# The Status of the Education Sector Development Program /ESDP I: 1997/98 - 2002/ of Ethiopia

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**Abstract**
This study was aimed to assess the status of ESDP I of Ethiopia. To achieve the objective, Evaluative research was considered, and the researcher has developed three basic research questions. Documents such as ESDPs, reports of MoE, other related research findings, and higher officials of MoE and ESDP were taken as population of the study. Of these, by considering their importance, some documents were selected purposively, and the higher officials were also included in the study via snow ball sampling technique. Document analysis and semi-structured interview were used as data collection instruments. And the required data was collected, and analyzed qualitatively. The finding of the analysis indicated how the quality of instructional process neglected in the expense of achieving the universal primary education by 2015.  This means, based on obtained reports, imbalance was observed between supply and demand aspects of the program. In addition to this, lack of awareness of the society towards the program, shortages of required resources, the occurred war between Ethiopia and Eretria etc. considered as faced challenges. Therefore, the MoE and Regional Education Bureaus have to have make a concerted effort and  have to take appropriate actions in order to solve the barriers and bottlenecks related to out-of-school children and enable the education system attain quality education by ESDP V.
**Keywords**: Education Sector, Policy, Quality education, Status

## Introduction

### 1.1.  Background of the Study

In Ethiopia, the education sector in general and the basic education sub-sector in particular is characterized by low access, efficiency, quality and inequitable distribution of educational opportunities (SE Asia Study Tour, n,d). Only about one out of three primary school age children attend primary school. The gross enrollment ratio (GER) in 1995/96 was 30% for Grades 1 to 8. Only one in ten school age youth attend secondary school and tertiary education is open to a smaller fraction of those completing secondary education. Regional disparities are also prevalent with urban areas having higher GER than less developed regions such as Afar and Somali. Except for Addis Ababa, gender disparities also exist with girls having significantly lower GERs than boys (World Bank, 1998).

In order to address the above issues, the Government embarked on a set of political, economic, and social reforms, and formulated a new Education and Training Policy and Strategy (TGE, 1994). According to World Bank (1998), the policy's scope encompasses formal education from kindergarten to tertiary education, special needs education, and non-formal education. Its objectives are the following: To make education more relevant and to link schools closer to the community by use of local languages as a medium of instruction at the primary level; To increase students' access to textbooks by reducing the textbook/pupil ratio from 1:5 to 1:1 in core subjects (language, math and science);To enable increasing numbers of students to complete 8 years of basic education by changing the existing structure of 6-2-4 to 8-2-2; To provide a good quality primary education with an ultimate aim of achieving universal primary enrollment over a period of 20 year etc.

To translate the Government's far-reaching policy and strategy into action, it was in 1997 Ethiopia come up with new education policy. This policy is called as: Education sector development program (ESDP) (Korcho, 2013). During the last decade, Ethiopia had passed through (ESDP I), (ESDP II), and (ESDP III). During those times much has been done on the education coverage which is highly backed by the MDGs to meet the universal primary education by 2015 (ibid).

As MoE (2006), the ESDP is a twenty-year education sector indicative plan that translates the 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) into action through a long and medium term planning cycles. It is a sector wide approach that encompasses all the education and training programs of Ethiopia - spanning from pre-primary education to tertiary education. It relies on a consultative process of setting targets, its scope and priorities for action. It calls for a sustained public investment program through mobilization of national and international resources. Ensuring equitable access to quality primary education for all children by 2015 is the main aim of ESDP, with particular attention to the education of girls, and the children of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities (MoE, 2006).

The ESDP envisages the expansion of educational opportunities so that by 2015 Ethiopia will attain universal primary education (MOE, 2004). The primary focus of the ESDP is on the improvement in quality of education and expanded access to education. It will emphasize primary education in rural areas as well as the promotion of girls` education. The framework for the ESDP I, developed by the Government, was presented to the Consultative

Group meeting of donors in December 1996. This resulted in a partnership between the Government and the donors to jointly prepare the program for external financing.

The goals for the first five years (ESDP I), among others, as World Bank (1998) and MOE (2004) argued are:

- expand access to education with special emphasis on primary education in rural areas, raising enrollment from 3.1 million to 7 million, and increasing the primary enrollment ratio from 30% to 50%;
- improve equity by improving enrollment ratios for disadvantaged groups: increase girls' enrollment from 38% to 45%, and increase rural relative to urban enrollment;
- improve efficiency of the education system by reducing dropout and repetition rates;
- improve quality and relevance by providing books, reducing the student to book ratio from 5:1 to 1:1 in core subjects, and by curriculum improvements and teacher training; and
- Improve financing for education by increasing public spending on education from 3.8% to 4.6% of GDP and facilitating private sector and community financing of education within the target of 5% of ESDP spending

The ESDP is estimated to cost US$1.8 billion and will be derived from domestic sources and external funding. The government is committed to financing 73% of the program cost. Funding from the World Bank and the African Development Bank is already secured (MoE, 2004). Implementation period was: Five years (1997/98-2001/02); four and a half years with IDA funding; Executing agency was: Ministry of Education and Implementing bodies were: Central Educational Agencies, MoE, Regional Education Bureaus (World Bank, 1998).

