

# The Historic Move, Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities in Ethiopian Education

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## Abstract

The intention of this manuscript is to overview the development of Ethiopian Education from Early to Modern schooling. Opportunities and challenges regarding education quality and access in Ethiopia are concerned under the study. The researcher used descriptive research design and qualitative research methods. Manuscript review (policy document, researches, historical literatures and different statistics), focus group discussion with 120 PGDT (Postgraduate Diploma In Secondary School Teaching) student-teachers and summer In-service students and interview conducted with 10 secondary school directors and observation was the viable instrument. The information thematised and analyzed qualitatively through narration and explanation. Recently, Ethiopia score tremendous expansion in primary and secondary as well as Higher Education. However, the fact that a large majority of the Ethiopian population lives in rural areas still lack of equitable access, equity and quality of education, organization of the school system and of the relevance of the curriculum needs revision. The findings disclose that in the last ten years Multi-million children obtain the opportunity to primary and secondary education in Ethiopia. The number of teachers and institution significantly increased. However, problem in securing standardization and quality assurance, low incentive, crowded classroom, teacher high turnover, poor school leadership, “banking” methods of teaching and poor commitments of teachers towards their profession still the major bottleneck. Therefore, system based emphasis to capacity building program for teacher and leaders, fulfillment and equitable distribution of educational logistics, modernizing methods of teaching, standardizing curriculum, assessment and quality assurance strategies required.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Church (Monastic) Education, Modern Education

## Introduction

Ethiopia is an ancient country. Paleontological studies identify Ethiopia as one of the cradles of humankind. For instance, “Dinknesh” or “Lucy,” one of the earliest and most complete hominoid skeletons ever found was discovered in “Hadar” through archaeological excavations in 1974, and dates back 3.5 million years. More recently, an older female skeleton, nicknamed “Ardi” was discovered in 1994 and considered the earliest hominid skeleton dating a million years before “Lucy”. The country is located in the Horn of Africa, at the crossroads between the Middle East and Africa. Today, it embraces a complex variety of nationalities, peoples, and linguistic groups. Its peoples altogether speak over 80 different languages, constituting 12 Semitic, 22 Cushitic, 18 Omotic, and 18 Nilo-Saharan languages (MOI, 2004 as cited CSA, 2011). Ethiopia’s total land area is about 1.1 million square km., of which about two thirds is estimated to be potentially suitable for agricultural production. It is a country of over 91 million people. Forty four percent of the population is under the age of fifteen years (CIA World Fact book, 2012). Unlike most other African countries, Ethiopia did not experience significant colonization (except for a brief Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941). It has rich social, political, cultural and economic history.

However, the history of Education development in Ethiopia still not been studied meticulously. Because of lack of fund and support from donor organization to investigate the nature, Philosophy and contribution of traditional education in producing people who can justify state authority, translation, read and write in Geez and Arabic. The contribution of religious education (Monastic, Church and Islamic education) to the introduction of modern education was unquestionable; but the question is to what extent modern education, curriculum development integrated indigenous knowledge with postmodern education philosophy to keep the identity and the divers need of the individuals in these dynamic world. Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular today enjoin Eurocentric and western philosophy of education in thier school system rather than Africanized and Afro-centric indigneous Knowledge and education philosophy that make African self-reliant.

### **Church (Orthodox Monastic) & Islamic (Quranic) Education in Ethiopia**

It is very complex to suggest when indigenous education started in most of Africa countries. This is because of lack of written language, devastative warfare and deprived advocacy of funding organization in the areas. In Ethiopia, Monastic and Church education system started in Aksumite period following the introduction of Christianity about the 4th century A.D. Aksum was a powerful kingdom in the Horn of Africa, they dominated vast territories up to south Arabia and control the major trade routes. However, its evolvement in Christian based traditional monastic education in a very organized way started on the 13th century A.D when the literature of the church had reached its peak (Hailegebriel, 1970) following the coming of the Nine Saints from Middle Eastern countries and strong support of Solomonid dynasty to christianity. At the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the church became a formal indigenous institution i.e. the only schools in the country that constituted traditional culture, religion and provided education which makes people read and write in Geez. Among the prominent monastic schools “Yeha” and “Debra Damo” in *Tigray* became great church schools of learning. Later speade to “Haiqe” and central part of the provice of the shewan kingdom



**Temple at Yeha**

Source: Encyclopedia



**The church of Debra Damo**

Source: Encyclopedia

Trade was the foremost factor for the development of relationships between Middle Eastern and Horn of African kingdoms along the major trade root of Zeila and Berbera. Muslim Arab merchants play pivotal role for the introduction of the religion of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D in Ethiopia. Quranic schools appeared probably in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Ethiopia, where its center of learning was Ifat and later moved to Harar (Ibid). Wollo was also considered as centre of learning (Hussein Ahmend, 1988). The primary aim of traditional education is to provide moral and religious education. The major function of church education, for instance, is to prepare young men for the service of the church as deacons, priests, scribes etc. According to Hussein Ahmed (1988), the three principal aims of traditional Islamic education have been: teachings and dissemination of Islamic dogma and practice, training of the clerical class, spread of literacy. The whole program of church education takes longer time usually more than twenty-five years. The objective of Church and Quranic education was religious; where the curriculum is largely unchanged and uncontested, i.e. the contents considered true, everlasting and worthwhile. In this idealistic Philosophy of education teachers are considered as spritual leader. The medium of instruction in church education is mainly *Geez*, while that of the Quranic schools is Arabic. According to Teklehaimanot Haileselassie (1999) in both Church and Quranic traditions; neither the central government nor the local authority were involved in designing curriculum. The tasks always been carried out by a few centers of excellence.

