

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### **Need Assessment on Jimma University Community Schools (JUCS): Focused on the Elementary and High Schools.**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*JUCS was institutionalized as one of Jimma University strategic devices for staff retention in providing quality of education for staff children which is one of the causes of staff evacuation. To support this school is then based on the need assessment survey which is essential to the university at large, and education faculty in particular.*

*This cross sectional study was done to assess the need of JUCS by a technical committee assigned to strength the link between the school and the university through education faculty which is appropriate to support the management of the school for quality of education. Accordingly selected students both at elementary and high school levels, teaching and administrative staff, and the board members were summoned for FGD in different but appropriate groups as source of information. Questionnaires and observation were also used for specific information before the FGD.*

*Major problems like, quality of education affected by staff quality, dissatisfaction and evacuation, shortage of teaching facilities such as text books , laboratories and equipment, library and pedagogical center, lack of parent cooperation; inappropriate school sites and play-ground, and absence of plasma television were identified.*

*Accordingly, beyond a strong link and support of education faculty, general workshop was recommended to present the finding and construct implementation plan, which was successfully accomplished involving faculty of education officers and senior staff, university higher officials, school teachers and students, and school board representative.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Jimma University Community School was established in 1990 E.C under the former Jimma Institute of Health Science (JIHS) by the name of JIHS community school (JIHS Planning & Organizing Committee 1997). It commenced as elementary school and gradually expanded upward to high school (including preparatory level) and downward to kindergarten. The school started its function with grades 1-5 and 223 students. Currently, it has KG (111), elementary school (447) and secondary (222) and a total of 780 students (JUCS 2003). Teaching University community members' children at a standard level of quality was its primary goal. Another main goal for the establishment of the school was also to maintain staff retention in the University. Though priority was given to the university community children, it also enrolls children of the surrounding community up to the availed space allows to accommodate.

Though the school is partially supported by parents in both financial and managerial aspects, the university is the main stakeholder and fully responsible for various activities and functions such as huge constructions or buildings and keeping the educational standard and quality by providing the necessary incentives to attract and retain qualified staff.

The University has signed a memorandum of understanding through faculty of education to collaborate with the school in maintaining quality teaching-learning activities which is undergoing in the Jimma community school particularly at high school level. This laid a base to create a strong link between education faculty and

Jimma University Community Schools particularly the high school, where by the agreement was signed recently. This agreement was also made for the mutual benefit of the two parties. Accordingly, the University assists the school in providing support to improve methods of teaching; supplying the necessary materials and exercising quality control system. In return, the school serves as a model of training center for the faculty of education. More over, the faculty staff will be beneficiaries in that their children will have access to quality education.

In order to implement the agreement signed by the two parties, the Faculty of Education established a committee known as “[Jimma University Community School Technical Committee](#)” consisting of four senior instructors of the faculty. The committee then started its task aiming to assess the problems of the school and design a system for implementing the already signed agreement between the school and the faculty. Accordingly, this survey was designed under the objectives to: identify main problems of the school that require support from the faculty of education, work out the implementation plan (action plan) for solving these problems, identify opportunities in which departments of the faculty can use the school for professional training and the school gets the necessary support from the faculty.

The study was delimited to Jimma University Community Schools (both primary and secondary schools) because its purpose was to identify problems of the schools and then work for the improvement of quality of education in the schools. This study was assumed to be significant: to increase the quality of education, to lay the basis for strong links between the schools

and faculty of education; and to develop awareness on the parts of different stakeholders in general and that of the Jimma University Community (JUC) in particular.

#### **Methods of Assessment**

**Populations under Study:** The study was conducted from June to July 2006. Jimma University Community Schools (both primary and secondary) were the focus of the study. Teaching and supportive staff, members of the school board and students were the subjects under study. Accordingly, 18 teaching staff, 22 students, 11 supporting staff, and 2 deputy directors and 4 board members were involved in the study. The populations under consideration were used as sources of information to identify major problems and the way to alleviate them. The study was designed in cross-sectional and both quantitative and qualitative survey methods were applied for analysis.

**Instruments of Data collection:** Data were collected through questionnaire, interview, observation and focus group discussion (FDG). Basic information like background, interests and levels of satisfaction of staff were considered through questionnaire while interview and FDG were used to identify school problems at large through explanation.

**Methods and Data Processing:** Data were organized, processed and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively by using basic statistical tools. [The methods were](#) preferred in order to simplify the description of the study.

Consent of the school board and the school officials was taken in to account for ethical

purpose as per the agreement with the faculty before conducting focus group discussion (FGD).

**Action plan:** Draft action plan was designed after need assessment and selected problems were prioritized to conduct inter-collaboration workshop. The faculty officials and staff, University officials, the board members, school deputy directors, the school staff, students, parents and concerned bodies were expected to contribute for the success of the plan.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Findings on Questionnaire Distributed to the Staff**

A total of 18 staff of JUCS responded to the questionnaire of which 15 (83%) were teachers and the rest three (17%) were administrative staff including laboratory technician. Eleven (61%) of the teaching staff members were from elementary level (1-8) of which 4 (22%) were females. The majority of these staff was of age below 40 years old where as 47% below 30 years of age. Many of the staff (40%) have served only for a year and (61%) served at most for 2 years in which the maximum service year reported was 8 as an exception.

The monthly average salary for the staff was Birr 985 where the maximum pay was Birr 1455 and the minimum pay was Birr 280. When grouping the salary, 11.8% of the staff members earned less than Birr 500, 29.2% of the staff were paid from Birr 500-999, 23.7 % of the staff members were paid Birr 1000-1254 and 35.3% of them were found earning Birr 1255 and above. In a cumulative sense, 41% earned below Birr 1000 and 64.7% below Birr 1255.

Table -1 Descriptive statistics of JUCS staff profile (by age, service year and salary)

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. dev.
Age	22	51	32.7	8.12
Service year	1	8	3.11	2.52
Salary	280	1455	985	354.67

Out of 15 teachers responded to the questions, 14 (93%) of them responded that the grade levels they are involved in teaching are valid and appropriate. Accordingly, many of the elementary

school teachers (22%) are involved in teaching from grades 5-8 and the majority of the high school teachers teach from grades 9 - 12 with respect to their fields of study.