In order to achieve these stated objectives, there are mechanisms or strategies such as increase the number of school buildings; expand teacher training programs; allow children to progress between grades one and three without being held back on account of inadequate performance, and use local languages in the classroom (Pereznieto and Jones, 2006). In addition to the above, as MoE (2006), the following considered as major strategies: working environment made more conducive to improved performance and education service delivery by addressing capacity-destroying issues, practices and phenomena; improved co-ordination, communication and mutual learning structures and modalities, within the education sector and between it and other key stakeholders, for better resource management, informed decisions and stakeholder engagement; strengthened institutional, organizational and individual capacities, and empowered regional and local structures and improved ownership and management of local capacity strategies in education.

However, as stated in the next section, Ethiopia's education sector seemed to be, directly or indirectly, susceptible towards socio-cultural and financial barricades. The shortage of consciousness regarding the importance of education among the society resulted in the access of education opportunities to be an obstacle, especially for females and other most vulnerable children, poor students in rural areas.

## 1.2. Statement of the Study

It is through successful accomplishment of the Education Sector Development Programs, which will be completed in the year 2015, that the Education for all goals will be achieved, both at national and regional levels (Messay, 2013). However, as noted by FSS (2008), the government's own study has concluded that at the present rate of dropout and repetition rates, the country may not achieve Universal Primary Education (one of the EFA goals) by 2015.

Based on this, according to Korcho (2013), although in the last 15 years Ethiopia has shown tremendous progress in school enrollment, children drop out of school early, and low quality learning outcomes remain the main problems. Particularly the lack of quality education considered to be the major problem which contributes to the early drop out and make the enrollment meaning. Thus, enrollment without quality education may pull the people back to the illiterate ring in terms of their contribution to their own life wellbeing, and their nation development at large (ibid). According to the Ethiopian Second National Learning Assessment (ESNLA) (2003/2004), as to the Ethiopian Baseline National Learning Assessment (EBNLA) (1999/2000), student achievement of Ethiopia is below the required levels of performance for grades 4 and 8.

Similarly, Korcho (2013) also reported as:

*Because of the push to the universal primary education goal for 2015, access to education rose to 95% while problems early dropout and low quality of education remain high. In this case since the goal the same for all developing countries, they are in competition to meet 100% in their universal primary education. Universal Primary education is still central to the current education policy in Ethiopia. Based on this reason, MGD is criticized by as it gives uniform development assignment to all the developing nations despite their local differences. Again one can see that there is still problem of overlooking the contextual demand of the nation while striving to meet the goal set by the external donors (Korcho, 2013).*

SE Asia Study Tour (n,d) in its side reported that the GER for primary education, a common indicator for measuring coverage, more than tripled between 1993-94 and 2003-04, from 20 to 68.5%. There has, in particular, been impressive progress on girls' education - with girls' primary GER going from 47% in 2000/01 to 59.1% in

2003/04. As impressive as the expansion of the education system has been, signs of distress are emerging. Since 1993-94, key indicators of quality have been in decline. As the Tour, the Ministry of Education must now ensure that quality - including the provision of textbooks, teaching materials, classrooms and trained teachers -improves to match increases in enrolments.

MoE (2002, cited in Mesay, 2011) also argued that despite significant progress in increasing access and coverage efforts, narrowing gender and regional disparities were not satisfactory, community participation in the management of education remained inadequate, implementing educational practice such as continuous assessment and "self contained" posed considerable difficulties, with the exception of first cycle primary, the government has not been able to assign adequate qualified teachers at all levels of education, inadequate planning and management capacity at district level. ESDP I also become the victim of the border conflict with Eritrea when donors suspended funding the program (MOE, 2002).

Korcho (2013) also conducted a research which aims to bring a better understanding on the challenges of the current education policy in Ethiopia. The finding of this thesis shows that internationalization of education policy particularly through the push to meet the MDG affects quality education. Since the MDGs provide uniform policy to all developing countries, as Korcho announced, it is likely to overlook the local need. For instance, the movement given to all developing countries to achieve UPE out of 100% is focused on quantity while the local need of the desirable education quality is overlooked. Moreover, finding of this thesis noted that, institutional mono-cropping is affecting the current education policy in Ethiopia by taking much its attention towards the supply side, which advocates having more teachers, schools and school materials, while neglecting the demand side which involves the real need of students, parents and the community. That is, however the demand side has mentioned in the policy, it remained as a paper value since it doesn't get enough attention. Hence result of the study show that there is a big policy gap between the demand and supply side. Particularly the demand side should come to the fore in order to bring the desirable quality education in Ethiopia (ibid).

