CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance, delimitation/scope of the study, limitations of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the study. It also presents different research models of an instructional leader developed by different authors, and the conceptual framework and model adapted by the investigator of the current study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The most important single factor in the success of schools is the quality of the leadership of the head (Department of Education and Science /DES, 1977). In particular, the devolution of responsibility for local management of schools in many systems has resulted in the head-teacher or principal becoming a manager of systems and budgets as well as a leader by colleagues. In addition, the increasingly competitive environment in which schools operate has placed a much greater emphasis upon the need to raise standards and to improve the outcomes of schooling.

Ethiopia is one among those, which pushed down the decision making power to the lower levels where schools and the local communities make decisions about educational issues. Traditionally, principals have worked under highly centralized education systems that limited their power and autonomy in making decisions related to the core business of school – teaching and learning. The practice of decentralization began following the education and training policy of 1994. Authority for making decisions for school improvement is also devolved to the school-level, which made the task of the principals
to be complex and put unprecedented pressure on school principals to be accountable for
the quality of education provided by their schools.

With regard to the growing challenge of school leadership ASCD (2013) says, “The
importance of school-level leadership is beyond dispute but the complexity of leadership
responsibilities is more challenging than ever” (p.3).

Literature on school reform has emphasized the need for principals to expand beyond
their traditional administrative role and become instructional leaders (Graczewski, Joel,
& Deborah J, 2009). The ultimate goal of schooling is learning on the part of the
students. What they learn, however, depends on the teachers’ performance, which is a
product of many factors, such as their commitment, professional growth, school
environment, prevailing culture, teachers’ innovativeness, etc (Enueme1, Chika, &
Ebele, 2008).

All these factors have connections directly or indirectly with the principal’s actions.
Promoting teachers’ professional development, according to Sheppard (1996) is the most
influential instructional leadership behavior at both the elementary and high school
levels. Supporting the above, Obi (2002) noted that to be a successful instructional
leader, the principal must give primary attention to the program of staff improvement,
which comprises leadership techniques and procedures designed to change the teachers’
role performance. He stated that the principals’ roles in this include classroom visitation,
observations, conferences, seminar, workshop, professional associations, in-service
educational programs, etc.
Stated differently, students’ achievement is based on teachers’ motivation and professional competence, which is in turn based on school principals’ instructional leadership effectiveness. The effectiveness of a school is in one way or another linked to the effectiveness of the instructional leader. Edmonds found a link between the effectiveness of 55 schools and strong principal leadership, starting a series of studies referred to as effective schools research (Hallinger, 1992). Therefore, the influence of the principal on teachers and students can have an impact on the effectiveness of any school.

More recent researchers (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress 2003) suggest that, an effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students. The principal is expected to provide the appropriate leadership, which will assist each staff member make a maximum contribution to the schools’ effort to providing quality and up-to-date education. He/she is expected to have experience in this area because, according to Sergiovanni (1996), after all, knowledge about teaching and learning and ability to share these insights with teachers is a key factor in any good principal selection process. He equally confirmed a positive and strong relationship between effective instructional leadership behaviors exhibited by principals’ and teacher commitment.

Research reports on effective schools of the 1970s identified the instructional leader as one who provides direction, resources and support to teachers and students in a classroom setting. Rossow (1990) also notes instructional leadership as the most significant leadership dimension. It is the most popular theme in leadership for more than two decades. Instructional Leadership is also a term to describe a leadership style, which focuses on the instruction of students and improving learning outcomes. Smith
and Andrews (1989) define the instructional leader as someone who is a resource provider, an instructional resource, and communicator. Hallinger (in Payne, 2009) offers that the principal defines the mission, manages the curriculum and instruction, and promotes the school climate. Despite its popularity, instructional leadership is often not clearly investigated.

In recent years, the restructuring of schools to empower teachers and to implement school-based shared decision making has resulted in a move away from bureaucratic control toward professionalization of teaching (Louis, Marks, & Kruse 1996). In many schools, teachers are developing a collaborative practice of teaching which includes coaching, reflection, group investigation of data, study teams, and risk-laden explorations to solve problems (Dowling & Sheppard, 1976; Glanz & Neville, 1997). Educational administrators are required to reinforce such efforts and must lead their schools to high achievement for all students and in their effort to build effective schools.

One consistent factor in most of the effective school research is an emphasis on strong instructional leadership (Edmonds, 1979a, 1982, Purkey & Smith, 1983; Weber, 1971; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). The extensive review of more than 100 studies by Purkey and Smith 1983 found nine structure variables that are encompassed in an effective school organization. These are instructional leadership, school-site management, staff stability, curriculum articulation and organization, school-wide staff development, parental involvement and support, school-wide recognition of academic success, maximized learning time, and district support. Particularly, teachers’ professional development is among the activities that need instructional leader’s /principal’s serious attention. Instructional leadership behaviors associated with promoting professional
growth and staff development yield positive effects of classroom practice (Larson-Knight, 2000; Blasé & Blasé, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Sheppard, 1996).

Defining and communicating shared goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching learning process and promoting school-wide professional development are inextricably interwoven. Effective instructional leaders demonstrate the behaviors described above for each of these dimensions. Instructional leadership offers schools a process to become more effective in the teaching and learning process.

A good instructional leadership practice can also bring about better student achievement. Weber (1971) studied four instructionally effective inner-city schools to identify determinants of student achievement. He concluded that all four effective schools had strong leadership that focused decisions around instruction, set high expectations for all students, had a safe, orderly atmosphere, emphasized the strong acquisition of reading skills, had additional reading personnel, used phonics in reading programs, individualized instruction, and monitored student progress frequently.

Leadership theories such as trait, behavior, contingency and charismatic, provide a theoretical framework for viewing the historic evolution of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership has many definitions and models that conceptualize it starting from the early 1900’s. The current study synthesizes the many definitions and models of instructional leadership using theoretical and empirical considerations. The instructional leadership construct is defined in terms of principal behaviors that lead a school to educate all students to the maximum potential possible.
The role of instructional leader of school leaders is a relatively new concept that emerged in the early 1980s in North America. Its emergence called for the shift of emphasis from the principal being managers or administrators to instructional or academic leaders. This shift was influenced largely by research, which found that effective schools usually had principals who stressed the importance of instructional leadership (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982). That is to say, high achieving schools had principals who boldly led the academic program, set goals, examined curriculum, evaluated teachers, and assessed the results.

Later, in the first half of the 1990s, attention to instructional leadership seemed to waver, displaced by discussions of school based management and facilitative leadership (Lashway, 2002). Recently, instructional leadership has made a comeback with increasing importance placed on academic standards and the need for schools to be accountable.