Table -2: Problems Encountered with Teaching Materials at JUCS

Major problems identified	respondents in	
	number	percentage
<b>1 Lack of teaching materials</b>		
1.1 Text	9	50
1.2 Reference	12	66.7
1.3 Blackboard	1	5.6
1.4 Chart	6	33.3
<b>2 Lack of teaching facilities</b>		
2.1 Library	4	22.2
2.2 Laboratory	8	44.4
2.3 Pedagogy center	8	44.4
2.4 Others	1	5.6
<b>3 Students activities</b>		
3.1 Not disciplined	9	50
3.2 Not active participant	2	11.1
3.3 Most are late comers	5	27.8
3.4 others	4	22.2

The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the problems they faced when teaching. Accordingly, expected sensitive issues were itemized and choices were given under each item to identify to what extent they affected the teaching and learning process. Consequently, 12 (66.7%) of them responded on lack of teaching materials such as text books and references by large. Of the respondents 8 (44.4%) have said that the schools lacks

laboratory equipment and pedagogical centers. Besides this, 9 (50%) of them agreed that students discipline was one of the major problems in the school, most of the students used to come late to classes.

However, as observed in government schools, the teaching-learning process was not suffering from large class size. Thus, the maximum students' population was

about 50 per class. Although the classrooms were conducive, they lacked ventilation and it was difficult to attend classes during hot seasons and afternoons.

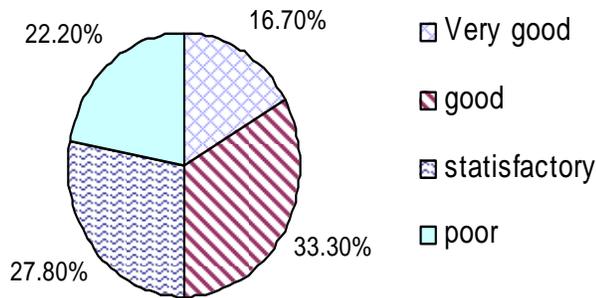


Figure -1 Rate of working conditions at JUCS

The staff was also asked to comment on the working condition of the school by rating as very good, good, satisfactory and poor. Accordingly, (22.2%) of them rated the working condition as poor, 18 (50%) of them said good and very good, where as 27.8% of them rated as satisfactory. Similarly the majority of them (66.7%) said the work load was moderate while the rest 33.3% rated work load as high due to preparation for different grade levels.

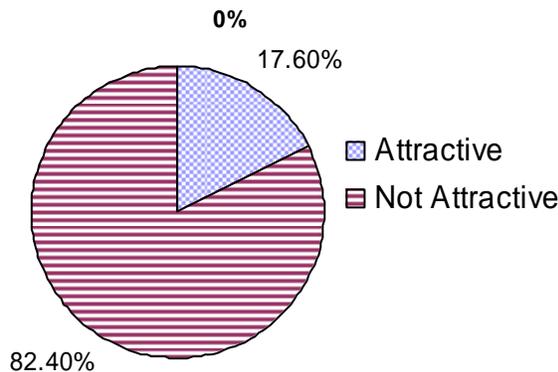


Figure -2: Level of salary satisfaction at JUCS

Regarding the satisfaction with the salary they earned at the moment, 14 (82.4%) said the salary they earned was not attractive, where by 15 (83.3%) of them responded that they were not satisfied with their basic salary they earned. Regarding the assessment as to whether the school administrative was a source of problem, the majority 15 (83.3 %) of the respondents said that the administrative system of the school was good and very good.

Table -3: Rate of school facilities for the teaching and learning process

School Facilities	Respondents in	
	number	percentage
No. sufficient Playground	11	61.1
No. toilet proportional to student population	2	11.1
Toilets not separated for staff /students	12	66.7
Toilets not separated for male/female	1	5.6

The respondents were also asked to rate the level of school facilities whether they were conducive to the teaching and learning activities or not. Accordingly, 11 (61%) said there was no sufficient sports field (playground) that was proportional to student population. Twelve (66.7%) of them responded that toilets were not separated for staff and students. On the other hand, 16 (89%) of them said that toilets were sufficient and proportional to the students' population and 17 (94.4%) said that the toilets were separated for male and female students (Table -3).

The respondents were also asked to comment on the level of relationship they had with school administrators and students. Accordingly, the majority of them (72.2%) and (83.3%) reported that they worked smoothly with students and other staff members respectively. Furthermore, 12 (80%) of the respondents said that there was functional disciplinary committee in the school while 3 (20%) denied the existence of this organ.

#### Open Ended Results from JUCS Staff

Teachers and administrative staff of JUCS also gave their opinion through responding to open ended questions adjoined in the questionnaire, and the following suggestions and comments were forwarded.

#### What are the major problems and supports the school needs from the university particularly the education faculty?

As the participants have responded; education faculty could have provided support to the school by assessing the educational status of teachers and working on further upgrading of the staff through professional trainings either in long term and short term trainings, workshops, or seminars. Of course this should be followed by change of status and salary increment for the staff. The faculty should also make frequent assessment on the overall teaching-learning activities.

The school has serious shortage of teaching material like textbooks, references, teaching aids and instructional media materials. Hence, the alleviation of these problems requires strong support from the faculty. For instance, the provision of laboratory equipments, chemicals/apparatus, computers and other pedagogical centers facilities to offer quality education for the children of the community requires strong support from the faculty.

In order to make the school a model for the faculty, formation of closer relationship between the school and the faculty is of paramount significance. This could contribute to the making of teaching-learning process more effective.

**What should be the relationship between the school and the faculty?**

With regard to this question, the respondents said that, first and foremost, the faculty of education has to administer the school as its model school for training student-teachers. The faculty should make strong follow-up, provide the necessary facilities and supervise every thing and training for the school teachers.