To sum up although ESDP I was designed and implemented to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, as stated above, it remained poor and ineffective: early dropout of school and low education quality; there is a great fall in education quality and it warns that the present scenario of declining quality in Ethiopian education will continue unless serious and urgent attention is given and measures are taken by all concerned bodies (http://www.ethpress.gov.et/ stated in Korcho, 2013). This condition leads the researcher to conduct this research.

**Basic Research Questions:**
1. What are faced challenges which made the ESDP I program ineffective to achieve the intended objectives as expected?
2. What are the taken solution strategies to solve the occurred challenges?
3. What the reasons behind for the coming of the ESDP II?

## 1.3. Objectives of the Study
The study aimed to investigate the faced challenges which make the ESDP I to be remained poor is major objective of the study. To specifically put, it strived to find out faced challenges which emerged in the program, and the taken solution strategies; to find out the reasons why the second education sector development program (ESDP II) was launched.

## 1.4. Significant of the Study
The study may show knowledge shortages of the education sector development program officials, and aid organizations. It may initiate them to see back and may motivate them try to fill the gap for the current ESDP V and in the other related policies which will work for quality education.

## 1.5. Scope of the Study
The study was confined to assess how the stated objectives of ESDP I achieved or not. Further, it also delimited to see the faced challenges to achieve the pre-intended objectives. Finally, the study was focused on identifying the background (s) of the coming of the ESDP II.

## 1.6. Limitation of the Study
Although the postgraduate program of Bahir Dar University sent the two PhD team (2nd and 3rd batch of curriculum students) to MoE of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), as a team member, I couldn't get well organized documents, and team members of the ESDP officials as expected which can show the issues of ESDP – the minute, individual ESDP officials etc. can be mentioned as an example. Not only this, but also the available officials or experts also occupied with immediate and regular meetings. To solve the faced challenges, as a team member, I tried to communicate with other individuals who worked in MSI, and SIP of MoE. Based on this linkage, they helped the researcher to meet with one project preparation, monitoring, and human resource expert, and I made interview

with him accordingly. Any ways the cumulative effect of the challenge had its own role on the quality of the research finding.

**Literature Review**
**2.1.  Concept of Quality Education**
There is no one definition of the term quality. According to the UNICEF (2000, cited in Korcho, 2013) declaration, quality education involves: Learners are healthy, well-nourished, ready to participate, and are supported in learning by their families and communities. In this case it is important to note that students' health and their motivation to study is a vital part of quality education. In line with this argument, parents, family architecture and the community are the main factors affecting the student motivation (Korcho, 2013). Moreover Gender-sensitive safe environment is vital to motivate girls in particular. From the school side content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas are the important part quality education (UNICEF, 2000). This means that outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (UNICEF, 2000).

The concern of quality of education has lead to global and national initiative. According to Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, (EAS) (2012), two of the six Educations for All (EFO) goals, for example, show this concern. These two goals intend (1) to ensure that by 2015 all children have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality; (2) to improve all aspects of the quality of education, so that recognized learning outcomes are achieved. In addition, one of the eight MDGs declares that achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015 is a powerful driver of progress towards the other MDGs, ultimately contributing to half poverty reduction throughout the word by 2015 (ibid).

In Ethiopia the general education quality improvement program (GEQIP) is the integral part of the current education policy; which has a strong focus on improving equity and access to meet the agenda of the MDGs (http://www.younglives.org.uk) (Korcho, 2013).Under this agenda, the program mainly seeks to increase investment in key inputs, such as textbooks, teacher training and development, and school infrastructure improvements; which implies the supply side.

Similarly, as EAS (2012), in an attempt to implement the MDGs, Ethiopia has taken a number of initiatives to expand primary education. Some of these include:
- ✓  Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP, 2002/03 -2004/05),
- ✓  The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP, 2005/06-2009/10,
- ✓  ESDP I to ESDP IV, (education Sector development Programs), and
- ✓  GEQIP

ESDP, according to EAS (2012), was primarily designed with a purpose to implement the Education and Training Policy of the country in five-year rolling phases. Each of the phases focused on the following:

ESDP I: improving quality, equity, relevance and efficiency of primary education.

ESDP II: improving curriculum by introducing Civics and Ethics education, expanding the opportunities for enrolment in primary education and building the capacity of the educational system.

ESDP III: reinforcing Civics and Ethics education, attaining Universal Primary Education (UPE), & narrowing the gap of disadvantaged groups (gender, regions, settlements, such as pastoralists, etc.).