As indicated by different authors, the school principal wears many hats being manager, administrator, instructional leader and curriculum leader at different points in a day. However, as per the experience of the investigator of the current study, this most crucial task (instructional leadership) of an educational manager seems to be less emphasized by school principals. While most would agree that instructional leadership is critical in the relation of effective schools, it is seldom practiced. For instance, among the many tasks performed by principals, only one-tenth of their time is devoted towards providing instructional leadership (Stronge, 1988). According to various studies, even today, school leaders continue to seek a balance in their role as manager/administrator and instructional leader. Among the reasons cited for less emphasis given to instructional
leadership is the lack of in depth training for their role as an instructional leader, lack of
time to execute instructional activities, increased paperwork and the community’s
expectation that the principal’s role is that of a manager (Flath, 1989; Fullan, 1991).

Once, when the investigator of the current study was attending his MA program in
Educational Planning and Management, a certain instructor (Doctor) entered his class
and asked the whole students the following question: “Who is the great person in a
school?” Everybody kept quiet for some time and later on, one of the investigator’s class
mates raised his hand and said, “anybody is great in his/her position.” However, “no,”
said the Doctor, “to me, the great person in a school compound is the school principal.”
This is simply to highlight the decisiveness of school principal in the overall activities of
a school and school improvement. The role of the principal continues to be a key to the
improvement of schools (Heck & Marcowlides, 1993; Keller, 1998; Krug, 1993; Portin,
Shen, & Williams 1998).

Hence, if principals are to take the role of instructional leadership seriously, they need to
free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts towards improving
teaching and learning. Instructional improvement is an important goal that when
implemented, allows both students and teachers to control their destiny in making a more
meaningful learning environment. Brewer (2001) suggests that the role of the
instructional leader should be expanded to incorporate a shift away from “management”
(working in the system of administrative tasks) towards “leadership” (working on the
system) with the focus on instruction.
The instructional leadership role of school principals can also undoubtedly affect the school improvement. It is now more than 20 years since leadership was identified as one of the key components of good schools. “Without exception, the most important single factor in the success of any school is the quality of the leadership of the head” (DES 1977, p.36). Principals are the key players in the school improvement process. They play a wide variety of roles to ensure that the improvement plan and the implementation are successful. One of their most important responsibilities is to ensure that the improvement plans reflect the characteristics of their own school and its community.

Following the formulation of Ethiopian education and training policy of 1994 and the decentralization of the educational system to lower levels (weredas and schools), attention has been given to the management of education in general and the training of secondary school principals in particular. In relation to this, Lockheed and Verspoor (in Sindhvad, 2009) state the following: “China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and Thailand, have addressed the need to improve school management, primarily by establishing institutions to train school principals” (p.6).

Prior to 1994, the concern for the training of secondary school principals was less. During that time, school principals were used to be appointed by their staff members as if it was a political election where individuals are assigned not based on their profession or competence but because of their political commitment. Even those few individuals who have got training in educational administration prior to 1994 were used to teach in their minor areas (like English and Geography), if they were not lucky to be elected (chosen) as principals by their staff members.
According to the information obtained from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2008), the Ethiopian government launched a major national-wide reform program to improve the quality of general education (grades 1-12). The objectives of the reform were to improve the achievement of boys and girls with respect to measured learning outcomes, primary completion rates, and secondary entrance rates. According to the review, the program was intended to be implemented for eight years in the form of a two-faced General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP).

GEQIP is comprehensive, covering most of the critical components of quality improvement, including revision and upgrading of the national curriculum, development and provision of new textbooks across all grades and subjects based on the new curriculum. It also focuses on improving pre-service teacher education, strengthening CPD for serving teachers, developing the capacity of head teachers (school principals), training and related services.

In spite of the emphasis given to the training of school principals after 1994, the weight given to the instructional leadership by the school principals seems to be inadequate. This could be the case for Ethiopian secondary schools in general and that of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR) in particular. SNNPR is one of the eleven regions in the country and is found in the southern part of Ethiopia. Out of the 80 nations found in the country, 56 are in the SNNPR. Having taught in one of the universities of SNNPR (Dilla University) for five years and training school principals and supervisors in the region in the regular, extension and summer programs for more than three years, the investigator selected the region as the target of his study.
Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the weight given to instructional leadership by secondary school principals of SNNPR and find out its association with the current school improvement practices launched in those schools.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The investigator targeted school principals as the major issue of the current study for the key positions they have and the major role they play in the day-to-day school activities. The position of principal has been identified as an important component of an effective school (Cotton, 2003; Goodwin, et al, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1996).

Among the core educational problems that have been raised by different Ethiopian governments in the past and still today are the problems pertaining to quality education. Following the formulation of Education and Training Policy (1994), the Ethiopian government has taken different measures to alleviate those educational problems. The efforts being made to strengthen professional skills of school principals and the school improvement process which has been in place are also part of the endeavor. In spite of the efforts made, the question of quality education is still the major concern of the country today.

Especially, educational quality needs to be the prime focus of educational managers or instructional leaders because schools are places where young generations lay foundations that enable them to be ready to shoulder the responsibilities given to them tomorrow. Particularly, serious assignment is given to secondary schools as they prepare youngsters for university education. If the students are provided with quality education at this level, there is a tendency for them to succeed in their higher education. In most cases, it is not uncommon to observe schools and universities blaming one another when too many
students fail to succeed in their first year university course and forced to leave the campus due to academic stress, particularly, with matters related to the medium of instruction, English. The investigator attended few meetings comprising school principals, teachers, university instructors and administrators.

As to the observation of the investigator in the meetings, the instructors were found to point their fingers at schools for the poor performance of the first year university students, saying that students should have laid foundation at school level. Conversely, schools projected the problem to universities. Whatever the case is, we need to work more on the quality of education in both cases today, in order to get better and competent citizens tomorrow. Among the major contributors to this are a good school improvement scheme and competent instructional leaders.

Quality is multi-dimensional. That is to say, we cannot bring about quality education at school level by improving only one dimension of the teaching learning process unless and otherwise the inputs are equally improved. For instance, the existence of competent and trained staff alone may not guarantee quality education if the school has extreme shortage of materials (including text books), weak school community relation, less attention for instructional activities and school improvement programs, recurring conflict among the staff and the school management, etc.

Hence, as to the investigator, the school principals are required to consider two important points to make their schools effective. First, they have to be professionally skilled and update themselves with the new technology. Second, they need to make instruction their top priority and have to have the “Instruction First” motto because
above all, they are there to direct the teaching learning activities whose result is to bring about the desired behavioral change among the learners. All other activities are supportive of this major activity.