Elleni Tedla (1995) also states that 'there is no serious efforts to study promote and incorporate indigenous education to modern education in Ethiopia and Africa in general. That is why the issues of identity, cultural civilization and cultural continuity highly deteriorated and replaced by new Euro-centric or colonizer identity and cultural practice. This is because the attention of international organizations, donors and scholars has been devoted to Africa's modern education with a very limited consideration and integration on traditional education to modern one'. So far traditional education does not seem to attract much attention from academia; most of them superficially attempt to examine the field that seems to concentrate on the explication of the drawbacks of the system rather that the decisive role to the modern one.

The provision of traditional education for more than a millennium is a witness to the continuation of traditional education in Ethiopia. Although modern education considered as a turning point in this discontinuity, despite this fact, still both Church and Quranic schools are providing education for a large number of children. The government never recognizes and supports this decisive role in addressing education for all and literacy campaign. So far, the traditional Monastic and Quranic “schools” severely under resourced both in materials and skilled man power, poor linkage with modern education and learning, and close to ending their role that may create cultural and religious discontinuity. Therefore, all stakeholders (Higher Learning Institutions, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, NGOs, Minisry of Education and Other parties) should renaissance Afro-centric Philosophy, Indigenous knowledge, Language, Literature, Art and Culture. This help to maintian cultural continuity, Tradational Medicine, knowledge of conflic resolution, keeping identity.....so far the ultimate social purpose of curriculum and education is preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to the succeeding generation.

### **The Introduction of Modern Education in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia one of the few African countries never to lose its independence, Ethiopia is as large as the combination of France and Spain and has one of the richest histories, culture, written language, diversity and identity on the African continent. However, until the opening of Menelik –II- School in Addis Ababa in 1908, there was no government (public) schools or education system in Ethiopia. Emperor Menelik was the father of modernization in Ethiopian history. In fact, there was an attempt to provide modern education through missionaries (Catholic missionary, Jesuits) during the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D



***Menelik –II-Emperor of Ethiopia***

However, it was discontinued when the Jesuits was expelled after *Atse* Fasiledes deposed his father Emperor Susinyos subsequent to a bloody civil war in 1622 caused by the declaration of Catholicism as official state religion in Ethiopia by replacing historic orthodox religion (Bahiru Zawdie, 2002). After the end of Zemene Mesafint(1769-1855) which was commonly called the era of war loard. *Atse* Tewodros –II- came to power and ruled (1855-1868) also try to introduce modernization and attempted to bring European elements of civilization to Ethiopia, but not successful and failed his ambitious plan following he was engaged to war against the British externally and the Ethiopian orthodox church internally caused by detention of British citizens and confiscation of church land respectively.

Following the Historic Battle of Adwa (1896) in which the superiority of Ethiopian patriots against colonialism demonstrated and referred as the symbol of black dignity, several modernization services started in Addis Ababa which includes Hotel, Cinema, Bank, Postal Service, Education ...etc. Educators consider the year 1908 was the turning point for the introduction of modern Education in Ethiopia. Several factors such as the post-Adwa situation, first the recognition of Ethiopian superiority in the battle of Adwa increase European interest to create strong relations with Ethiopia, the introduction of modern institution, and the powerful expression of the educated Ethiopians to the problem of backwardness necessitated introducing modern education in the country (Bahiru Zawdie, 2002). The establishment of a central state authority, permanent urban seat of power, the development of the modern sector of the economy, the arrival of foreign embassies at Addis Ababa, the military contact, the need for maintaining the sovereignty of the country, and readiness to accept innovation, particularly in the scientific and technological fields caused for the introduction of modern education in Ethiopia. The other reasons could be Emperor Menelik's positive attitude towards innovations, attempts to break down some of the detrimental social customs. These cumulative effects made emperor Menelik to open modern public schools in 1908 in Addis Ababa.

The introduction of modern education was not however accepted enthusiastically by religious leaders and shewan nobility. The clergy and aristocracy were especially hostile towards the new education scheme because they believed that modern education would be instrumental for introducing new or alien religious denominations to the country and destabilize the status quo (Seyoum Tefera, 1996) because they have bad experience with the catholic missionaries and the Jesuits'. However, Emperor Menelik wisely overcame the overwhelming oppositions by adopting a reconciliatory policy, which is (Girma Amare.1982): a) hiring expatriate teachers who are Coptic Christians from Egypt and Middle Eastern countries to teach in modern schools. b) Making such expatriates not to interfere in the Church's traditional educational activities. c) Attracting students by providing financial rewards. In the Ministry of Religion was entrusted with the authority to run the modern education system, and the Abun was supposed to serve as its custodian.