ESDP IV: addressing the current (five) challenges of education. Two of the challenges to be addressed include (1) improving quality of education through improving student achievement and (2) creating a good work environment by improving and building the capacity of educational administrators

EAS (2012) also added by saying as:

> Aligned with the ESDPs, GEQIP was designed as a package to address quality in education through a comprehensive approach that mainstreams cross cutting issues. The project has five components: Curriculum, textbooks and assessment; Teacher Development Program (TDP); School Improvement Program (SIP); Management & Administration Program (MAP); and Program coordination & monitoring/evaluation.

These issues indicate how the government of Ethiopia struggled to achieve quality, equality, relevant, and appropriate education throughout the nation. The main question here is why major reasons behind the reduction of quality instructional process time to time?

**2.2.  Education Sector Development Program (ESDP): Concepts, Objectives, and Strategies**
In Ethiopia, the education sector in general and the basic education sub-sector in particular is characterized by low access, efficiency, quality and an equitable distribution of educational opportunities. Realizing this fact, the current Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has adopted an Educational and Training Policy (ETP) along with its sector strategy in 1994. To realize the goal of the education and training policy, a program action, as (SE Asia Study Tour (n,d), the first Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-I) was launched in1997/98,

and concluded in July 2003. Education Sector Development Program is a long term plan initiated to help achieve the government's long-term human development and poverty eradication targets, and to redress the problem of fragmented interventions. It is an extensive undertaking which derives its objectives from the ETP (URoT, 2001, cited in Mesay, 2011).

Recognizing the fundamental role of education in social development and poverty reduction, the first multi-year Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP I) in 1997 initiated a range of programs related to the provision of educational services (generally dubbed 'supply side' programs) that have continued to be supported.

In order to achieve the above stated objectives, as MoE (2006), the following considered as major strategies: Working environment made more conducive to improved performance and education service delivery; Improved co-ordination, communication and mutual learning structures and modalities; Strengthened institutional, organizational and individual capacities, and Empowered Regional and local structures and improved ownership and management of local capacity strategies in education

Moreover, the following stated issues also considered as mechanisms for ESDP I to achieve the intended objectives (Pereznieto and Jones, 2006): increasing the number of, and upgrading, school buildings, expanding teacher training programs, allowing children to progress between grades one and three without being held back on account of inadequate performance, using local languages in the classroom, developing context-appropriate primary school syllabi and textbooks, eliminating school fees, and Developing quality assessment mechanisms.

Within the charter of the 1994 ETP, the Government of Ethiopia launched the first five year ESDP I in 1997. Ever since the beginning of ESDP there has been a significant increase particularly in primary school enrolment where the expected rate of enrolment was from 3.7 million to 7 million rather it reached to 8 million in 2000/01 (Samrawit, 2015).

Regardless of the rapid increase of the system, Ethiopia's education sector seemed to be, directly or indirectly, vulnerable towards socio-cultural and financial barriers. The lack of awareness regarding the benefits of education among the society caused the access of education opportunities to be an obstacle, especially for females and other most vulnerable children, poor students in rural areas. On the other hand inadequate supply of education, triggered by the insufficient allocation of finance, brought about the inequality in the provision of quality education and the lack of human resource (*ibid*).

The implementation of these initiatives and components, Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, has brought notable changes in all aspects of the education system. For instance, there is satisfactory progress in terms of increasing proportion of qualified teachers; the pace of upgrading primary teachers from certificate to diploma has been higher than planned; textbook procurement has significantly improved the availability of textbooks; school grants have shown progress both in allocation and utilization; the share of education in the total Government budget as well as the share of general education budget in the total education budget has increased. As a result, substantial system expansion was achieved in recent years (EAS, 2012).

## 2.3.  Related Research Findings on ESDP I

Various individuals and organizations have conducted research on this area. For example, UNESCO (2011) reported that although the ESDP process has been influential in improving cooperation, on the whole donors were reluctant to support the first ESDP, and it has only recently begun to be an effective instrument in mobilizing aid to the sector. Thus, as the UNESCO, the initial implementation of the program coincided with the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, during which aid to the education sector was reduced significantly. It is all the more a sign of Ethiopia's commitment to progress in education that it increased domestic funding to education during this time to make up the shortfall. Despite this interruption in aid, the country nevertheless managed to achieve many of its ESDP I targets.

Pereznieto and Jones (2006) contend that the mid-term review of ESDP I show that while there has been progress in expanding enrolment and improving some inequalities, the quality of education has deteriorated. This is reflected in shortages of qualified primary school teachers and textbooks, increasing class sizes and an inadequate curriculum. It is hoped that ESDP II will build on the achievements of the first phase and overcome its shortcomings.