Teaching in primary and secondary schools for more than six years, serving as a secondary school principal for three years and Lecturing at Dilla university (Ethiopia) for five years, the investigator of the current study is attracted towards this topic. Besides the investigator’s experience in different educational institutions, the provision of the course entitled “Instructional Leadership” as a subject at the university level in Ethiopia starting from the year 2009 also contributed a lot to the selection of the title of the current study. Especially, the investigator was impressed by the words of a supervisor who once came to his office while the investigator was a secondary school principal.

That day, the investigator was overwhelmed with some administrative activities and papers were piled up high on his table. Some of them were urgent reports to upper officials. Soon the supervisor (from the Zonal Education Desk) entered his office and the investigator warmly welcomed him rising from his seat. Then, the supervisor said: “Owoo.. Principal, don’t lose yourself in routine administrative activities and ignore the most important part of your job.” The investigator questioned him, “why you said that?” “Because,” continued the supervisor,” “on my way to your office, I saw some students disturbing and teachers leaving classes before the bell has gone. So while doing your administrative tasks in your office, send your eyes and ears out and sense what is happening to the instructional activity. It is better to overlook office works than ignoring the instructional activities, which is the core part of your job.” With smile and friendly
approach, the supervisor conveyed the message, which also influenced the investigator’s interest towards this topic today.

As mentioned in the background section, the investigator considered the emphasis given to the instructional leadership in secondary schools under study to be inadequate. Particularly, starting from the year 2002, Ethiopian secondary school principals have abandoned the task of teaching for unknown reasons. In the previous years, they used to teach five to six periods (load) a week, besides the administrative activities. Now, it seems that they are kept at distant from the actual teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. Stressing principals’ teaching skills, Goodwin, et al (2003), Lyons and Algozzine (2006) recommend that school principals must have strong instructional skills and knowledge of teaching and learning.

As long as the school principals are not updating themselves with the practical aspects and techniques of teaching, classroom management strategies, assessment methods, etc, they are likely to face problems in commenting on teachers classroom activities, assessment methods, correcting lesson plans, evaluating the applicability of the recently launched active learning methods, and designing the new or improved teaching strategies. With regard to this, Hill (2001) comments the following:

*Despite principals and head teachers being recruited from the teaching profession, their knowledge of teaching and learning is often tacit or dated knowledge, based on increasingly distant memories of a former life in the classroom. As a consequence, it is possible that the knowledge of teaching and learning possessed by many Principals are more a hindrance than a help in informing the role of modern school leader.*
As mentioned in the background section, the principals in the secondary schools under study could not be exceptional to this problem.

Because of the aforementioned and related reasons, the investigator is interested to conduct this study in the area of instructional leadership and school improvement. The study attempted to answer the following basic questions, which are directed at instructional leadership and school improvement issues:

1.3. Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following key questions were addressed:

1. Have the school principals made attempts to promote teachers’ continuous professional development (CPD)?

2. Are there proper supervisory services in the target secondary schools?

3. To what extent do school principals define and communicate school goals to different stakeholders?

4. What were the actions taken by principals in promoting school climate?

5. Are there proper resource allotment practices by the school principals?

6. To which aspect of their job do principals give more emphasis, instructional or non-instructional?

7. What activities have been done so far by secondary schools in the area of school improvement?

8. Is there any association between the instructional leadership roles of principals and school improvement?
1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The major objective of this study is to investigate the instructional leadership roles of principals in secondary schools of Gedeo and Sidama zones, SNNPR and find out the relationship of these roles with the school improvement.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The following are specific objectives of the study:

1. To scrutinize the attempts made so far by the school principals in promoting teachers’ continuous professional development,
2. To find out whether proper supervision was practiced by principals in the sampled secondary schools.
3. To probe the extent to which the school principals define and communicate clear goals to different stakeholders,
4. To investigate the actions taken by principals in promoting school climate,
5. To examine the resource allotment practices followed by school principals,
6. To investigate the aspect of school principals’ job that has got more emphasis by the principals themselves,
7. To assess the activities done so far in the area of school improvement,
8. To scrutinize the relationship between the instructional leadership role of principals and school improvement.

1.5. Conceptual Framework

There are multitudes of conceptual models that demonstrate instructional leadership. Even though the models seem to be similar, there are some differences among them. The
model for the current study of (the instructional leadership roles of principals and their association with school improvement) was developed after going through the following models, which are similar but different from the approach of the current study. The following authors addressed the models:

Murphy’s Model (in Michelle, 2003),
Weber’s Model (1996),
Michelle’s Model (2003), and
Lineburg’s Model (2010)

This section reviews the above four models of instructional leadership and then introduces the new adopted model for the current study.

1. **Murphy’s Model** - Murphy (1990) provided a systematic and comprehensive review of instructional leadership in his synthesis of research findings from the effective schools, school improvement, staff development and organizational change literature. Michelle (2003) explained that Murphy built an instructional leadership framework, which incorporates studies and findings.

The framework consists of four dimensions of instructional leadership broken down into sixteen different roles or behaviors. The four dimensions of the instructional leader are developing mission and goals; managing the educational production function; promoting an academic learning climate; and developing a supportive work environment. They indicate the different instructional leader roles or behaviors that make up that dimension. Murphy (1990) discusses that developing a mission and goals is fundamental in creating a sense of shared purpose and linking efforts within the school around a common vision. Murphy
broke down this dimension into two major roles or behaviors of the principal.

These are *framing school goals*, and *communicating school goals*.

*Table 1 Murphy’s Comprehensive Instructional Leadership Framework*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing mission and goals</th>
<th>Managing the educational production</th>
<th>Promoting an academic learning</th>
<th>Developing a supportive work environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framing goals, communicating goals</td>
<td>Promoting quality instruction, supervising and evaluating instruction, allocating and protecting instructional time, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring students’ progress.</td>
<td>Establishing positive expectations and standards, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for students, promoting professional development.</td>
<td>Creating safe and orderly learning environment, providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement, developing staff collaboration and cohesion, securing outside resources in support of school goals, and forging links between the home and the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Murphy (in Michelle, 2003, p.43). Principal Instructional Leadership*

Framing school goals encompasses setting goals that emphasize student achievement for all students, incorporating data on past and current student performance and including staff responsibilities for achieving the goals. Communicating goals frequently, and formally and informally, to students, parents, and teachers stresses the importance that school goals guide the activities of the school.