However, despite this measure, there was no government department charged with giving the educational process central direction (Bahiru Zewdie, 2002). Little attention was given for education during Lij Iyasus's era the immediate successor of Menelik-II-. Empress Zewditu did in fact take certain measures. She was able to promulgate laws on what role parents and church leaders ought to play as far as education of children was concerned. Nonetheless, there was no standard policy regarding curricula, textbooks and language of instruction. Furthermore, the Ethiopian experience (culture) in education was not well developed. Rather it was dominated by foreign experience. Curriculum developers and researchers were not available. No evaluation and researches were made to improve the curriculum. Although Menelik-II- was considered as a pioneer of change in Ethiopian history because he was started different modernizing institution such as Schools, Hospitals, Bank, Postal Service, Hotel, Cinemas, and other.

Emperor Haileselassie aspired to transform Ethiopia through education. The development of education in Ethiopia further enhanced after Emperor Haileselassie's coronation in 1930 (Pankhurst, 1974). The Emperor immediately after his coronation gave orders that soldiers should learn to read and write, and that the priests should busy themselves by instructing the youth.



***Haile Selassie I Emperor of Ethiopia***

The humble attempt that was made by Emperor Menelik, further enhanced by Emperor Haileselassie, to modernize the country through Western education. However, this attempt disrupted by Italian occupation in May 1936 with full of revenge of the battle of Adwa after four decades. According to Seyoum Tefera (1996), though the occupation was short lived, it had resulted in a lot of damage both in education and other sectors: a) the schools were closed down and the educated Ethiopians were liquidated; b) Fascist Italy's educational policy was adopted where it aimed at making Ethiopians merely loyal servants of their Fascist Italian masters. The educational policy of Italy based on racism, fascism and militaristic educational philosophy of Italy. Colonial educational policy of Italy was "designed to Italianize the African as much as possible, to produce soldiers for Italy, and to create a reserve of menial laborers" (Teshome Wagaw, 1979).

The destruction made by the Italians was devastating. This was not only reflected in the education sector but also in other sectors too. After the expulsion of the Italians, in 1941 the task of reorganizing the education system started from scratch. The period between 1944 and 1950 was characterized by sluggish growth, although efforts were made to organize the education system. Severe shortage of resources and manpower were the main bottlenecks. To overcome the problems the main concentration in the first phase (1940s-1950s) of development was on the production of teachers and various personnel for the state machinery (MOE, 1996). This task was mainly done with British assistance. A change of objectives of the Ethiopian education was inevitable. Although the teaching of foreign languages was essentially the objective of Ethiopian education during the pre-war period, the post-liberation period proved to be that the teaching of languages was not adequate. The introduction of modern system of government and administration required people trained (qualified civil servants, trained professionals and technocrats) in the art and science of government (Tadesse Terefe 1964). Immediately after the liberation the need for personnel to work in the Civil Service made it necessary for all schools to offer courses (short and did not strictly adhere to regular grade by grade promotion) in basic education. In other words, the curriculum during this time was developed to meet immediate manpower needs of the country. The curricula and textbooks used in these schools were not standardized and not oriented toward "the Ethiopian world" in view of the fact that the teaching staff was overwhelmingly foreign".

#### **Education in Ethiopia during the Derg Regime**

The events of 1974 led to the downfall of the 44 years Haileselassie imperial regime and its replacement a radical military group known as Derg. This has led the country into unquestionably revolutionary situation in Education, Agriculture, trade, etc. The major changes include the overthrow of an ancient and well-established monarchy; the nationalization of all-major means of production, urban and rural; the nationalization of urban land and rented housing; the creation of the new constitutional system on Marxist-Leninist lines, and a reversal of diplomatic and military alliances from the USA to USSR.



***Mengistu Haile Mariam  
Chairman of the Derg and Head  
of State of Ethiopia***

Derg considered education as a key to development, particularly reflecting the socialist ideology. This view was reflected in the programme then known as National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which was adopted in April 1976 (MOE 1977). The educational program provides free education, step by step, to the broad masses. Such a program aimed at intensifying the struggle against feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism. All necessary measures to eliminate illiteracy will be undertaken. All necessary encouragement will be given for the development of science, technology, the arts and literature. All necessary effort was made to free the diversified cultures of Ethiopia from imperialist cultural domination and from their own reactionary characteristic. The ordinary (transitional) curriculum was prepared immediately affect the 1974 revolution in an effort to comply with the new ideology i.e. socialism. It consisted of academic, vocational and technical subjects. Elementary and Secondary school teachers as well as university and college instructors took part in the preparation of this curriculum. The curriculum during this period was centralized. All curricular materials used in all primary and secondary schools of the country were developed in the Curriculum Department (this department was established in 1975) of the Ministry of Education.

According to Feleke Desta (1990), the goals of education in this period were vague, too general and broad to provide necessary direction to education universally throughout the country. Although an effort was made to align the transitional curriculum with the new outlook of socialism, there was a need to make a complete change in this respect. A directive regarding objectives, content and structure of the new education of Ethiopia was adopted in 1980. The general objectives of education should focus on education for production, education for scientific consciousness and education for socialist consciousness and the content of education should be connected with polytechnic education that emphasizes practice, production, the objective reality of the society.