As Pereznieto and Jones added, "financing concerns in the education sector hinder efforts address Ethiopia's educational crisis. The sector is heavily dependent on external assistance, making it vulnerable to changes in donor policy". Although the government officially allocates 13.4 per cent of its total expenditure to education, as a result of delays in transfer of funds and failure to fulfill commitments, it has only been able to cover 64 per cent of the total education budget for the period 2002-05" (ibid).

Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS, 2012) also added by saying as:

> the Ethiopian Second National Learning Assessment (ESNLA) which was conducted in 2003/2004 academic year across the nation as a continuation of the Ethiopian Baseline National Learning Assessment (EBNLA) conducted in 1999/2000 academic year has shown that student achievement is below the required levels of performance for grades 4 and 8. Key factors identified

*in the NLA's relating to student achievement include school organization and management, teacher training on new techniques, school supplies, availability of curricular and instructional materials, and language of instruction.*

In the same way, SE Asia Study Tour (n,d) reported that the First National Educational Assessment (FNEA) and the Second National Educational Assessment (SNEA)  were conducted in 1999/2000 and 2003/2004 respectively on the first and second cycles of primary education, grades 4 and 8. The main objective of the first National Learning Assessment was to establish baseline data on students learning achievements while the objective of the second one was to monitor its progress overtime. Accordingly, the following findings are observed: low teachers perception of students learning and instructional quality, inappropriate use of instructional materials by teachers, students' background and shortage of teachers' guides and syllabus. Moreover, lack of appropriate training courses and materials to train multi-grade teachers, teachers are not well trained in pedagogy and management of multi-grade students, textbooks are not modified in such a way that self-learning approaches and exercises are not incorporated to meet the needs of a multi-grade class student also seen as obstacles for quality education.

 According to Mesay (2011), the ESDP document published in 2002 provides a useful insight into the challenges ESDP I faced and it states that: despite significant progress in increasing access and coverage efforts, narrowing gender and regional disparities were not satisfactory, community participation in the management of education remained inadequate, implementing educational practice such as continuous assessment and  "self contained" posed considerable difficulties, with the exception of first cycle primary, the government has not been able to assign adequate qualified teachers at all levels of education, inadequate planning and management capacity at district level. ESDP I also become the victim of the border conflict with Eritrea when donors suspended funding the program (MoE, 2002, cited in Mesay, 2011).

All these imply that students are not equipped with the necessary numeracy, literacy and life skill at primary schools, and that there is a considerable challenge to meet the quality and standard of education at the primary level in Ethiopia. There is, therefore, as EAS, (2013):

*... a need to investigate contributing factors for the decline of quality of primary education in the country taking into   consideration teachers' qualification and their years of professional experience; perceptions of teachers, students, and leadership (at school, district and zonal levels); factors related to learning resources and environment; factors related to teaching methods and curricula; factors related to school leadership and management; factors related to external environment; and strategies to address the problems affecting quality of education in the country.*

According to Korcho (2013), The main point here is that a country may have mere schools, teachers and school materials from the supply side which is good; however if these supplies are not accompanied by the demand side (students, parents and communities motivation), it may result in low quality of learning outcomes and early drop outs.

Hence, in contrary to the line of institutional mono-cropping, the demand side of a policy underlines the importance of contextualization and it works on the real needs of the community at local level. Quality education, should involve, learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities (UNICEF, 2000). Institutional mono-cropping theory argued that institutional blueprints are being implemented without the contextual considerations of the recipient countries. According to (Evans, 2002, cited in Korcho, 2013), the dominant implementation of this insight, which has been trying to impose uniform institutional blueprints on the countries of the South –called as "institutional mono-cropping".

## Research Methodology
### 3.1.  Research Design
In order to achieve the stated objective, Evaluative research was considered by the study because it enables the researcher to assess systematically the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy (ESDP I), compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy (Weiss, C. H., 1998).

### 3.2. Sources of Data
ESDP documents, MoE reports, ESDP sector officials, and related conducted researches on the ESDP I were taken as data sources for the study.

### 3.3. Population and Sampling Technique
ESDP documents of Ethiopia, ESDP related conducted researches, Reports of MoE on the areas of ESDP, and ESDP sector officials etc. were the concerned areas.  Of these focused population of the study, the researcher was obligated to select the appropriate and available documents and more responsible officials, because it is difficult

to entertain in the study whatever information which talks about the topic. Related to this Bryman noted that, it is impossible to cover everything that has been written or said on the topic, therefore doing one's own research subjective in what is chosen relevant to one's own research (Bryman 2012: 544,551, cited in Korcho, 2013). Based on this reason, the researcher selected documents based on the variability of ESDP documents, MoE reports, related research findings, and as the same time the materials are selected purposively. In addition to this, the ESDP sector official was included in the study by employing snowball sampling technique.

### 3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data from the participants of the study, document analysis and interview instruments were applied.