Managing the educational production function of the school is the second dimension of Murphy’s (1990) framework. This dimension emphasizes management behaviors of the
principal. The instructional leader promotes quality instruction by conducting teacher conferences and evaluations, visiting classrooms, providing specific suggestions and feedback on the teaching and learning process, and determining teacher assignments in the best interest of student learning (Murphy, 1990; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1996). Additionally, the principal allocates and protects instructional time with school policies and procedures. The principal works with teachers to coordinate the curriculum through aligning school goals and objectives. The instructional leader monitors the progress of students frequently. An instructional leader also models how to use assessment data to set goals and evaluate instruction (Murphy in Michelle, 2003).

As to Murphy, promoting an academic learning climate refers to the behaviors of the principal that influences the norms, beliefs, and attitudes of the teachers, students, and parents of a school. This dimension deals directly with the teaching and learning process in classrooms (see table 1 for detail).

The development of a supportive work environment put by Murphy as final dimension of framework, which denotes how an instructional leader establishes organizational structures, and processes that support the teaching and learning process. The principal that exemplifies this dimension creates a safe and orderly learning environment, provides opportunities for meaningful student involvement, develops staff collaboration and cohesion, secures outside resources in support of school goals, and forges links between the home and school.

As mentioned earlier, Murphy (in Michelle, 2003) provided a systematic and comprehensive review of instructional leadership in his synthesis of research findings.
from the effective schools, staff development, school improvement and organizational change literature. However, he did not link his study of instructional leadership to school improvement, which is the concern of the current study.


Defining the school’s mission was described by Weber as a dynamic process of cooperation and reflective thinking to create a mission that is clear and honest. The staff, students and parents should be bound by the mission of the school to a common vision. The instructional leader offers the stakeholders the opportunity to discuss values and expectations for the school. Together they work to create a shared mission for the school.

Managing curriculum and instruction must be consistent with the mission of the school (Weber, 1996). The leader helps teachers use current research in best practices and instructional strategies to reach school goals for student performance.

Promoting a positive learning climate 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” (Weber, 2003, p.263). 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 (Weber, 1996).

Table 2: Instructional Leadership Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining the School’s mission</th>
<th>Managing curriculum and instruction</th>
<th>Promoting a positive learning climate</th>
<th>Observing and improving instruction</th>
<th>Assessing the instructional program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructional leader collaboratively develops a common vision and goals for the school with stakeholders.</td>
<td>The instructional leader monitors classroom practice alignment with the school’s mission, provides resources and support in the use of instructional best practices.</td>
<td>The instructional leader promotes a positive learning climate by communicating goals, &amp; establishing learning environment.</td>
<td>Instructional leader observes and improves instruction through the use of classroom observation and professional development opportunities.</td>
<td>The instructional leader contributes to the planning, designing, administering, and analysis of assessments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to Michelle (2003), observing and improving instruction starts with the principal establishing trusting and respectful relationships with the school staff. Weber (1996) proposed that observations are opportunities for professional interactions. These interactions provide professional development opportunities for both the observer and one being observed. This is to say that there is reciprocal relationship where both people
involved gain valuable information for professional growth. Principals enhance the experience by emphasizing research as the foundation for initiating teaching strategies, remediation, and differentiation of the lessons (Michelle, 2003).

Assessing the instructional program is Weber’s last domain of instructional leadership. According to Weber, this is essential for improvement of the instructional program. The instructional leader initiates and contributes to the planning, designing, administering, and analysis of assessments that evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. This continuous scrutiny of the instructional program enables teachers to meet students’ needs effectively through constant revision and refinement.

Even though Weber’s (1996) model of instructional leadership incorporates research about shared leadership and empowerment of informal leaders to create a school that underscores the emphasis of academics and student achievement, it has not tested the correlation of those instructional leadership dimensions with school improvement. In other words, though it is obvious that school principals play different instructional leadership roles to promote students achievement in the school, the link of these roles with school improvement (whose target is student achievement) has not been indicated by Weber’s model.

2. Michelle’s (2003) Framework of Instructional Leadership: After going through the aforementioned instructional leadership models and examining Hallinger & Murphy’s (1985) instructional leadership framework, Michelle adopted her own new model. To do this, she took three common dimensions of instructional leadership from those models. These are defining and
communicating shared goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promoting school-wide professional development.

*Table 3: Instructional Leadership Model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defines and communicates shared goals</th>
<th>Monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process</th>
<th>Promotes school-wide professional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This means that the leader works collaboratively with staff to define, communicate, and use data-driven shared goals of the school. Goals are used in making organizational decisions, aligning instructional practice, purchasing curricular materials, and providing targets for progress. These goals focus the staff around a common mission to achieve.</td>
<td>This dimension describes the activities of an instructional leader around the academic curriculum. These activities include being visible throughout the school, talking with students and teachers, providing praise and feedback to teachers, students, and community on academic performances, and ensuring that the instructional time of the school is not interrupted.</td>
<td>Encompassed in this dimension are behaviors that are consistent with lifelong Learning. The instructional leader encourages teachers to learn more about student achievement through data analysis, provides professional development opportunities that are aligned to school goals, and provides professional literature and resources to teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Michelle, J. (2003). Instructional leadership, academic press and student achievement. The Ohio State University.*

The three dimensions of instructional leadership demonstrate the goal-setting theory in practice in an educational setting. Michelle recommends that an instructional leader needs to work collaboratively with staff to define shared goals for the school year. The leader needs to monitor and provide feedback of the teaching and learning process as it relates to the specified, shared goals. Finally, she underlines that it is the instructional
leader’s responsibility to provide resources and professional development opportunities that help the staff reach the goals. Michelle also has not tested the influence of those dimensions of instructional leadership on school improvement. Her model is depicted in table 3:

4. Lineburg’s (2010) instructional leadership Model: Lineburg developed this model to study principals’ influence on teachers’ instructional practices. He explains that principals use the following leadership strategies to change teachers’ instructional practices:

(a) Communicating goals, (b) supervising instruction (c) promoting professional development, (d) providing resources, and (e) providing incentives (Lineburg, 2010).

Figure 1: Model of theory of change in teacher instructional practices

Even though Lineburg’s model seems to differ from the previous models in its approach, the focus is still on dimensions of principal’s instructional leadership. Like the aforementioned investigators, Lineburg has also not addressed the association of instructional leadership with school improvement.

Generally, after examining the instructional leadership models designed by the aforementioned writers, the investigator of the current study developed the following research model for the current study.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2**: *Instructional leadership and school improvement model for the current study*


The framework depicted in figure 2 is designed for the current study. It focuses on the five dimensions of instructional leadership roles being played by principals and their linkage with the current school improvement program in schools understudy. The major target of school improvement is students’ result or achievement. Hopkins (2001) writes that school improvement is concerned with raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching–learning process and the conditions that support it. So the framework of
the study focuses on finding out the association of the instructional leadership role of principals with school improvement, which is assessed based on the data obtained from respondents and additional information from document sources.