The relationship between the faculty and the school should be better than its current position. There should be intimate relationship. Of course, the relationship should also be consistent, fair, supportive and intellectual in its character.

**What types of disciplinary problems are encountered in classroom?**

With regard to this question, the staff forwarded major disciplinary problems that the school often comes across from irresponsible students. These were: destroying school materials both knowingly and unknowingly; not attending classes properly, giving less emphasis to their education, lack of concentration, chatting and talking while classes are on progress; disobedience and insulting teachers, chewing gums, not working their home work and assignments, late coming and coming without uniform.

**Observation Results from the Elementary School Environment**

The study group observed that the elementary school had sufficient playground for the existing student population but it was rough and ragged, and lacked proper marks for basket ball, volley ball and football play. The school compound was not well protected with fence and unguaranteed for children's protection. There were 20 toilet rooms of

which 2 were for staff (one for males and the other for females separately). There were also 21 water taps available in the compound out of which 8 of them were located around the toilet rooms. The study group could observe that toilets and water supply were sufficiently available. However, the water supply was often discontinuous which may be common to all members of the community around at large.

Inefficient size of the library, unequipped laboratory and absence of pedagogical center were also among the major problems observed by the study group. The library and laboratory were very small in size and without sufficient facilities and meant for model observation only. Hence, they needed due attention.

On the other hand, the study group observed that neat and clean food store / meal waiting room, sufficient administrative rooms and offices with separated sections for administration, finance, accountant, cashier, store, staffroom and school heads, appropriate classrooms with in standard size of maximum 50 students per class. The high school compound observation was deliberately neglected since it was going to be moved to the new site near by the elementary school which was under construction at the moment.

**Focus Group Discussion (FDG) Results**

**(FDG) Results with Elementary School Students**

Eleven students from grades 5-7 (about 3 to 4 students from each grade) were purposefully selected. A total of 11 students were involved in the focus group discussion of which 4 of them were males and the rest female students. Students from 8<sup>th</sup> grade could not participate since their class was over after the national

examination and the period of this discussion.

The first question put to the participants was focused on how they differentiated their school from the government schools. Accordingly, the following points were forwarded by participants of the discussion.

In JUCS parents were relatively more responsible for their children's learning than the government ones. They paid more tuition fee, checked homework, and made continuous follow-up about the progress of their children. The quality of teachers at JUCS was better than that of the government schools. Most of the teachers did have concern in making continuous follow-up and they made strong control over students' discipline when coming late and going out earlier. Students were also more disciplined and teachers were more punctual in JUCS than in governmental schools. Most students did not go out of the school before the class ended which was common in governmental schools. The library in JUCS was functioning the whole day and gave service for all students while the governmental school worked in shifting system and the probability to use the library was minimal.

The second question raised focused on the analysis of strength and weakness of teaching-learning a process in JUCS and situations of facilities. Accordingly, their opinions were summarized as follows.

Even though our teachers were better than the teachers in governmental schools, most of them were new with less teaching experiences. Some of them even went out of the classroom before the class ended by giving class work. Most of them had lack of willingness to help students during the class work. Some teachers were authoritative and insulting students. There were also teachers using corporal punishment and tried to control classroom

discipline in a very harsh and aggressive ways. They did not use advice and counseling before punishment.

Most of the teachers in JUCS were attending extension programs for their personal upgrading purpose which of course, we would not object but almost all of them would leave the school after graduating. This situation exposed the school to scarcity of experienced teachers. So, why did not the school employ those experienced teachers who had completed their study in diploma/degree to avoid such problems? Instead of giving summarized and brief notes, some teachers also ordered students to take large notes from their text books. Of course, there were good teachers whom we admired so much because they gave us home work and corrected it; they helped us during class work; and their teaching methods were participatory that employed active learning. They also used teaching aids during classroom instruction. In general, there were responsible teachers who guided and helped us to solve our problems in the classes as well as outside the classes. Besides, the school lacked adequate library and appropriate play ground. There was shortage of necessary books too.

In addition to problems of teaching facilities, the participants of the discussion commented on other facilities including the general school environment. They said that the place where they stored their lunch food was not clean. There was no place to eat. Stealing lunch food was common in the school. Water tap was shut off during lunch time and we were suffering from shortage of water to wash and clean our hand and even to drink.

They also suggested that even though there was an appropriate and sufficient toilet facility which was separated for student and teachers, as well as for male and

female students, there was a problem of inappropriate utilization of toilet rooms. There were some undisciplined students who did not use the toilet properly, who wrote uncultured words on the wall. So the janitors should be aware of this problem to make the necessary follow-up.

The playground was not properly leveled for entertainment. The school compound was not properly fenced. Guards were not active in managing disciplinary problems. The action of undisciplined students observed running out-and-in of the school during break and class times required strong follow-up.

The school playground was very close to classrooms. As a result there was disturbance of other classes particularly during physical education periods. Windows were likely to break even during the entertainment time. There were also students who abused kids' right. They hit small kids for the sake of joke. Some of them did not even respect their teachers. Some of them were insulting their teachers who were assumed to be our fathers/mothers.

Most parents did not come to school to check what was going on in the school unless they were wanted by the school to listen to the charges of their children. Some of them did not have the habit of making/teaching their children to be disciplined and respectful. They did not care about proper bringing up of their children. For example some parents allowed their children to change the model of the school uniform into fashion types like short garments of girls which was bad example for the rest of students. They simply thought that paying tuition fee was sufficient to educate their children.

### **FGD Results with High School Students**

A total of 11 students were involved in this group discussion from the high school of which 5 of them were from grade 9 (2 males and 3 females), 2 males from grade10 and 2 males from grade12, and 2 females from grade 11.

Like in the previous group, the first question put to them was to compare their school (JUCS) with that of the government schools. Accordingly, they pointed out that, in JUCS classes were conducted for the whole day regularly while shift system was used in government schools. In JUCS the maximum number of students per class was about 50 while it usually went up to 90 or 100 in most governmental schools. There were also differences in quality of teaching in such that better teaching-learning process was under going in the JUCS than in the government schools. However, the supply of teaching materials and learning facilities like books, library, and laboratory were better in government schools than in the JUCS. For instance, Plasma TV was one of the supports of teaching and learning activities in government schools which was not available in JUCS.