### 3.4.1.  Document analysis

Document analysis /secondary data used as a source in this study. In the process of data collection, education policy documents, different reports from the Ministry of Education and multilateral organizations, articles, books, journals and other relevant literatures are used. This technique is different from other techniques. Many of the research techniques like: questioner, structured or semi structured interview, structured observation and content analysis are extremely time consuming and expensive while the secondary analysis technique does not (Bryman 2008: 54, cited in Korcho, 2013). This means that, when the secondary analysis compared to other research methods, it is advantageous for it does not need much cost and time (Bryman 2008: 297). Apart from its advantage, the secondary analysis approach has limitation and question of reliability both in the process of data collection and analysis (Korcho, 2013).

### 3.4.2.  Interview

Interviewing is the careful asking of relevant questions of selected individuals. It is an important way for a researcher to check, verify or refute impressions gained through observation. The methods provide a means to gain information about things that cannot be observed directly (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993, cited in Koranteng, 2009). Based on this, the researcher developed semi-structure interview questions for the available and the responsible ESDP sector officials.

### 3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Postgraduate program of Bahir Dar University sent two curriculum PhD student batches (the 2nd and 3rd batches) to MoE of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa) to gather data related to status of ESDP. Of these, I was one of the members of the team, and gathered data from ESDP sector officials via conducting semi-structured interview. Side by side, the researcher also collected and analyzed the required documents: ESDP I, report of MoE (2006), and related conducted research findings etc.

### 3.6. Validity and Reliability of the Study

For the purposes of research, documentary sources should never be accepted at face value. Their validity is something that needs to be established rather than being taken for granted and, as Platt (1981) and Scott (1990,) cited in  Denscombe (2007) have argued,  documents need to be evaluated in relation to four basic criteria: Authenticity /Is it the genuine article? Is it the real thing? Can we be satisfied that the document is what it purports to be – not a fake or a forgery? *Credibility* / Is it accurate? Is it free from bias and errors? This will depend on factors like: What purpose was the document written for? And Who produced the document?/; Representativeness /Is the document typical of its type? Does it represent a typical instance of the thing it portrays? Is the document complete? Has it been edited? Is the extract treated 'in context'? /.

Thus, to make the study be valid, the researcher tried to get relevant documents by considering their relatedness with the ESDP I, their time of publication (proximity to the program). Except one documents (SE Asia study Tour), others (round 12 in number) have explicitly stated date of publication.

### 3.7. Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data, qualitative analysis approach was applied because issues which gathered through interview and documents analysis are vital to analyzed qualitatively. Thus, the collected policy documents, MoE reports, and related conducted research findings were analyzed based on the pre-stated objectives of the program: how the stated objectives achieved, the faced challenges in the implementation process of the program, the taken solution strategies, and the reasons why the ESDP II emerged. These are considered as a set of standards against which the status of the policy (ESDP I) evaluated.

In addition to this, the researcher also conducted semi-structured interview upon MoE and ESDP higher officials. And the data was analyzed qualitatively accordingly. Based on the finding of the study, the researcher put his conclusion and recommendation in the next chapters as follow.

## 4.   Data Analysis and Interpretation

The purpose of the study was to investigate the faced challenges which made the ESDP I ineffective to achieve intended objectives. To realize this, evaluative research was conducted and the following questions were developed: What are the faced challenges which made the ESDP I program ineffective to achieve the intended objectives as expected? What are the taken solution strategies to solve the occurred challenges? What the reasons behind for the coming of the ESDP II?

In order to get solutions for these questions, the researcher has collected data by employing document analysis and interview as data gathering instruments. Accordingly, the researcher has reviewed the following documents so as to get solutions for the above raised three questions:

-   Workshop Report on Quality of Primary Education in Ethiopia.  Semien Hotel, Addis Ababa, Thursday, 27 December, 2012 by Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) (2012).
-   Policy gaps which contribute to the low quality of education in Ethiopia by Korcho  (2013).
-   Monitoring and Evaluation for the Africa Bureau Education Division *Country Context Report – Ethiopia, at: www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/oseas_adsec/ethiopia_ed_profi* by MoE (2004).
-   Five Year Education Sector Capacity Development Strategic Plan Main Report: Complete Version by MoE (2006).
-   Study on Situation of out of School Children (OOSC) in Ethiopia: All children in school by 2015 Global out of School Children Initiative by MoE and UNICEF (2012).
-   Educational choices in Ethiopia: What determines whether poor children go to school? -  *Young Lives Policy Brief 2 by* Pereznieto and Jones (2006).
-   Ethiopia's effort towards accomplishing the Millennium Goals on Universal Primary Education. *Reporter on current social affairs by* Samrawit (2015)
-   Country Issues Paper – Ethiopia by SE Asia Study Tour (n,d).
-   Ethiopia's Progress in Education: A Rapid and Equitable Expansion of Access by UNESCO (2011).
-   Secondary Education in Ethiopia: Supporting Growth and Transformation by World Bank (2013).
-   Education and Training in Ethiopia: An Evaluation of Approaching Goals by Institute for Educational Research (IER) (2005).
-   Assessment on the Implementation of the Third Education Sector Development Program (ESDP III): The Case of Primary and Secondary Schools in Dire Dawa -MA Thesis by Mesay Tilahun (2011).