Promoting school-wide continuous professional development (CPD) is the first dimension of an instructional leader. The activities done so far by school principals in this area and the linkage of this with school improvement are addressed.

Supervising instruction is the second dimension of instructional leadership focused at by the current study. The school principal is among few key individuals rendering supervisory services in secondary schools. To what extent this role is being played is studied. Further, the relationship of the supervisory roles of principals with the school improvement was also assessed.

Communicating goals is the third dimension treated by the study. Sheppard (1996) puts that communication of school goals by the principal has a significant positive relationship with teacher classroom innovativeness and this in turn can add up to the overall school improvement. Here, the extent to which school principals share the idea and communicate school goals to teachers, students, parents and the whole community is identified. Following this, the association of goal communication with school improvement is assessed.

The other dimension of instructional leadership is promoting school climate. Among the activities of an educational leadership, according to Grift (1999), are initiating school improvement and creating a learning oriented educational climate. Promoting school climate includes protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing
incentives for teachers and students, and enforcing academic standards (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Therefore, principals’ role in this regard is assessed by examining its association with school improvement.

The last dimension of instructional leadership indicated in figure 2 is providing resources. To what extent do school principals hire and correctly place competent teachers? Are they properly allocating financial and material resources to the instructional activities? These and related questions are addressed under this dimension of instructional leadership. Further, the relationship of principals’ resource allotment practice with the school improvement is examined thoroughly in the analysis part.

Figure 2 indicates the association of the instructional leadership role of principals with school improvement. The model is designed in such a way that it addresses three different issues. First, the instructional leadership role of principals was assessed based on the data obtained from different sources. Next, the implementation of school improvement program in secondary schools was tested based on the responses given to school improvement issues focusing on the four domains of school improvement. Lastly, student achievement is put as an indicator for school improvement. As indicated earlier, this was obtained from document sources.

The research model of this study, therefore, links instructional leadership to school improvement and school improvement to students’ achievement/result. Put it differently, a leader plays a pivotal role in bringing about better student achievement through his/her focus on school improvement. As noted by Leithwood, Waters and Grubb (in American Association for School Administrators/AASA, 2010), leadership is critical to improving
student achievement. According to The Wallace Foundation report of (2011), a particularly noteworthy finding, reinforced in a major study by researchers at the University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, is the empirical link between school leadership and improved student achievement. Leaders create the conditions and culture for the target changes to take place that lead to improvement in student achievement.

The Ethiopian ministry of education school improvement program blueprint (MoE, 2007) emphasized that the school improvement activities are categorized into four distinct but interrelated domains (see the literature part for detail). The assessment of schools has been made against these four domains as long as school improvement is concerned.

**Domain 1: Teaching-Learning:** This includes teachers’ initiative and efforts, students’ efforts and expected behavior, and curriculum related issues.

**Domain 2: School Leadership and Management**- Included under this are actions to be taken by the school leadership and management to implement school improvement program in the school. These are designing school vision in collaboration with school improvement committee, preparing strategic planning and getting ready to bring about change, effective utilization of resources, promoting the participation of stakeholders in school improvement program, innovativeness and self-critical tendency of the school management.

**Domain 3: Safe and Healthy School Environment**- This assesses the degree to which positive learning attitudes are promoted, how well are students supported to become independent and responsible, and the presence of safe education environment. In addition, consistent and regular student attendance, adequate facilities and learning
classes for students, attractiveness and the beauty of school fences and campus, and teachers expectations of all students were all assessed here.

**Domain 4: Community Involvement**- This domain of school improvement includes effectiveness of school strategies to support parents and caretakers in helping their children to learn, how well parents and caretakers are actively involved in school events, and existence of community involvement policy in the school. Further, accessibility of communication to all parents and community and efforts made to get financial and material supports from stakeholders were all addressed under this section.

**1.6. Significance of the Study**

As indicated earlier, the salient task of a school principal is his ability and motivation to properly guide the instructional program, which directly or indirectly contributes to the improvement of school he/she leads. This study is expected to have the following significances:

1. It may enable educational officials in SNNPR in general and that of the secondary school principals in the region in particular to assess the emphasis given to instructional leadership and take a remedial action.

2. It may raise the awareness of the concerned bodies in giving adequate training to school principals in the area of instructional leadership.

3. It may serve as a feedback to secondary school principals of SNNPR in evaluating themselves and take a corrective action in the area of instructional leadership and school improvement.
4. It is expected to help policy formulators in their activities pertaining to the improvement of secondary school instruction and competence of the school principals in the region.

5. It is expected to raise the awareness of secondary school principals to involve the school and the surrounding community in the development of curriculum and other instructional activities.

6. It may throw some light on the improvement of instructional leadership and strengthen school improvement programs, which are underway in Ethiopian secondary schools.

7. The findings of the study can also serve as a source for those who want to conduct their studies on similar topics.

1.7. Scope of the Study

The study should have included all secondary schools in SNNPR; however, due to the limitations of distance and time, the investigator was forced to delimit the study only to secondary schools under the selected Zones of SNNPR. There are fourteen zones and four special weredas in the region. Out of this, two zones were targeted by the study.

Concerning delimitation of the subjects of the study, the investigator included only those subjects that he considered are directly related to the problem under study and are considered to provide adequate and reliable information. Accordingly, the study is delimited to two Zonal Education Department (Gedeo and Sidama) staff members, school principals, senior teachers, preparatory students (11th and 12th grade), and PTA members from each sampled secondary schools.
1.8. Limitations of the Study

There were some limitations encountered during the course of study. Among these was problem pertaining to data collection. Since the research strategy followed was sequential explanatory type, the investigator had to go twice for data collection. That is to say, the collection of quantitative and qualitative data was made separately at two different times. This again prolonged the completion of the final paper and forced the investigator to request some more months for data gathering. Another limitation was that not all respondents returned the questionnaires, which to a certain degree affected the representativeness of the sample. Further, reluctance or lack of interest on the part of some school principals to be interviewed were the major limitations of the study.

1.9. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Action research** - The research (study) that teachers and/or school principals and supervisors carry out to examine educational problems with the primary focus of improving instruction.

2. **Criterion sampling** is the sampling technique where the researcher sets certain criteria and picks all cases that meet the criteria (Paton, 1990).