The General Polytechnic Education programme was based on Marxist Leninist pedagogy. Creating Marxist-Leninist and all round-developed personalities became the leading catchword. The ultimate objective of

the experimental curriculum was to produce citizens who possess solid fundamental knowledge of all areas of social life, socialist attitudes and convictions and are fully prepared for the building of socialism. Developing creative, scientific and technical abilities and skills that can play their role in the construction of a socialist society was the other target in view (MOE, 1984). To this end it was suggested that the design of the programme should focus on science and technology, ideology, progressive culture, aesthetics, sport and other basic knowledge that are integrated in process and connecting learning and work. Largely these were taken as the philosophical bases for planning the curriculum. The implementation was not successful because of continuous war, shortage of resources and political instability across the country. Finally, in 1991 the Derg regime ended unconditionally that was the new chapter in Ethiopian social, political and education realities.

### **Ethiopian Education from 1991 to the present**

When a change of government had taken place in May 1991, a reform has automatically begun. Peace, stability, democratization, and liberalization of the economy were some of the changes considered by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. Education was one of the areas that the reform focused on. Two major policy guidelines were in place: a) a policy guideline produced based on the Charter adopted by the 'Conference for Peace and Democracy' in 1991, and b) The Education and Training Policy adopted in 1994.



*Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister  
of Ethiopia*

The General objectives of education and training (TGE, 1994) are to: develop the physical and mental potential and problem capacity of the individual, bring up citizens, who can, take care of and utilize resources wisely, bring up citizens who are endowed with democratic culture and discipline and who respect human rights, stand for the well being people as well as for equality, justice and peace, bring up citizens who differentiate harmful practices from useful ones, who seek and stand for truth, appreciate aesthetic and show positive attitude towards the development and dissemination science and technology in society and, Cultivate the cognitive, creative, productive and appreciative potential of citizens by appropriately relating education to environmental and social needs.

The structure of education indicated in the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia is 8-2-2 (MoE, 1996). The primary education consists of grades 1-8 and again this is subdivided into two cycles of Basic Education (1-4) and General Education (5-8). The cycles following primary education are the general secondary education grades 9-10 and the preparatory/ senior secondary grades 11-12. In each grade level the number of students boost from time to time especially after the country signed the agreement of education for all. This shows that the country deserve their assignment in calling students to school by the slogan “No child left behind the school” in locally or in Amharic called “አንድም ህጻን ከትምህርት ቤት ውጭ አይውልም”.

Achievement of the long-term vision of transforming Ethiopia into a middle-income country demands a transformation of the economy through conscious application of science, technology and innovation as the major instruments to create wealth. This, in turn, requires unfolding commitment to increasing the overall level of education of the population and a focus on science and technology education in particular (ESDP IV). The vision calls on the one hand for a further expansion of access to high-quality basic education and special efforts to improve the overall literacy level of the population. It demands on the other hand that human resources development be strengthened by training competent and innovative people with special attention to engineering, technology and natural sciences, through introducing high quality science and mathematics curricula at primary and secondary schools and the recently adopted policy of the 70:30 university intake ratios in favor of science & technology (MoE. 2010). Nevertheless, these are not an easy task for different African countries like Ethiopia their education dependent on foreign donations, schools from lower to higher institution were seriously under resourced (problem of educational infrastructure, lack of skilled manpower and lack of quality instructional materials) and corruption also one of the major bottleneck.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Education has long been defined as a vital instrument for development. It is seen as “....a means to the sacred end of economic growth” (Hutchins, 1970 as cited in Ayalew, 2009). Education is also one of the basic human rights. Hence, any nation committed to economic growth and fair treatment of its citizens has to organize and provide an efficient educational system.

Ethiopia made significant progress in education. Access at all levels of the education system increased at a rapid rate in line with a sharp increase in the number of teachers, schools and institutions. There were important improvements in the availability of trained teachers and some other inputs, which are indispensable for a high quality education system (ESDP III). The achievements under ESDP III are fundamental to allow Ethiopia to progress towards becoming a middle-income economy by the year 2025. Notwithstanding major investments

in improving the numbers and the qualifications of teachers and the availability of equipment, student achievement, management of schools, participation of society in education decision, quality of teachers, and integration of education with technology has not sufficiently improved.

In relation to the aforementioned explanation, Miles (1975) states that school facilities such as good curricula, creative instructional materials, efficient organization and management, modern facilities and equipment, all contribute to the effectiveness of education, but all depend for their full realization upon the skill, the wisdom and the commitment of teachers. Therefore, this paper addresses the following basic questions that underpin the issues:

1. What was the history of Ethiopia, particularly in the areas of Education?
2. What are the major prospects in contemporary Ethiopian Education
3. What are the key factors that hinder the success of Ethiopian Education?

### **Methods and Materials**

In this review, the research method applied was descriptive study accompanied by historical analysis to assess main features in the provision of curriculum development in Ethiopian education from ancient to present. Descriptive research design aims at describing behaviors and together people's perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about a current issue in education (Kumar, 1999). A qualitative research method applied for the study. The required data collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data sources were direct observations of the real situations related to the teaching-learning process inside the classroom 10 secondary school, focus group discussion with 120 key informants and interview with 10 school directors. In addition to primary data, secondary data collected from related research works and documents at different line policy document, research and statistical report. The data gathered through key informant interviews and observational checklists analyzed via descriptive statements. Descriptive comparison analysis applied for analysis based on key issues.