The students also commented on issues of future improvement, saying that, the school management in general was good because it tried to keep the students discipline and made the teaching-learning process smooth though inconsistency was prevailing since the director is overloaded working both the management and the classes.

With regard to the teaching learning process and strength of the school, the students confessed that they did have better opportunity to discuss their complaints with the school management to the extent of changing and selecting the best teacher available. But the following points suggested for bringing more improvement

in the future. Facilities like textbooks and laboratory equipment should be fulfilled as per the subject requirements and student population.

Care should be taken when setting class schedules in making hard subjects in the afternoon especially during the hot season. Since it was very difficult to continue classes just after physical education, it would be better to make the physical education classes before afternoon break times or lunch times.

Some teachers were irresponsible in covering the contents of the subjects on time; they had to finish the content before the exam approaches

Most teachers were newly employed every year and it seemed the cause for many students' disciplinary problems. These new teachers were most likely youngsters and do lack experiences in teaching. The problem was more serious especially during evaluation.

Late comers were punished by waiting outside the campus until the first period ended. This had to be replaced by other properly designed punishments like cleaning the garden or even let them sit inside the school campus and read something under shadows, until the end of the first period. Most parents came to know the cases of undisciplined children lately. It could be good if they had been informed from the beginning.

Some undisciplined students did not respect their teachers and would need more attention. Teachers should have certain right to correct students' behavior. The school had the tendency to respect students more than it had for teachers and should stop this.

Attention should also be given when teaching some subject like Afan Oromo which was second language for most students. So, teachers were required to make the class more interesting by offering especial supports to students.

The computers in the school were old and insufficient to serve as many students per session. A system of library for borrowing books should be improved. Chemistry laboratory for 9<sup>th</sup> grade should involve students in some laboratory activities instead of observing teacher demonstration only. The rest 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades should avoid theoretical learning in science classes.

With regard to the high school compound facility and environment, students commented that the school compound was appropriate and neat but insufficient for play ground as compared to students' population. The toilet was normal and separated for males and females but there was no appropriate and clean place to preserve students' lunch food. The quality of blackboards and chalk was questionable.

Students in general had to develop a culture of helping and working (studying) together. They should give attention when the teacher did need it. He/she had to get respect even though the students discipline was mainly determined by the teacher's approach.

Lastly, the following general ideas and comments were given by the students before ending the discussion.

- The quality of teaching at JUCS seemed decreasing from time to time, specially that year it was low. Hence, it would be good if JU were to provide the school with freshman textbooks and to use the laboratory in spare time particularly the preparatory students.

- Practicum students from JU must not come during exam times.
- It would be wise to use different color of uniforms for different categories of the school at least for the elementary and high school students.
- The school must plan to employ teachers before the academic year starts, especially before 'Meskerem'. Besides, this employed teacher must be responsible and experienced (if possible).
- We need half-a-day summer tutorial class in order to improve our status.
- Organize students lounge and clubs like scouting and others.
- Plasma TV should be introduced to the school.

### **FGD Results from Elementary and High School Teachers**

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with Jimma University Community School teachers to identify major areas of support. The following ideas were forwarded by the teachers.

The FGD participants from both schools identified that absence of defined duties and responsibilities for Directors and Vice-Directors and lack of trained school principal, were major problems of the school management and administration. They said that books were , in sufficient. The participants stated that there was no standard library in both schools. The Library used by the students could accommodate only 15 students. Chemicals and Equipment were not available and safety devices such as fire extinguishers and ventilators were not available.

The participants said that the school Pedagogical center was small with out audio-visuals materials like posters,

teaching aids and trained man power. They mentioned that educational transmission through plasma television was not started. They also said that there was no staff lounge, no playground and no staff rooms for some activities.

These participants also said that there were no long term and short training opportunities and refreshing courses for teachers. The starting salary for teachers was lower in community school than government schools and career structure was not functional as it was in government schools. The overloaded in which every teacher had 20-22 periods per week in each period of 50 minutes required several preparations which most teachers' could not afford.

The participants identified that there was normal teacher-student ratio in JUCS. However, there were no sufficient student textbooks, teacher's guides, syllabi and other materials necessary for teaching. There was no clear guide line which regional curricula to be followed. More over, they reported that no training was given on active learning methods of teaching for teachers and there were disciplinary problems in the school from the students' side.

### **FGD Results from Supportive Staff**

Janitors (4), librarian (1), duplicator (1), accountant (1), store keeper (1), cashier (1), administrative staff (1) and office boy (1), and total of 11 individuals (M 3 and F 8) were participated in this focus group discussion. Members of the group were from both primary and secondary schools.

The objective of the discussion was explained to the group members and awareness development was made before the discussion. The following were main

points raised by participants corresponding to the questions presented to them.

According to their opinion about the differences between JUCS and government school; most of the members replied to this question as: shifting system was not applicable to JUCS as of government schools. Teaching staff were hired on contract base in JUCS. Teacher-students ratio in JUCS was 1: 40 and one period was 50 minutes. The focus on language ability development was higher in JUCS than in government schools. E.g. English Language had 10 periods per week. But when compared with government schools, JUCS had no plasma TV, no sufficient library, no mini media and other co-curricular activities.

On the question of the major problems in the areas of management and other teaching-learning facilities; the supportive staff responded as follows.

The management of the JUCS was not observed as necessary model for the university. The school did not have responsible administrator for running and coordinating the activities of supportive staff. The school management required strong support from the University. There were problems in the provision of facilities for supportive staff like gowns and aprons and transportation service. The majority of respondents identified the absence of staff and student lounges and fence in both schools. JUCS had two libraries for both primary and secondary divisions. But both libraries did not have enough books and other reading materials.