3. **Instructional leadership** - encompasses those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning (Debevoise, 1984)

4. **Kebele** – local administrative unit (a sub-unit of a wereda, often times a town or cluster of villages). It is the lowest administrative unit.

5. **Maintaining high visibility**: in this study refers to being seen all over the school for the support of others rather than confining oneself to office. It is frequent contact and interactions with teachers and students.
6. **Preparatory students**: Students of grades 11-12 (according to Ethiopian secondary education structure) that are prepared by their schools for further university education.

7. **Protecting instructional time**: Minimizing wastage of time allotted to the instructional program, or allotting adequate time to the instructional activities.

8. **Public secondary schools**: In this study public secondary schools refer to all government secondary schools in SNNPR.

9. **School improvement**: refers to the process of altering specific practices and policies in order to improve teaching and learning (Barnes, 2004).

10. **Secondary school**: In this study, secondary school refers to a school comprising grades 9-12.

11. **Senior teacher**: According to the Ethiopian teachers’ career structure, a senior teacher is the one having teaching experience of nine or more years.

12. **Special weredas**: are those weredas that are different from their neighboring zones/weredas in language, ethnicity, culture, etc.

13. **Vision**: Vision is defined as a set of professional norms that shape organizational activities toward a desired state (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990). Sergiovanni (1990) also defines vision as beliefs, dreams and direction of the organization and the building of consensus to get there.

14. **Wereda**: administrative sub-unit of a zone

15. **Zone**: An intermediate administrative level between regions and weredas. It is a sub unit of the regional state.


1.10. Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five major chapters. Accordingly, chapter one deals with background part of the study. Chapter two surveys the related literature on the topic being studied. The literature stresses on principal’s role as an instructional leader and school improvement programs. Chapter three deals with the research methodology in detail, while chapter four discusses deeply the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. Chapter five winds up the study by presenting the summary of the major findings, conclusions reached at, implications of the study, recommendations made, and propositions forwarded by the investigator for future research.

1.11. Short Description of Ethiopia, SNNPR, and the Study Zones

1.11.1. Ethiopia

Before describing the study region and zones, it is wise to say few about the country (Ethiopia) as a whole. Ethiopia is an ancient country formerly called Abyssinia, with a long history of independence. The country has mosaic of people and diverse cultures. It is a country of earliest civilization, located in the North-Eastern Part of Africa, popularly known as the Horn of Africa. It is situated between 3° 14’ N latitude and 33° 48’ E Longitude in the Horn of Africa and shares borders with Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan (MOE, 2008). The country has an area of 1.1 million square kilometers.

A prominent feature of the country is its rugged topography, comprising alpine mountains, flat-topped tablelands, deep canyons and rolling plains. The country’s population in 2008 is 73.9 million. In respect to age structure, those under 15 years old constitute 48%; those between 15 – 64 years old make up 49%. The majority of the
population, about 85%, live in the highlands of the three largest regions (Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples), and Tigray. Other people are living in the relatively lowland regions of Afar, Somali, Benshangul –Gumuz, and Gambella. About 80 different languages of Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, and Nilo-Saharan origin are spoken in the country. With regard to religion, Ethiopians are Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Protestant Christians and followers of other faiths (MoE, 2008).

Ethiopia has a federal system of government consisting of nine regional states and two city administrations. Regional states have considerable authority and responsibility which they exercise and discharge through councils at regional, zonal (in some cases), wereda and Kebele levels. The information obtained during the year 2008 indicates that there are over 720 weredas and close to 18,000 Kebeles.

Modern formal education, in the sense of an education directed to contemporary life, was introduced in Ethiopian around the end of 19thC and beginning of 20thC. Western missionaries introduced it in Ethiopia mainly from Britain, France, Italy, US, and Egypt (Engdasew, 2011).

In 2004/05, out of 14.3 million primary school age (7-14 years) children, 11.4 million were enrolled in formal primary schools (55.9 percent) male and (44.1 percent female). Eighty-five percent of the population dependent upon rain-fed subsistence agriculture accounting for 42.1 percent of GDP. The majority of Ethiopians are vulnerable to climactic shifts (Engdasew, 2011). The country is one of the poorest in the world with per capita income not exceeding 100 USD, and approximately 44 percent of the population living below the poverty line. The country has adopted federal governance with nine regions and two city administrations.
An Education and Training Policy was put in place (in April 1994) and a rolling Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) was launched in 1997/98 to meet the EFA and MDGs by 2015. It was also in 1994 that the Ethiopian government launched the first five year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-I) in 1997 as part of a twenty-year education sector indicative plan which has been translated into a series of national ESDPs. The main thrust of ESDP is to improve educational quality, relevance, efficiency, equity and expand access to education with special emphasis on primary education in rural and underserved areas, as well as the promotion of education for girls as a first step to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

The first ESDP (1997/98 to 2001/02) derived its goals and strategies directly from the Education and Training Policy. Subsequently the Government developed a second comprehensive Five-Year Education Program (2000/01 to 2004/05) to align it with the five-year term of the government. This covered the last two years of ESDP-I and three years beyond. Therefore ESDP II deliberately had only a three-year span (2002/03 to 2004/05), so that ESDP III is synchronized with the government's five-year planning cycle. ESDP III, which spans five years (2005/06 to 2009/10) and is in line with MDG, has been developed. Like the previous ESDPs, ESDP III is summarized as Program Action Plan (PAP), which is an output of a nationwide planning process involving the center and the regions. ESDP IV is now underway following the implementation of ESDP III.

Side by side with the expansion of primary schools by the Ethiopian government, a substantial expansion of secondary education also took place under ESDP I and II. Consequently, the total enrollment in secondary education (Grades 9 to 12) increased
from 426,495 in 1996/97 to 953,217 in 2004/05, a rise of 123 percent. In 2004/05, the GER for girls, boys and the total in the first cycle of secondary education (Grades 9-10) reached 19.8 percent, 34.6 percent and 27.3 percent respectively (MoE, 2005). This increase was facilitated by an increase in the number of secondary schools from 369 in 1996/97 to 706 in 2004/05, which represents an increase of 91 percent. Previously, secondary schools were mainly concentrated in urban areas.

However, during ESDP-I and ESDP-II the percentage of secondary schools in rural areas increased from 7.0 percent in 1996/97 to 12.7 percent in 2004/05. As a part of the decentralization process, weredas and schools have been given more responsibility and authorities are pushed down from the center to these grass root levels to enable the localities to primarily take responsibility for the education of their children. Secondary schools, which were previously controlled by Zonal Education Desks, became under the jurisdiction of wereda education offices and the training of secondary school principals has also been given serious consideration.