The general objective of this study was to explore the historical overview, contemporary challenges and opportunities in Ethiopian education system. The study specifically tried to Review the historical development of Ethiopian education, Analyze the status of Ethiopian education and Identify the major Challenges and opportunities in Ethiopian education to give valid generalization and possible recommendation for further improvement.

### **Result and Discussion**

This part deals with the organization, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from secondary school teachers, directors, and education experts. The qualitative data captured through interview, document analysis, focus group discussion and observation. Hence, the data collected through these instruments were organized, analyzed and interpreted in line with the main issues of the study.

### **The Success in Ethiopian Education Systems**

Under ESDP III, Ethiopia made significant progress in education. Access at all levels of the education system increased at a rapid rate in line with a sharp increase in the number of teachers, schools and institutions. There were important improvements in the availability of trained teachers and some other inputs, which are indispensable for a high quality education system. Disparities decreased through a more than average improvement of the situation of the disadvantaged and deprived groups and of the emerging regions. Efforts were made to make the content and the organization of education more relevant to the diversified needs of the population. Increased attention given to the need to strengthen science and technology education. The university system experienced an important expansion.

Ethiopian deputy minister of education (Fuad Ibrahim, 2011) stated that in the last 15 years, Ethiopia has shown remarkable growth in the expansion of education at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary levels), the gross enrollment rate in primary schools has reached over 95%. Enrollment in secondary schools, universities and colleges has also increased significantly, gender and regional gaps in primary school enrollment rates have narrowed, and Ministry of Education has launched the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) a multi donor trust fund, Ethiopian Government is allocating 4% of its GDP for education, professional capacity of teachers and education managers has increased significantly.

The achievements under ESDP III are fundamental to allow Ethiopia to progress towards becoming a middle-income economy by the year 2025. Challenges, however, remain in order to realize this long-term vision. Because of the progress made during the previous years and within this long-term vision, the focus of education policies under ESDP IV will shift towards priority programs, which address these remaining challenges. At the same time, work will continue on other areas to ensure that the important achievements of the previous years are not lost. The main challenges, which ESDP IV will address, are as follow:

- 1) A strong improvement in student achievement through a consistent focus on the enhancement of the

- teaching/learning process and the transformation of the school into a motivational and child-friendly learning environment,
- 2) The developments of programs that help to attract the unreached and the disadvantaged into school and ensure that they complete primary education,
  - 3) A renewal of adult education with a specific focus on Functional Adult Literacy, The number of illiterates has remained high and, for reasons of justice as well as economic and social development, efforts need to be strengthened to build partnerships against illiteracy,
  - 4) The strengthening of the capacity for knowledge creation, in particular in the domain of science and technology, through an expansion of access to TVET and to higher education without sacrificing quality and,
  - 5) Further improvement of the effectiveness of the educational administration at all levels, through capacity development and the creation of motivational work environments”.

Under different challenges and circumstances Ethiopia, achieve enormous success with regard to providing education for all in the last 15 years. The number of students who come to schools, number of teachers and institutions increase dramatically. To address access, equity and quality in the government develop various program such as school improvement program, continuous professional development program, school management and leadership program, information technology program, curriculum development program and civic and ethical education program. Educational access in Ethiopia is progressive and gets recognition in achieving Millennium development goal, seem, the enrollments rate in 2012/13 probably the number more than the population of some African countries.

#### Enrollment of Students in Ethiopia 2012/13

Grade level	Student Enrollments			Number of Teachers			S/T Ratio
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Pre-primary	1,046,177	967,037	2,013,214	734	11,905	12,639	1:159.3
Primary	9,133,374	8,296,920	17,430,294	210,975	124,134	335,109	1:52.01
Secondary	1,010,406	888,432	1,900,735	55,353	9,763	65,116	1:29.18
Teacher Education	104,802	70,340	175,142	1,886	58	2,044	1:85.68
TVT	115,879	121,998	237,877	10,678	2,101	12,779	1:18.61
Higher Education	411,785	172,185	583,970	21,376	2,529	23,905	1:24.42
Total	11,822,423	10,516,912	22,341,232	298,281	149,064	447,345	1:49.94

*Source: Educational Statistics Annual Abstract 2012/13 G.C MoE*

Regarding Colleges of Teachers' Education (CTEs) was classified under the higher education sub-sector. From 1998 E.C. (2005/06) onwards, the education system was changed from a 12+2 diploma program to 10+3 diploma program. There are 34 colleges of teachers' education in the country (12 are in Oromiya, 10 in Amhara, 4 in SNNP, 2 in Tigray and the rest are in Afar, Harari, Somali, Gambella, Benishangul and Addis Ababa) MoE (2005). This institutions play indispensable role in producing teachers for our primary schools.