Coming to the issue of work load and working conditions; shortage of human power due to high staff turnover was mentioned repeatedly by the participants. They further stressed that an office boy was

doing a lot of things. Two years salary increment was not practical for supportive staff and school payment was not fair when compared with the tasks carried out by workers. Moreover, the participants reported that their payment was not fair when compared with their work load

Regarding teaching-learning process, there was positive interaction between teacher and students. Most of the time, teachers encouraged students and made contact with parents for better students' learning activities. However, there was wrong conception from both parents and students regarding teachers' effort to correct student's behavior.

In addition, the participants of the discussion had reported that the school compound was not conducive for children to play. There was shortage of human power and one person was responsible for a variety of activities at a time such as an office boy doing a lot of things at the same time. Teaching materials were poor in quality and quantity. Workers were not supplied with gown and other working clothes. There was serious transportation problem. There was high staff turnover. Two years salary increment was not applied and this had discouraged many workers. The use of single seal for primary and secondary schools was lagging work activities behind.

The participants of the discussion also forwarded their opinion on how to overcome the problems mentioned above. These were, to call upon a meeting for stakeholders' discussion; parents committee has to be strengthened; the University should pay due attention to the further improvement of the school from KG to secondary levels; resource-center/pedagogical center should be strengthened. Staff and students lounges should be availed; sport-fields should be made proper for children; the school

compound should be fenced at least by corrugated sheet.

### **FGD with JUCS-Deputy Directors**

Currently, JUCS has two vice directors, one for the high school and the other for the elementary. These two school administrators were summoned for open discussion to alleviate the problems of the school at large.

The discussion was started with explanation of existing major problems of the schools. Accordingly the following major problems were raised.

Though the board of the school was strong in attempting to fulfill the needs of the school, there were drawbacks to be improved in the future. The board tried to do every thing by its own from material supply to academic management and supervision with out delegation of authority to the school heads and teachers. If the school heads did not have some authority to decide and teachers could not take disciplinary measures how could the teaching-learning activities run smoothly? These could be among the factors for teachers to leave the school. The board accepted what students said rather than what the staff say.

Being board membership was based on willingness. So their work was not legal based and it was questionable for its sustainability. It would be wise enough if their work was designed on legal base followed by incentive for further creativity and accountability. Furthermore, the deputy directors stipulated the following rules of thumb.

Teachers need to have incentives and encouragement to be retained. Letting them for advanced education either short term, long term or through workshops is

essential, and then followed by incentives to acknowledge their up-grading.

The board wants to see change in an over night but education is a mental work and life long process that requires a long period of time. It will be good if people from Education Faculty be members of the board to strengthen the academic wing properly.

Whether they are professionals or not, the board members supervise the teaching-learning activities and usually try to give the feedback by insulting and hard talks in front of students which is immoral. They actually frustrate teachers and considered to be one of the causes for this study. The board has to work by motivating teachers and respecting their democratic rights.

Students' disciplinary problem was very high due to neglected staff empowerment. There should be shared responsibility among the board members and the staff. This may help to change teachers' perception not to use employment in the school as a bridge to search for another job opportunity.

The board contact with the education bureaus was very loose and there was information gap, for instance, in getting ready for national examinations, to send the examinees list.

The school was using the university resources to the maximum up to laboratory equipments (except the small size of rooms). But the major problem at hand was lack of sufficient text books, and missing of plasma TV.

Coming to the school environment the playground was ragged, rough and not properly leveled, say basket ball field was used from the university.

At the end, these officials were given opportunities to suggest how the faculty of

education could support and/or utilize the school. Accordingly the following were forwarded.

The board needs support of professionals in areas like supervision. Supervision is to make a difference, to learn and improve but not to be punished. There must be workshops on feedbacks of supervision. Professional trainings like short term training in teaching methodology and long term in summer for elementary school teachers should be under consideration. What will happen if one or two teachers join HDP? Special emphasis must be given in supporting teachers to use student-center methods of teaching.

### **FGD with JUCS Board Members**

Three board members and the two vice directors were involved in this focus group discussion. The issues under the discussion range from the purpose of the establishment of the school to its current status.

JUCS was established in 1990 E.C. The main purpose for the establishment of the school was to retain staff members by solving the problem of schooling for their children. Until today, JUCS students have been successful in their results. Students have successfully passed the national examinations at grades 8, 10 and 12.

The 2nd question put to the board members was to explain the combination of board members and the mechanism they use to supervise school activities.

The school board was a combination of individuals from different sections of the university like administration, hospital and academic staffs and the school (director and teachers' representative).

The board assigned responsible individuals to KG, primary and secondary levels of the school. The members had regular meeting once in 15 days. Individual board member was assigned to visit the school once in a week and check the lesson plan. The board often took in to account every comment and feedback from parents.

The board members were asked to explain the structure of the school and the role of parents committee

JUCS has three different parts the KG, primary (1-8 grades) and secondary (9-12 grades). However, the structure is one and all of them are using one seal and run by vice directors.

The schools have no directors and administrators. The main director is not assigned due to technical factors which the school is hopefully ready to employ the school director on permanent basis. The assignment of administrator assumed to be wastage when compared with past experience and the activities to be performed. A lot of work was expected to be performed by parents committee to improve the school and solve some problems. However the committee was not functional and had no role to play at the moment. The future plan for the school is to bring together both elementary and secondary schools to one area near by the primary school. This will minimize the problem of management due to distance between the two schools (Adair, J. 1982).

Regarding comments on recruitment and selection of staff: most of the time, JUCS employ teachers both on permanent and per-timer bases. Secondary school teachers are employed on regular basis while primary and KG teachers employed on contract basis. However, recruitment and selection takes place in collaboration with Faculty of Education. Primary school teachers are employed on contract basis

because in terms of benefit they do not fulfill the criteria that enable them to get their current salary as permanent employee.

They forwarded comments on Problem faced in the teaching- learning process: when compared with governmental schools, JUCS was in a better position, because Teachers' salary was attractive; the management of students discipline was strong; Professional training for teachers was high; and teachers' work load was average. However, facilities like laboratory, library, pedagogical center, plasma TV, lunch meal storage room and text-book supply, were full of problems.