Based on the new Ethiopian educational structure (4-4-2-2), the government has been expanding education in all regions. The provision of secondary education is made by categorizing it into two. The first cycle (Grades 9-10) and a second cycle (Grades 11-12). The focus of secondary growth and construction has been predominately on the first cycle. Nine out of ten students in secondary education are in the first cycle. To transit from grades 9-10 (also called General Secondary) to the next level – also called Preparatory, students must pass the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE). The exams help to determine whether students enter the
Preparatory stream or pursue a career in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) track.

To wind up, under the federal system of the Ethiopian government, education is a shared responsibility of the federal, regional states, and wereda governments. The MoE gives technical and policy support to regional states and manages university education (MOE, 2008). Regional states and weredas have the mandate to run formal and non-formal education programmes. “Wereda Education Offices are responsible for primary, secondary, as well as non-formal education for adults and youth and out of schoolchildren” (p.3).

1.11.2. Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Regional State (SNNPR)

With regard to the study region, SNNPR is one of the largest regions in Ethiopia, accounting for more than 10 percent of the country’s surface area (USAID, 2005). The fourteen zones and four special weredas of the SNNPR occupy most of Southwest Ethiopia (see figure 3). The Region contains up to one-fifth of the country’s population and based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), the SNNPR has an estimated total population of 15,042,531, of whom 7,482,051 were men and 7,560,480 women.
SNNPR is the region of the country with by far the greatest number of ethnic and language groups, including Gurage, Hadiya, Kambata, Wolayta, Sidama, Gamo, Goffa, Ari, Sheko, and the pastoral/agro-pastoral Hamar and Surma of the Omo River area and beyond to the west (USAID, 2005). As mentioned in the background part of this paper, out of eighty nations found in Ethiopia, about fifty-six are found in this region. These ethnic groups are also distinguished by different, cultures, and socioeconomic organizations.

SNNPR boasts all of the inhabited environments seen elsewhere in Ethiopia: arable highlands (dega), midlands (woina dega) and lowlands (kolla), and pastoral rangelands (bereha). Nevertheless, the most characteristic environment of the Region is a relatively fertile and humid midland, which contains the densest rural populations of Ethiopia. The
most characteristic product of SNNPR is enset/false banana, a food unique to Ethiopia and in modern times at least, largely confined to southern Ethiopia as a staple (USAID, 2005). Enset is sometimes called ‘False Banana’ because its leaves are so similar to those of the banana plants to which it is related; but it is the starchy base of the plant.

Concerning education, there is great expansion following the decentralized education system starting from KG to university level. According to recent information, there are 341 kindergartens, 4223 primary schools and 164 secondary schools, which are owned by government in the region. There are also 330 primary and 14 secondary schools, which are non-governmental. As per the information from Regional Education Bureau, the total primary school coverage in the region reaches about 90.2 Percent. Additionally, there are 82 technical and vocational training schools, 4 colleges and 5 universities operating in the Regional Overview.

Secondary schools have been expanding continuously in the last years period. The information from SNNPR Educational Statistics Annual Abstract (2010) indicates that the number of secondary schools reached 228 in 2010, out of which 199 were under government ownership and 29 were owned by non-governmental organizations. It is also indicated in Ethiopian Education Sector Development Program IV (MoE, 2011) that the focus of ESDP III for secondary education (grades 9-12) was to expand this level to meet the demand for trained middle and higher level human power and to reflect the intake capacity of the tertiary level.

It is also explained that the number of secondary schools and classrooms were increased with special attention to rural, pastoral and under-served areas in order to decrease distance between schools and homes. In the expansion of preparatory secondary schools,
the Ethiopian government planned to follow the principle that one preparatory secondary school will be at the center of three general secondary schools during the implementation of ESDP IV. The following chart, which is adapted from the SNNPR annual abstract (2010), gives the number of schools in the five consecutive years at region level.

![Number of Secondary Schools in SNNPR (2006-2010)](chart)

*Figure 4: Number of Secondary Schools in SNNPR (2006-2010)*

At region level, the gross enrollment in secondary schools has been increasing from year to year in the five successive years and became 34.2% in 2010. This is the growth by about 6.8 percentage points compared to the base year (2005/06). “The GER of females also increased from 17.9% in 2006 to 26.2% in 2010” (p. 57).

Preparatory schools provide a quasi-freshman environment for students who join higher education institutes in the next one or two years. In Ethiopia, history of preparatory schools began since 2001/2002. In 2010, 35768 students enrolled in preparatory (grade 11-12) out of which only 29.5% were females (MoE, 2011). This implies that there remain large gap between males and females at this level. Enrollment at this level
showed an extraordinary growth in last five years period. Accordingly, the average annual growth rate has been 22.2% with enrollment of females’ growing faster than the males’ cohort growth. According to the information obtained from SNNPR educational desk, besides the principalship program launched by the Ethiopian government, the region has arranged different training programs for school principals at different times. The training programs were arranged from time to time in collaboration with universities for school principals and for those individuals working at different managerial positions in the education sector.

1.1.3. Study Zones
As mentioned in chapter three, the two zones selected for the current study are Gedeo and Sidama zones of SNNPR. Each of them is shortly described below:

1. **Gedeo Zone** - Gedeo is a Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Regional State (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. According to the information from Gedeo Zone Administration Office/GZAO (2008), this Zone is named after the *Gedeo people*, whose homelands lie in this zone. The zone is well known by producing high quality coffee (Yirgacheffe-Coffee) to international market.

Gedeo is bordered on the east, south and west by the Oromia region, and on the north by sidama. Dilla is the administrative center; other towns include Yirgachefe (which is provider of internationally high quality of organic coffee), Wonago, Fisahagenet, Chelelekitu, Gede, and Bulle.

Gedeo Zone is Located in 369 km from Addis Ababa to southern Addis Ababa-Moyale international road and 90 km from Hawassa (capital city of the region) in Southern Nation Nationality and People’s Regional State (SNNPRS). On the basis
of the current border delineation, the land area of the region is estimated at 1347.04 square kilometers. Geographically, the zone is located North of Equator from 50 53’N to 60 27’N Latitude and from 38° 8’ to 38° 30’ East, Longitude. The altitude ranges from 1500 to 3000m (GZAO,2008).

Concerning climate, the zone has sub-humid tropical climate and receives mean annual rainfall 1500 with range of 1200 and 1800 mm. The rainfall pattern is bimodal, with short rain season between March and May accounting for 30% of total rain fall and long rain season between July and October accounting for more than 60% of total rainfall. The mean monthly temperature is 21.5°C with mean monthly maximum and minimum temperature of 25°C and 18°C, respectively. The Zone experiences three distinct agro ecologic Zone Namely ‘Dega’ (30%), ‘Woyina Dega’ (67%) and ‘Kefil-Kola’ (3%).