Higher Education in Ethiopia includes undergraduate degrees offered for three, four or more years and specialization degrees such as Masters and PhD programs. The country have 34 public higher education institutions (31 owned by MoE plus Ethiopian Civil Service University, Defense University College, Kotebe College of Teachers Education) and the accredited non-government higher education institutions is more than 20 furthermore the government planned to open 10 additional new universities. These were rapid expansion to access higher education for all and improve the number of graduate but some scholars criticized this massification in the expense of quality. Particularly controlling mechanism and keeping standardizations in both private and Government College and Universities needs payable consideration to produce internationally competent and productive generation beyond certification.

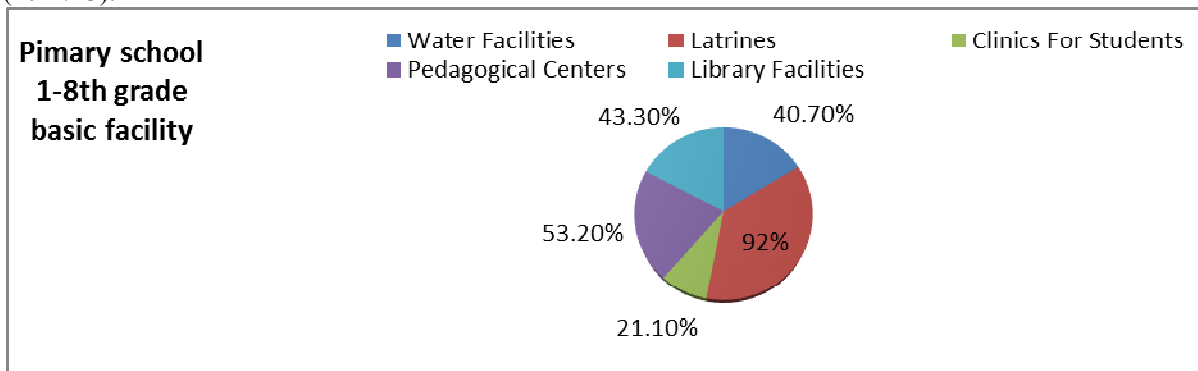
Expansion of higher learning institution may be the biggest achievement in the history of Ethiopian education system because in the last 50 years access to higher education is very limited and allow for very few students. Today more than 400,000 students enjoy higher education in Ethiopia in government and private universities.

#### The Main Challenges in Ethiopian education system

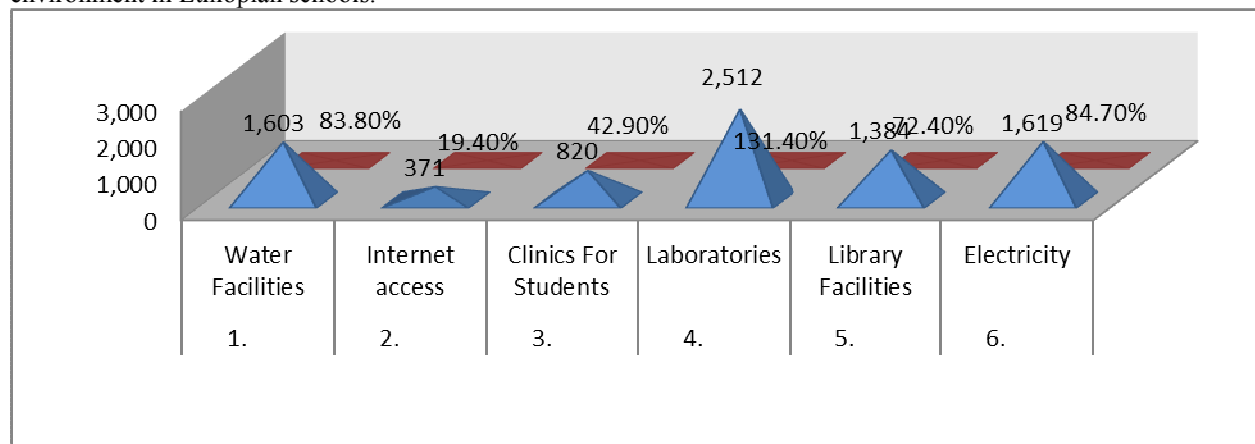
Research findings indicate that: although most schools tried to make the society to take part in the education process, their participation is little. Contents were found to be beyond the maturity level and the learning capacity of pupils in most cases; pupils' performance was found to be below average. Some of the evaluation findings on First Cycle (9-10) Secondary Education Curriculum reveal the following: **first** students scored far below average (35.8%) on profile attainment tests, which is below the expectation; **second** weaknesses observed regarding the quality of curricular materials (some of the objectives stated were not realizable; lack of clear instructions for exercises; language, difficulty; lack of variety of assessment techniques and activities;

inadequacy of the allotted periods to cover contents, lack of clarity of pictures, charts and diagrams etc.) are indisputable challenges in Ethiopian education system.