Teachers' workload was not more than 20 periods /week but in the secondary school; teachers were engaged in teaching from grades 9-12; variety of preparation at a time.

According to comments on teachers' incentive and trainings, until now different capacity building trainings were not organized for teachers. However, teachers were allowed to teach one of their children free from school tuition fee. There was also salary increment every two years.

Concerning comments on the shortage of facilities, laboratory was assumed to be improved in collaboration with Faculty of Education. Freshman curriculum texts and books have been shelved in the school library in order to enhance preparatory students.

An attempt was made to use plasma TV by connecting through dish with Sato Samaro secondary school. However, it was unsuccessful. Besides this the attempts made to get plasma TV in collaboration with Educational Mass Media Agency (EMMA) failed.

Another attempt would be made in collaboration with Education Faculty because JUCS serves the faculty as model

school and the faculty agreed to help the school.

The board members were also asked to explain the relationship between the school, MOE, Oromia Regional Education Bureau and Jimma Zone Education Department.

JUCS was established with the knowledge of all concerned bodies. However, there was no identified and clear relationship between the school and the Regional Education Bureau and the Zone. For instance, experts from Zonal Education bureau supervised the school but they did not give us the feedback.

The following additional comments were forwarded from board members. The school board was aware of many problems in the school. There were limitations in the area of sport fields, toilet rooms, lunch meal storage room, water supply, first aid service for students, tea rooms both for students and teachers and the dispersed location of KG, primary and secondary schools. Thus we were planning to tackle all the problems in collaboration with other stakeholders.

## DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the FGD participants from Jimma University Community elementary and secondary schools had identified similar problems which could affect the teaching learning activities in the schools.

Most of the participants said that parents were reluctant about their children and the school and parental committee was not operative in the school. There was a problem in accepting new students by entrance examination and teachers were not aware of the current education and training policy (Goacher, B. and Reid, M.I. 1983).

In conclusion, the study revealed that there were several problems which adverted the teaching-learning process in both elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, there should be readiness by all stakeholders. The School Board, the school parental committee, teachers, students and parents should come together to discuss how to alleviate the problems of the school and develop effective and sustainable teaching- learning processes (Bowers, A. 1986; Walerhouse, P. 1983).

From the study conducted June 2003, to select practicum sites for faculty of education trainees, JUCS was found the top in qualification of high school teachers (first degree and above) amounted 75%, where by many of 21 high schools under the study were found below 50%, the average 36% by then (Ethiop. J. Educ & Sc Sept. 2005). But as it is observed in the results section, the study indicated that majority of the staff were young and many of them served not more than two years and implying for high staff turnover. This affected the educational quality since the young staff used the school as foot step for searching other job opportunities. In addition, the average salary found to be Birr 985 also contributed to the dissatisfaction of staff and their turn over (Berliner, D.C. 1987; Vok, J.H.C. 1983).

According to the assessment made to identify major problems of the schools that hindered the teaching-learning processes, textbooks and references were the top priorities which needed immediate solution including laboratory and pedagogical center. Here the Education Faculty should cooperate with the school board to design new ways.

Concerning students' activities in the school the biggest problem was to manage students discipline and late-comers to the

class which was increasing from time to time. The idea that students were not disciplined was supported by open ended suggestions forwarded by the staff; some of which were destroying school materials knowingly or unknowingly, not giving emphasis to learning and lose concentration, disobedience and even insulting teachers, not working their home works properly and the like (Calderhead,J. 1984; Johnstone, M. and Munn, 1987; Robertson, J. 1989).

The working condition in JUCS was rated good and very good by 50%. This implies that there was a lot to be improved, even though a few have said poor at the rate of 22%. Similarly, though many of the teaching staff (about 67%) confirmed the work load was not high, still there was a need to work hard and decrease down the work load (33%) for the sake of quality of teaching.

Coming to the school environment more than 60% of the respondents said that there was no sufficient playground proportional to the student population. But from the observation made by the study group, the area was found sufficient rather it was ragged and not properly worked out and made appropriate for student to play. Sport fields like basket ball and football were missing especially in elementary school where the high school was expected to shift in the near future. On the other hand, students were comfortable having proper and proportional toilet rooms in both compounds separated for male and female students, except at the high school where there was no separate toilet for staff. Similarly, there was sufficient number of water taps as per student population. But its supply was insufficient which was and is usually common problem of the community at large.

According to the observation made, especially in elementary school, the laboratory, library and pedagogical center needed serious intervention since they were meant only for observation serving as models only. These interventions were expected from the faculty of education.

Relatively, there were sufficient and separated administration offices functional in the schools. Besides this, the respondents agreed on the existence of smooth working relationships among staff members, and staff and students which rated as 70% and above.

According to the open ended questions forwarded, the staff suggested that there had to be a close and intimate relationship between the school and the faculty. Especially the faculty was expected to support the school in upgrading the professional quality of the staff through short-term and long-term training, organizing the library, laboratory and pedagogical center of the school and support by offering equipments, teaching materials, books, chemicals and the like. Beyond the utilization of the school as a training center for its trainees (would be teachers) the faculty of education was expected to facilitate the schools as its model both in administrative and technical areas. Above all the faculty should assist the teaching-learning activities regularly by exchanging information and [feedback](#) that was essential for the school (Brown, G. A. and Armstrong, S. 1984).

Though students agreed that JUCS was better than the government school, in such a way that JUCS parents were more responsible to educate their children, students relatively disciplined, teachers were relatively more qualified and punctual; appropriate number of students per class. According to the students' view, teachers were young and in-experienced.