According to the population and census report of (2007), 962,622 people live in the zone. Gedeo zone is one of the most densely populated regions in the country with an estimated population density of 617.53 people per square kilometer.

As reported by GZAO (2008), agriculture is the base of the economy of the zone. It provides employment for an estimated 89 percent of the population and accounts for about 65 percent of the zone gross domestic product. Coffee, hides and skins are the major agricultural export products of the zone which has lion's share from the region. For example on average 26,660 tones of clean coffee supplied to the central market (Addis Ababa) annually. Likewise, about 260,781 hides & skins are annually supplied to the central market. However, increases in agricultural output and productivity are constrained by several factors including
traditional farming methods, natural resources degradation and limited use of modern technologies. Furthermore, rapid growth of population has resulted in fragmentation and reduction of farm sizes, adversely affecting the production and productivity of food crops.

In the zone, cultivated land constitutes 79.88%, forest (5.95%), shrub (3.79%) and uncultivated land constitutes (5.41%). Gedeo zone is one of the major coffee and Enset (*Enste Vintricosum*) producing zones of the region. Like Sidama, Enset is the major food here. Moreover maize, wheat, teff and barley are the major cereal crops grown in the highland woredas (Bulle and Gedeb) of the zone. Broad bean and field pea are also grown extensively in the same agro ecology with well- practiced mixed farming.

The zone is also known for its plenty of natural beauty and a surprising variety of landscapes with well-kept agro-forestry agricultural system. One impressing fact that the investigator of the current study observed is the care and protection for natural forests by the native people. Trees are cut off and used for the household services only if they get older; unless otherwise some forcing conditions arise. Trees are great properties father passes over to his son before he passes away.

The zone is endowed with magnificent tourist attraction components which are classified as Natural, Historical and Cultural attractions. The Gedeo agro forest agricultural system by its nature is home for many different floras and faunas, which are valuable for tourism and scientific study. Yirgachefe organic coffee, which is internationally known by its high quality, is product from this agricultural system. According to zone administration report, Stelae are one of the oldest historical
heritages of the zone, which are found in Tutit (anthropological & archeological site) and Tutifela site. The stelae are differently shaped; some have cylindrical shape (indicate male sex organ) while others are flat with engravings. Among 900 stelae found in East Africa about 600 are found in Gedeo zone. There are also several caves, cold and hot springs, mineral waters and waterfalls (Goto, fall in Bule wereda with 31 meters height).

According to 2007 data from zonal education Department, there were 189 educational institutions in the Zone, consists of 16 kindergartens, 160 primary schools (1-8), six secondary schools(9-10), two preparatory (11-12), one TEVT (Technical and vocational training), one Agricultural college and one University (Dilla University). It is also indicated in Gedeo zone education statistics report (2011) that there were 322 and 46 staff members teaching grades 9-10 and 11-12 respectively. However, in 2012, this number reached 381 for grades 9-10 and 68 for preparatory (grade levels 11-12). This is an indication for the increment in number of staff members.

Regarding student population, there was enrolment of 12702 students in the year 2011 for grades 9-12. In 2012, this number was 12203, indicating slight decrease in enrolment rate of student population. However, the overall educational activities are showing improvement in Gedeo from time to time.

2. Sidama Zone- The Sidama people of Southern Ethiopia are an ethnic group whose homeland is in the Sidama Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia. Sidama is one of the places where highly and densely populated people live. According to Sidama Zone Culture, Tourism
and Government Communication Affairs Desk (2011), Sidama people number 3,232,308-the fifth most populous nation in Ethiopia. It constitutes 19.72 percent of the population of the region. This is based on the 2007 national census. In terms of gender disparity, there are 1,631,555 (51 percent) males and 1,600,754 (49 percent) females.

Their language is called “Sidaamu-afoo”, which according to the 1994 National census was the mother language of 99.5 percent of this ethnic group. According to some local sources, the majority of the Sidama practice their traditional beliefs, and only in the 1960s that European missionaries came to their region and introduced their faith. However, according to Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia), only 14.9 percent practice traditional beliefs while the majority (66.8 percent) are Protestant, 7.7 percent Muslim, 4.6 percent Catholic, and 2.3 percent practice Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity.

In addition to what is mentioned above, there are other natural, economic, and cultural features that Sidama people are known for. Among these are the topography of their land, Weather conditions, life subsistence, and the likes.

As far as topography and population settlement is concerned, Sidama is found in the Eastern part of the horn of Africa and in the South Eastern part of Ethiopia. It is situated between 6°14’ N to 7°18’ N latitude and 37°92’ to 39°14’ longitude. Sidama is one of the 14 zones of SNNPR. Its tributaries are Oromia in the North-East and in the South-East and Wolaita in the West. According to Sidama Zone
Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs Desk (2011), Sidama’s
total land area covers 7200 square k.m.

With regard to weather condition, Sidama is divided into three ecological zones.
These are Dega (relatively cool), Woinadega (Moderate), and Kolla (hot). Woinadega
constitutes the highest percentage (60%) of the area, while Dega and Kolla cover
30% and 10% respectively. Sidama’s yearly temperature ranges from 10.1 to 32°C
(P.1), while rainfall ranges from 801mm to 1600mm.

Nearly 95% of the Sidama people live a life centered on agriculture. An important
staple food is the wesse plant, or Ensete. Other crops are also grown and they
breed cattle. Perhaps the most important source of income is coffee, and the area
is a major contributor to coffee production in Ethiopia (named Sidama Buna). As
per the information from Wikipedia, producing a high percentage of export coffee
for the central government, Sidama is second only to the Oromia region.

Sidama people preserved their cultural heritage, including their traditional religion
and language until the late 1880s, during the conquest by Emperor Menelik II.
Before this, the Sidama had their own well-established administrative systems that
dated at least to the 9th century, though it was made up of a loose coalition of
Sidama kingdoms. These kingdoms extended into the Gibe region. As a result of
marginalization and since the language does not have its own alphabet, very little
has been written on Sidama issues. Many were not able to attend school until after
the Dergue came to power in 1975.
Today, there are 672 government schools and 73 non-government primary (1-8) schools in Sidama. In addition, there are 24 first cycle secondary (9-10) schools and 8(eight) preparatory (11th-12th) schools in the zone. Further, there are one Government University, two government technical and vocational training colleges, two government health colleges, and one government teacher-training institute. The provision of education has shown remarkable improvement from year to year.