The findings of the 2nd Cycle of the Secondary School (Preparatory Program) curriculum indicate (ICDR, 2005): The overall profile attainment of the students is below 50 %. The quality of the curriculum materials has major limitations: lack of stating objectives clearly, sequencing contents logically, and using simple and clear language in the textbooks, applying appropriate methods in relation to active learning etc. community unity participation in school affairs is less effective. In the findings that concern the first cycle and second cycle of secondary education, students overall profile attainment was below 50%, which is indeed worrisome and hence requires due attention. Regarding educational logistics and basic facilities in 2005 E.C. (2012/13):



These shows that lack of clean water caused to unclean water related illness, lack of clinics to provides first aids, lack of pedagogical centers (affect students creativity, skills, technological ideas, innovation, production and preservation of creative work), and library facilities. This area needs emphasis from educational stakeholders (government, NGOs, the school communities and other parties) to create a healthy learning environment in Ethiopian schools.



In Ethiopia Secondary Schools (Grades 9-12) are not well equipped by Basic Facility. As demonstrated above 1,603(83.8%) schools have Water Facilities, 371(19.4%) schools have Internet access, 820(42.9%) schools have Clinics for Students, 2,512 (131.4%) schools have Laboratories, this shows that some schools have two or more laboratories, 1,384 (72.4%) schools have Library Facilities, 1,619 (84.7%) schools have Electricity, 15, 281 Plasma TVs distributed to secondary schools, on average each secondary school has about 8 plasma TVs. This is incredible status in Ethiopian education when we compared to the past regimes. However, still most of secondary schools in Ethiopia have not Internet access and plasma TVs are not functional (because most of teachers were not trained and poor in usage of instructional technology). Therefore, future program should emphasis in equipping teachers through short-term training about instructional technology and expand internet access and school net program. Most of teachers still reported during FGD that:

*“Most of pedagogical center and laboratories are not functional because of Lack of motivation and passion among teachers to use media resource, shortage of continuous training for teachers about how to produce materials, shortage of resources for preparing instructional media materials, acute shortage of chemicals and problem of avoiding mechanism for those of out of date (expired) laboratory chemicals and current challenges in Ethiopian secondary schools”*

During the discussion with summer 6<sup>th</sup> Physics and Mathematics students and English, and History In-



out-In PGDT student teachers, they raised a number of challenges however, all most all participants in FGD reflected that the Main challenges in Ethiopian education systems summarized as follows:

1. *Leadership and management capacities at institutional level remain weak,*
2. *Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is not obtain enough attention by a Significant number of school leaders and teachers,*
3. *Insufficient well qualified teachers and high turnover because of low salary,*
4. *Lack of focus on higher order thinking in teaching- learning processes,*
5. *Monitoring and evaluation systems is inadequate,*
6. *Cheating both in classroom, regional and national examinations still needs attention.*
7. *The capacity to implement SIP (school Improvement Program) at school and woreda level is still limited and SIP monitoring and evaluation system is not yet well established,*
8. *At a standstill low level of confidence amongst a number of teachers on the benefits of ICT,*
9. *Lack of computers and Internet servers in secondary schools; teacher trainee lack capacity and competence, , system for information sharing and coordination is weak,*
10. *There is a shortage of teaching materials especially in newly open schools and Utilization of resources and equipment is inefficient”.*

Therefore, future program should focus on quality of pre-service training, establishment and production of better teaching materials, providing more adequate practical training both for school directors and teachers about leadership and management skills, provide continuous training about teaching methods and continuous assessment, address teacher concern related with motivation, salary’s and other privileges. Examination process should needs new strategies to avoid cheatings, introduce rewarding environment at school level to encourage better teachers and students in the implementation of SIP programs, strengthening CPD programs and make functional school internet access and plasma TVs.

One interviewee Mr. “Y” forwarded the following regarding quality of education in Ethiopia. He said that “quality education” I think most of people agreed that there is observable problem: look students motivation to learn, teachers motivation to teach, look our pedagogical centers and laboratories which is essential in sciences education these all shows the problem” In Amharic “የትምህርት ጥራት በሀገራችን ጥያቄ ውስጥ እንደገባ አብዛኛው ሰው የሚሰማ ይመስለኛል፡ ተመልክት የተማሪዎችን የመማር ፍላጎት፡ ተመልክት የመምህራንን የማስተማር ፍላጎት፡ የትምህርት ማእከሎችን ተመልክት፡ ላቦራቶሪዎችን ተመልክት እነዚህ ሁሉ ነገሮች ችግር መኖሩን ያመለክታሉ”

He also said that:

*“Their low salary disgruntles most of Ethiopian teachers, lack of respect towards their profession, high turnover, and experience low commitment to stay in profession that caused to shortage of teachers. This needs due attention to transform the country and building the base for national development”.*

During all interview and focus group discussion teachers frequently raised that “low salary” caused to problem of quality education. Personally, I believed that salary issue affects the education system but not the major problem, relevance of the curriculum, organizational structure of the school, management and leadership capacity, education policy and strategies, other directives, student’s attitudes towards education, parental participation, and availability of instructional materials, financial regulation and others undeniably affect quality education. Therefore, the problem generally related with system, re-diagnosis of need and re-development of system might save our education system from devastation.