Some teachers were even authoritative utilizing corporal punishment. Students worried about most teachers having their own evening classes and assumed that a means of teachers fast turn over that their young teachers leaving the school very soon after graduating from their evening classes, anticipated it might be one cause for the evacuation of teachers, and their suggestion why not employing already qualified ones, was very reasonable worry which needed managerial action. Such teachers were usually observed leaving their class before the class ended and giving assignments to students to take their own notes just by copying several pages directly from the text with out providing brief summaries. Students complaints like lack of [textbooks and references](#), [laboratories](#), proper place to keep their lunch food and place to eat, appropriate play ground, alert guards to manage undisciplined students who were going out of the compound during break were very important issues that corresponded to the response given by the staff in the questionnaire. These issues needed the collaboration of the school with the faculty. Besides, [students'](#) comments on negligent parents who did not regularly follow up the education and discipline of their children were very interesting where by the parents committee needed to work it out and create awareness in cooperation with the board.

The above comments and suggestion of the elementary school students were also worries of the high school students. But the high school students raised questions like the importance of plasma TV at government high school which was the missing link at JUCS high school. The faculty of education could possibly push the MOE to supply the plasma TV for the school for the purpose of using the school as model for training.

The sequential arrangement of subjects when setting class schedules must get attention. Subjects for morning sessions and for after noon, should be identified during the hot season. Late comer students should not wait out side the compound till the next class begins. This was unfair for the students, rather it would be advisable if they sat and read inside the compound in one corner or even punishing them by assigning to do gardening and cleaning the compound (Goad, T.L. and Brophy, J.E. 1987; Hanko, G. 1985; Kyriacou, C. 1960).

Especially the comment given to the school board to employee staff as early as possible before the new academic year (class begins) was a very serious comment that must be amended in collaboration with the faculty.

The results of focus group discussions (FGDs) with teaching staff have shown that there were areas that needed support from different stakeholders. The FGD Participants identified major points as school management and administration Problems. These were absence of administrative structure, lack of school principal, absence of horizontal and vertical relationships with regional education Bureau and Ministry of Education and absence of job description for every teacher. Moreover, the FGD participants identified absence of school organogram, lack of student text books, and students' discipline, as some of the major problems seen in schools.

In both elementary and secondary schools, the participants stated that school facilities like; standard library, laboratory and Pedagogical center were absent. They also reported that books available in the library were not adequate.

The FGD participants also reported that there was no functional pedagogical center. There was no trained man power in charge of it and audio-visuals were not available in the center. They further stated that teacher's guides, syllabi, curricula for subjects and transmission of subjects through plasma TV were absent.

The FGD participants reported that there was no short and long term training opportunity for academic staff in both middle and preparatory schools. They stated that they were employed as per the salary scale of civil service commission. The participants reported that they were highly loaded with classes and teaching preparations. There was also no good working condition in the school as there were no lounges for the staff and students. Most students were dinning in the classrooms.

The majority of the participants mentioned that there was normal teacher student ratio. They mentioned that they had no awareness about active learning methods because they didn't get any sort of training on this area and they prepared their lesson plans in teacher centered method of teaching. The participants also said that there were no offices for departments at all and the school was not fenced (Desforges, 1989).

Alike that of students and teaching staff, the supportive staff also commented on lack of plasma TV, insufficient library and absences of co-curricular activities like mini media, sports field, etc. They also commented on the impact of high turnover of teaching staff and the misconception of parents and students on teachers when attempts were made to shape the behavior of students.

They appreciated most of the teachers in terms of their positive interaction in the

teaching and learning activities. Similarly, shortage of human power in the administrative sector like office boy/girls, lack of material supplies such as working gowns, lack of transportation to come to the school on time from different corners of the town, non existence of regular salary increment, and unfair salary when compared with the work loaded were among serious issues on line that attracted the discussion and recommended for future change. The utilization of single seal for the two schools which were located far apart was also reported as obstacle to offer the necessary service to the clients on time; which could be corrected easily by the school board.

Like of the academic staff, the administration staff have also suggested very sensible means of solving the problems that the university should give attention for further improvement by establishing strong attachment with the school by calling up-on a meeting and making discussions with parents, teachers, supportive staff, even students separately or in group. In which case this finding of the study need to be presented in a form of joint work shop for discussing and planning implementation schemes Child, D. 1986; Clark, C.M. and Yinger, R.J. 1987; Rogers, W.A. 1989).

The two top administrators (the acting vice heads) for the high school and elementary school forwarded their deep comments on how to improve the school were really constructive. As the detail can be seen in the result section, their comments may help the board of the school to improve its management system first and foremost with all its strong deeds. The board members were working hard to improve the school system with out any payment. The first change was implicated on sharing authorities to school management unit and

monitor the job done rather than doing everything by itself. Staff empowerment is very important (Laslett, R. and Smith, C. 1984).

Therefore, the faculty of education should share some of the tasks as per its capacity by involving some of its responsible staff as board members. The board collaboration with the faculty could at least create incentives like short term and long term trainings if not incentives in kind. The board would like to see the change in an over night which was impossible in the process of working for behavioral change in the teaching-learning activities. Besides this, the board usually interfered or did not share authority to teachers to take progressive and corrective measures on undisciplined students. Especially on these last two issues the board needs a serious behavioral change on itself. The board was responsible for overall activities of the schools system but when it comes to supervision on teaching-learning activities, it would be wise to involve professionals like it has started recently by giving corrections and comments in due of hard ways like insulting the staff in front of student which could demoralize teachers and may be one of the causes for high staff turn over (Maslow, A.H. 1970).

The university, through education faculty should wisely use the school as its model for training. In return, besides the supervision and other supports, it would also be wise to give priority to the high school teachers if any part time work exists, just as one of the incentives. It was essential for the school to have plasma TV like government school, which could be worked out in collaboration with the faculty considering the school as its model for training.

JUCS is categorized in to kindergarten, elementary and high school. As it is doing its task in its extra time, the board is responsible to manage all activities in the schools with out any incentive. This by itself is appreciable though it is essential to design a sort of incentives for the board members in the future to insure the sustainability of the school.

