ideas, teaching students about the tradition/culture or history of the local people and the likes.

The role of the wider community in school improvement should be given high emphasis, particularly for a country like Ethiopia, where the decentralized education system is being made practical with the intent of involving the community in decision-making at school level. To ensure parents are informed about and involved in their children’s education, schools must improve their partnerships with parents. A good way to do this is to involve parents in the improvement process.

Evidence has suggested that school improvement can be achieved if a school has a commitment to its community. By developing a deep and a mutual relationship with people and organizations in the local community, a school gains not only information, knowledge and support but also a sense of moral purpose (Gelsthorpe and John, 2003). Put differently, in order to envisage their school improvement
schemes, schools need to actively involve communities in the process. They should leave their doors open to the community so that the community members consider schools as their own properties and take part in whatever programs the school design.

How do we involve communities and what kind of partnership do we follow? Epstein (1995) gives a short and precise answer to these questions.

The Six Types of Partnerships Framework, developed by Joyce Epstein is a framework describes the general categories of partnerships that exist among schools, families, and communities. They are summarized as follows:

- **Parenting**: Helping families establish home environments to support children as learners.
- **Communications**: The use of effective forms for school-to-home- and home-to-school communications.
- **Volunteering**: The recruitment and organization of the school’s volunteer program
- **Learning at Home**: Helping families assist their children with homework and recognizing other learning at home opportunities.
- **Decision-making**: Including parents, students, and community members in the school decision making process.
- **Collaborating with the Community**: The identification and integration of resources and services from the community.

This model of Joyce Epstein and her colleagues is a tool schools can use to analyze their current practices and make plans for future activities. As Per the suggestion of the authors, this model can help schools see their strengths and build upon them to
create a comprehensive approach to family and community involvement that promotes student success.

If schools really want to involve the community in school improvement program, they need to improve their collaboration with the community from time to time. Davis (2000) discusses that building better connections to meet the needs of children and further the goals of school reform starts with effective school and community partnerships. He lists the benefits of improving community collaborations as follows:

- **Schools feel they are getting help from multiple sources:** With the support of their communities, schools can accomplish their goals, which in turn, can result in more community support for increased school funding.

- **Communities can unite around the shared responsibility of educating youth, and schools are able to expand the number of positive role models:** Community partners can offer varied mentoring experiences to students.

- **Community businesses can make people aware of their support for schools and families:** Businesses can benefit from the positive public relations of working closely with schools.

In summary, the active involvement of different partners in school improvement activities is an opportunity for a more democratic and participatory approaches in principals’ strive for building stronger school improvement scheme in their schools. Attempting to meet this goal in the absence of active participation of the aforementioned bodies is to become deficient. All that school principals should do is collaborating with those bodies, motivating them, raising their awareness about educational policies and strategies and working with them.
2.3.2. The Strive for School Improvement in Ethiopian Secondary Schools

In Ethiopia, a School Improvement Program (SIP) was initiated on a pilot base in 2006 as part of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP), as indicated in ESDP IV (MoE, 2011). Following the educational decentralization system, high emphasis has been given to lower levels. Authority for making decisions for school improvement is devolved to the school-level which puts unprecedented pressure on school principals to be accountable for the quality of education provided by their school.

To make the school improvement program practical, the establishment of Wereda Education and Training Board (WETB), Kebele Education and Training Board (KETB), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and School Improvement Committee SIC were given consideration. According to the program action plan (ESDP IV), it is estimated that currently; about 80 percent of primary schools and 60 percent of secondary schools have developed a School Improvement Plan. The investigator of this study observed that three out of five schools under study have their own school improvement plan, though the degree of implementation varies from school to school. The best SIP practices and experiences are being scaled up to be communicated to all schools.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education prepared a handbook for guidance on self-assessment and school improvement planning in the year 2011. Schools have been assessed based on the criteria included in this handbook. According to this handbook, the ultimate objective of the school improvement process is to improve student achievement levels by creating a positive environment for learning and by increasing
the degree to which parents are involved in their children’s learning. Accordingly, Parents and local communities have been actively participating in school improvement planning and implementation. A number of workshops have enabled SIP committee members, supervisors and educational personnel support the SIP activities (MoE, 2011).