Another interviewee Mr. “X” said that the issues of education quality are multi dimensional. I believe that Ethiopian score tremendous achievement in addressing education for all, look at every village at list there is one primary 1<sup>st</sup> cycle school. However, access and quality in Ethiopian never go hand in hand that creates crisis in Ethiopian education and it experiences the following problems: He said that:

*“The quality of education is still questionable because the number of students beyond the capacity of schools and the logistics as well. Problem of inconsistency in Teacher education training program, low teachers professional commitment, lack of continuous training for teachers, insufficient application of technology, lack of good leadership in school, problem in modernizing teaching mechanisms and application of continuous assessment are still challenges the education systems”.*

Ethiopian higher learning institution similarly demand due attention to secure quality education for the future generation. Because I personally observed some drawbacks that determine the quality of higher learning institutions especially in newly opened Universities. My observation depict as follows:

*“low and inconsistent University-industry linkages, high turnover of academic staff because of low salary and other privileges, sciences and engineering colleges/ institutes are poorly equipped with necessary materials caused to graduate poorly skilled engineers’, crowded classrooms, low motivation of students, lack of reference materials, irregularity in teacher development programs, lack of application of continuous assessment to check student progresses*

*and still domination of traditional methods of teaching.....are the common bottlenecks”*

### **Conclusion and Implication**

Despite, the enormous contribution of traditional Church and Quranic education, in the early period of the introduction of modern education, various challenges face the infant education system. First the quality of textbook preparation was questionable (inadequacy of texts to reflect the curriculum; the inclusion of too much irrelevant contents in the texts; a failure to consider research findings for writing texts; insufficient explanation; lack of organization; the use of too much technical or scientific terminology in the text. Second, since the various advisors and experts who had worked in the education sector had largely been unfamiliar with Ethiopia and its specific problems the value of their recommendation decreased. Third valid evaluation of student achievements was inexistence and absence of the use of mother/first/ language at least in primary education maintain children to learn by Amharic.

Similarly, during the dergu regime despite the positive effort made to expand modern education, the expansion of secondary education beyond the capacity of the economy (particularly creating unemployable graduates), the deterioration of quality of education, the existence of inadequate educational resources, shortage of qualified teacher's, etc. According to (MOE, 1986): education in dergu regime faces the following problems: First, textbooks do not reflect national educational objectives and most of them pay attention to the teaching rather than learning dimensions. Second, Amharic as a medium of instruction in primary school (grades 1-6) has created difficulties for students whose mother tongue is not Amharic. Third, using English as medium of instruction from grade seven up to grade twelve created difficulties both for teachers and as well as students. Fourth, the stages of the education ladder i.e. primary (1-6), junior secondary (7-8) and senior secondary (9-12) were not satisfactorily integrated and coordinated. Fifth, the textbooks then used were poor in quality; there was lack laboratory equipment, and above all, there was incompetence among the teaching staff.

Besides, their success in addressing education for all and expansion of schooling recently, education in Ethiopia encounter by undeniable challenges. The underlined problem as stated by teachers were: lack of committeemen among teachers to handle their responsibility because of low salary and economic inflation, high inconsistency in teacher education program, deterioration of attractiveness of teaching profession, low quality and function of school pedagogical center and laboratory, the high emphasis given for theoretical knowledge with little connection to day-to-day life of the community, still the domination of rote learning, overcrowding of schools, the scarcity of instructional materials, insufficient training on usage, application and cascading of technology, low quality of educational leaders and skill deficits among university graduates were observable. Therefore:

1. The government of Ethiopia has to be supposed to establish and put into practice appropriate and consistent Teacher Development Program to meet the main challenges of shortage of skilled teachers in each level Kg-HLI. Continuous short and long-term training on pedagogical skill and research should be providing to the young teacher as much as possible.
2. Educational institution/schools give more emphasis to the significance of establishing and implementing student support system like guidance and counseling to enable learner to take personal control and development of their own Personal, Psychosocial, Emotional, Physical and Mental Development.
3. The dissatisfaction of teachers especially in primary and secondary school due to low salary, lack of autonomy/good governance and less respect to teachers and teaching profession requires much focus in a policy or a strategy that promote teaching profession advocacy. Furthermore, the government of Ethiopia and all other stakeholders ought to give due attention to improve the satisfaction of teachers through creating additional privileges for teachers and save teaching profession from disasters consequence.
4. Curriculum development team and MoE should Improve the participation of stakeholders in the development of more relevant, skill oriented, authentic, appreciation democratic value, help poverty reduction, culturally relevant curriculum and own the implementation by all stake holders , a continuous review of the strengths and weakness of each program/subject, and to suggest solutions for its improvement is indisputably important.
5. All stakeholders ought to work collaboratively to develop relevant supplementary material, logistics and improve the function of pedagogical and laboratories centers to widen the skill and scientific understanding of students.
6. MoE should give more emphasis in Engaging teacher to CPD program, and integrated with both an individual teacher career, school and system change at all. At career level, in-service education, appraisal and reward should be associated. Furthermore, improve individual competencies and collaboration among teachers to produce better instruction in the classroom at all level.
7. The government needs to give more emphasis to develop citizenship behavior of all educational

expertise, teachers, academician, researchers, parents, educational leaders and others to take their part in realizing student potentials.

8. Finally and importantly, MoE needs to give emphasis and work in collaboration with religious institution; ministry of culture and tourism to the development of indigenous knowledge; traditional education and skills encourage researchers to focus in these areas.

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