Since the objective of this study is for improvement, assessing strength and weakness of the school management, moving the high school out of the center of the university to minimize risks in case of violence etc. are issues that need consideration. It is also advisable to allow professionals to supervise staff performance as already started. As from the recent observation the board has planned to increase staff authority in controlling students' discipline and assume for providing incentives by offering short and long term trainings. The board members also have shown their consideration to employ staff on time and to follow best selection criteria to employ the best teachers with the support of the faculty of education. They have also shown their willingness to supply teaching materials and other facilities like, textbooks, references materials, laboratory equipments, libraries and the like in collaboration with the university particularly education faculty; even though many things to be improved yet.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

One can observe from the results and discussion parts that there were major problems in the schools which require to be improved. Almost all the problems were

identified by all informants like Students, teachers, supportive staff, officers and the board itself. Thus here is the area where Education Faculty of JU should involve to support.

Equipping laboratories, furnishing libraries, establishing pedagogical centers construction of classrooms, and arrangement of schools compound are some of the areas that the university could intervene. The faculty could also support the schools by conducting classroom supervision and offering training for teachers in programs like HDP. Materials like plasma TV shall be regulated by the faculty for training purpose where by the schools will be advantageous. So, close attachment of the school and the faculty is important for further development of the schools. Provision of incentives for the staff, establishment of good management system, identifying responsibility of the board, the parents, and the school community as a whole are essential elements.

The results of this study revealed that the school has the following major problems.

- The quality of education is affected by fast staff turnover that created shortage of experienced teachers;
- There is dissatisfaction of staff in both academic and non-academic areas due to low salary and lack of other incentives like opportunity for further education;
- Both staff have complaints on the mismatch of authority and responsibility to control misbehaving students;
- There is shortage of textbooks and references materials which is of top priority;
- There is insufficient facility in library, laboratory, and pedagogical center;
- There is absence of parents' cooperation in controlling student discipline;

- There is **uncomfortable** sports field or school play ground;
- There is lack of professional school administrators in both primary and secondary schools;
- The location of the high school is being at the center of the University compound and has risk for the students in case of violence time as experienced in the past;
- There is absence of plasma TV transmission at the high school;
- Malfunctioning computer facility for basic computer literacy;
- Some teachers are irresponsible with regard to their responsibility;
- Some board members and parents are over ambitious and need to see changes in an overnight; **and**
- Improper arrangement of subjects during scheduling the time table for morning and afternoon classes.

### Recommendations

In order to alleviate the above mentioned problems and reduce the risk in quality of education in JUCS, the study group has recommended the following points.

- For further development of common understanding among stakeholders, the role of parent-teacher association should be increased.
- Due attention should be given to the establishment of strong relationship between Ministry of Education, Oromia Regional Education Bureau and Jimma Zone and Jimma Town Education Offices. This may help to provide the school with various supports like Plasma TV, laboratory equipment and textbooks. Moreover, it may help to increase the value of JUCS as means of measuring quality of education in the area.
- In order to enhance the school management to work for quality of

education, teachers should be empowered and provided with job security and provided with short and long term trainings for quality education.

- In order to fulfil the necessary facilities for the effective **teaching-learning** processes, there should be strong collaboration between the school and Jimma University particularly **Faculty of Education**.
- Although, ambition has great contribution to motivate and develop morality among teachers, it may lead to destruction and ineffectiveness if it is overemphasized. Therefore, parents and board members should focus on gradual change for sustainable development and the achievement of the school goals.
- As the academic staff turnover is one of the major issues, further deep **study is essential to the complex factors and finds** a better solution.
- This study was not concerned to gender issues, the current sensitive area; and hence, the further study should be conscious about it.
- The JUCS is growing from time to time; vertically and horizontally; hence, it will be wise to design its own strategic plan very soon.

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**Implementation plan for JUCS Improvement**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Activities for seem</b>	<b>Cost estimation or material</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Fast turnover and dissatisfaction	-Incentives for retention -Short and long professional trainings -Other material benefits like regular salary increment and housing allowance - Serious recruiting system, procedure and selection criteria	- free summer training for degree programs - project work for short training Birr 20,00 - Salary increment about Birr 100/yr - housing allow 150-300Birr/month - Design standard criteria for employment	FOE  FOE & board  Board  Board, FOE & board	
2	Lack of regular professional school managers	- permanent employment	- salary Birr ____	JU and the board	
3	Existence of some irresponsible teachers	- punishment up to firing - Serious recruitment system		The board  Board & FOE	
4	Lack of authority to the school community to control students discipline	- share responsibility to the academic staff and management unit at different level	- Design a system -monitor and evaluation	Board Board	
5	Shortage of text books and references	- Purchase sufficient text and references as per the student population	Birr _____	Board and school management	
6	Lack of	- Expand the current Library,	- Collaborate with FOE use	FOE and school.	

	appropriate learning facilities like laboratory, Library, pedagogical center	laboratory - Construct sufficient rooms -consult FOE relevant professional in the three sciences and pedagogies	extra supply& consultancy - Birr _____ - Free consultancy	Mgt.  Board FOE and the School. Mgt.
7	Risk of high school kids the school in the center of JU campus	- construct new building and move the school	Birr _____	JU and the board
8	Malfunctioning computer facilities for learning	- maintenance - new purchase	Birr _____ - Birr _____	JU workshop Board
9	In appropriate punishment for late comer students	-let them get in the school compound and clean or make gardening - Read under shade area till the next class	-  -	School management  “
10	Lack proper sequential arrangements of subjects during hot season	- arrange the hard subjects morning session when scheduling - it needs serious discussion to deicide which are hard subjects	-  -	School management  ”
11	Lack of plasma TV for high school	- Request MOE through FOE as model school - Purchase TV's	- -	FOE  Board
12	In appropriate ambition of the	- create awareness program	-	Board & school mgt

	board and parents expecting over night changes	- Regular discussion among the board, parents and school community	-	
13	In appropriate school play ground	- Design carefully and divide the sites for valley ball, football, basket ball etc.	-	The board school mgt.
14	Lack of parents cooperation to control students discipline	- continuous and regular gathering for discussion to design a system and evaluating the progress	-	The board school mgt.
15	Consistent quality of Education up to the maximum standard	- professional consultancy and support - monitoring and evolution	-	FOE departments  FOE Technical committee and board.