Based on analysis of these documents and conducted interview, the researcher could find solutions for the raised basic research questions as follow.

### 4.1.   The Faced Challenges which Made the ESDP I Program Ineffective to Achieve the Intended Objectives as Expected

As I assessed the thesis of Messay (2011)**,** community participation in the management of education remained inadequate, implementing educational practice such as continuous assessment and "self contained" posed considerable difficulties, with the exception of first cycle primary, the government has not been able to assign adequate qualified teachers at all levels of education, inadequate planning and management capacity at district level. ESDP I also become the victim of the border conflict with Eritrea when donors suspended funding the program (MOE, 2002, cited in Messay, 2011).

In addition to this, according to SE Asia Study Tour (n,d)**,** there are no 'enough textbooks, not enough libraries or reading rooms, and there is a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers. Moreover, a continuing theme that hinders the implementation of the ESDP is the lack of capacity in all involved government bodies or departments in the education sector at the federal, regional, and district levels.

Moreover, as I investigated the Country Issues Paper by SE Asia Study Tour (n,d)  the following are the major problems  which faced the ESDP I: Low teachers perception of students learning and instructional quality; Inappropriate use of instructional materials by teachers; Lack of comprehensive textbook policy; Inadequate financial resource; and Lack of expertise pertinent to textbook management, planning, preparation, utilization and other pedagogical issues. Additionally, Lack of appropriate training courses and materials to train multi-grade teachers; Teachers are not well trained in pedagogy and management of multi-grade students; Textbooks are not modified in such a way that self-learning approaches and exercises are not incorporated to meet the needs of a multi-grade class student.; The demand and supply mismatch regarding schools and teachers, and Curriculum relevancy to satisfy the labor market was poor.

The document of Korcho (2013) which argued about *Policy gaps which contribute to the low quality of education in Ethiopia also* shows that internationalization of education policy particularly through the push to meet the MDG affects quality education. Since the MDGs provide uniform policy to all developing countries, as Korcho, it is likely to overlook the local need. For instance, the movement given to all developing countries to achieve UPE out of 100% is focused on quantity while the local need of the desirable education quality is overlooked. Besides, finding of this thesis noted that, institutional mono-cropping is affecting the current education

policy in Ethiopia by taking much its attention towards the supply side, which advocates having more teachers, schools and school materials, while neglecting the demand side which involves the real need of students, parents and the community.

That is, however, the demand side has mentioned in the policy, it remained as a paper value since it doesn't get enough attention. Hence, the result of the study shows that there is a big policy gap between the demand and supply side. Particularly the demand side should come to the fore in order to bring the desirable quality education in Ethiopia (ibid).

In addition to this, I also investigated the document termed as *Education and Training in Ethiopia: an Evaluation of Approaching Goals* which is developed by Institute for Educational Research (IER, 2005). According to this document, Since 1999, the progress of the ESDP has been assessed by three Joint Team Review Missions (JTRMs) in 1999, 2000, and 2003, the teams consisting of representatives from the Government and the donor community; three Annual Review Meetings (ARMs) undertaken in 1999, 2000 and 2001; three Consolidated National Performance Reports in 1999, 2000 and 2001; and a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in March-April 2001.

Accordingly, the JTRM (ESDP, 1999) identified a number of problems with the supply and quality of teachers which must be addressed. The Annual Review Meeting (ARM of the ESDP), held in June 2001, reviewed the findings of the MTR and the annual reports from regional and federal levels on the progress of the ESDP. One of the ARM's major conclusions was that the lack of quality continues to be a major problem which needs attention if the objectives of the ESDP are to be achieved. The main reason for this has been a lack of resources. The *Mid-Term Review (MTR* of the first ESDP) took place in February and March 2001. It revealed that while good progress had been made in expanding enrolments, qualitative indicators had declined over the ESDP period (ESDP, 2001).

The review pointed out that teacher attrition is high in many areas. In one *zone* it was observed that 44 percent of the new teachers failed to take up their post and that over the previous year, because of high attrition, there had been almost no increase in the number of teachers. In particular, the review raised the subject of attrition due to HIV/AIDS, pointing out that it was important to collect statistical data on this issue so as to improve projections and planning. The review also highlighted the fact that the numbers of qualified staff in second-cycle primary and in secondary education were inadequate.