In spite of these efforts, the implementation of SIP was found to be delayed in some schools due to shortage of resources. To overcome these, GEQIP launched implementing a School Grant Program by preparing School Grant Guidelines (SGG) and distributing to key stakeholders (MoE, 2009). Schools were assessed based on the four school improvement domains indicated in a handbook for guidance on school self-assessment. The four school improvement domains against which Ethiopian schools are currently being assessed are:

**Domain 1:** Learning and Teaching

**Domain 2:** Student Environment

**Domain 3:** Leadership and Management

**Domain 4:** Community Involvement

1. **Learning and Teaching**

As has been mentioned by MoE, greater emphasis was given to this domain by the implementing schools, as it is the key contributing area to the success of a school. The school leadership and management also took responsibility to have a strategic role in ensuring the success of learning and teaching, keeping the student environment and involving parents and the community to contribute to the effectiveness of school strategies to ensure success. Because the key to a successful
school is getting the learning and teaching right. Hence, learning and teaching is among the key elements of school improvement (Ethiopian MoE, 2009).

Included under this are the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and curriculum. Generally, it comprises different qualities expected of both students and teachers. From the teacher’s side, mastery of the subject he/she teaches, ability to conduct timely and continuous assessment, to be a role model to his/her students, recognizing students’ individual differences etc. On the part of the students, the key ones are students’ interest to participate in clubs and committees, the respect they have for their teachers, their interest to ask questions in class, etc.

2. Safe and Healthy School Environment for students

This domain includes student focus, student empowerment, and how well students are supported. It embraces activities done by teachers and the school principal to keep the school environment safe and healthy for students. These activities include principal’s willingness to support students and help them to become independent and responsible citizens and his trend to create a safe, supportive and welcoming educational environment for all students. In addition, the principal’s practice of setting clear directions for the school and his/her effort to keep the beauty of school fences and campus are the major activities needed to be done by the school principal in his/her effort to keep safe student environment. Likewise, teachers’ practice of taking regular student attendance, his expectations of all students and interest to communicate these expectations to his students are major issues to be addressed under students’ environment.
In additions to what is listed above, the existence of adequate facilities and learning sections for students and teacher’s practice of implementing student centered activities are also points need to be considered when keeping safe and healthy environment at school. As stated somewhere in this paper, it is hard to implement the school improvement program in the absence of human, financial and material resources. So besides the school grant provided to them, schools need to design various mechanisms to enrich themselves with the required resources, if the true SIP is to take place. Likewise, teachers also need to divorce themselves from the traditional and teacher-centered approach and introduce a variety of student centered approach in their classes. This will create a sort of self confidence among students, and prepare them to face challenges and tackle whatever problems they face.

3. Leadership and Management

This section requests schools to consider the following points:

- Whether school principal designs school vision in collaboration with a school improvement committee (SIC). School improvement committee is one of the bodies in school that is accountable for different activities pertaining to SIP in Ethiopian secondary schools. This is indicated by SIP handbook prepared by Ethiopian MoE (2011). The head of SIC is a school principal. As it is indicated in the handbook, school principals need to design school goals and vision in collaboration with this committee.

- Nevertheless, as the investigator observed from the focus group discussion and interview results, Sip is currently not active in secondary schools under study. The responsibility is rather taken over by the PTA. The focus group participants
say, “School improvement committee is inactive here, we are observing while most activities are done by PTA”. That is the major reason why the investigator chose PTA rather than school improvement committee (SIC) for the focus group discussion.

4. Community Involvement
This is the fourth domain of school improvement. Included under this are partnership with parents and guardians, engaging the community, and promoting education. Generally, the following are issues need to be addressed here: the presence of effective strategies in school to support parents and guardians, efforts made by the principal to invite parents and guardians to school so that they can be actively involved in school affairs, accessibility of communication to all parents, efforts made to get financial and material supports from the community, the presence of community involvement policy which encourages the community to support and participate in school life, etc.

The aforementioned domains are the key to school improvement in which Ethiopian secondary schools are currently targeting. In Ethiopia, communities have contributed significantly to the development and the expansion of education, especially at primary level. According to ESDP IV, The massive increases in student enrollment and expansion of primary schools can partly be attributed to community efforts. Likewise, almost all primary schools and many secondary schools are constructed, rehabilitated and/or upgraded by community efforts (MoE, 2011). However, the following are major challenges observed in the past (p. 50):
Policies about community contributions are not clearly articulated and communities are not well-informed about them.

Data on community participation are not properly reported

Some communities are overburdened and/or stressed by contributions, the risk of “community fatigue”, and a decrease in their participation may occur.

Generally, the Ethiopian government is targeted at community involvement as an important domain in school improvement. It was indicated in ESDP IV that inequalities in access to secondary and preparatory education reduced. Constructing and expanding preparatory secondary schools, expanding preparatory secondary education classes within the compounds of general secondary schools, and increasing Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for general secondary education from 39.7% in 2009/10 to 62% in 2014/15 some of the activities planned to be accomplished in collaboration with the community.