The interview made from the project preparation, monitoring, and human resource also supported the above issue. Thus, the expert argued that:

> ...in the time of ESDP I to around ESDP III, the issues of gender and HIV / AIDS hadn't any
> focal or responsible individuals rather the two programs were lead by teams or committee which
> resulted in poor achievement that distorted the objective of ESDP I.

To sum up, as stated in different reports, conducted interview, and research findings, the ESDP I program was not free from challenges so as to achieve its pre-intended objectives. As discussed above, poor perceptions of teachers, parents, and students towards the program; shortage of financial resources; teachers remained poor in terms of knowledge, skill, and attitude; delaines of aid organizations the required budget; the occurrence of Ethio - Eretria war; poor management system in the Federal, Region, Zone, and district levels; absence of organized responsible guys of gender and HIV/AIDS etc. can be considered as major challenges which made the program ineffective. All these imply that students are not equipped with the necessary numeracy, literacy and life skill at primary schools (Mesay, 2011).

## 4.2. The Taken Solution Strategies to Solve the Occurred Challenges

In order to solve the challenges, and to achieve intended objectives of the ESDP I, various mechanisms and suggestions were conducted. For example, as I assessed *the Young Lives Policy Brief 2 by* Pereznieto and Jones (2006), to achieve the intended objectives: increasing the number and upgrading school buildings, expanding teacher training programs, allowing children to progress between grades one and three without being held back on account of inadequate performance, using local languages in the classroom, developing context-appropriate primary school syllabi and textbooks, eliminating school fees, and Developing quality assessment mechanisms were the designed strategies by the program.

In another way, the (MoE, 2006) put the following as shortages which need future scale up endeavors:

- Innovative low cost, flexible and multi-sectoral solutions to primary education targeted at out of school children, pastoralist and semi agricultural areas.
- Further revision and improvement of the alternative basic education (ABE) package in terms of curriculum, methodology, teachers training and budget share.
- Greater support, training and empowerment of community structures such as parent teacher association (PTAs) and kebele education training boards (KETBs) to organize and mobilize community efforts to bring all children to schools, construct, upgrade/renovate classrooms and establish low cost education centers.
- Provision of water supply, separate latrines and sanitary facilities particularly for girls.
- Improved and better distribution of school feeding program that would also benefit ABE learners.

- Scaling up annual census of children to allow proper projection of enrolments, planning for resources and setting of achievable targets based on reliable data.
- Programmed, multi-media based continuous awareness raising campaigns to win parental acceptance and willingness to send their children to school irrespective of gender.
- Creation of better synergy amongst all actors to gain commitment of all parties to contribute and mobilize additional resources to support the education in a more coherent and coordinated manner.
- Study the impact of the result oriented performance management system and incentive structures used to monitor achievement of targets (e.g. SNNPR) and scale up further based on feasibility etc.

SE Asia Study Tour (n,d) also assessed the status of ESDP I based on students learning and assessment. Accordingly, the following are the major strategies to solve problems based on the assessment: Interactive, child centered learning approach and classroom management particularly in large size classrooms; Appropriate utilization of the production of cluster resource centers by satellite schools teachers and the management of the centers; Maximizing education materials including curriculum syllabus to reach teachers; Capacity Building in textbook policy formulation and related pedagogical issues; Technical assistance in textbook design and preparation; Financial assistance to meet challenges related to establishment of sustainable national system for textbook design and preparation; and Capacity building on developing the actual textbooks and related teaching materials on multi-grade teaching. Furthermore, training materials for teacher education institutions in pedagogy of multi-grade teaching; Resource mobilization and creativity in the utilization; and In order to address the above problems, capacity should be created at all levels to analyze the relationship between various input and outcomes of education process to focus on achieving maximum return out of scare resources.

EAS (2013) in its side as well forwarded suggestions by arguing as 1) a need to investigate contributing factors for the decline of quality of primary education in the country taking into consideration. SE Asia Study Tour (n,d), the Ethiopian Government needs assistance in the following areas

- Expanding access to post-primary education, while improving quality, efficiency and equity and without diverting scarce resources from primary.
- Developing a sustainable financing strategy with the right balances between the levels, and between sources of financing;
- Designing an effective strategy on transition rates primary-secondary and secondary-TVET/university
- Encourage the private investors to involve the education sector.

The Joint Team Review Missions/JTRM/ (ESDP, 1999) identified a number of problems with the supply and quality of teachers which must be addressed. These included training teachers able to deliver the new curriculum, building the institutional capacity of all the country's teacher training institutes/colleges (TTIs/TTCs), providing adequate support and resources, for example by strengthening administrative and resource management systems, and ensuring adequate pedagogic resources, such as laboratories, books and materials and so on. There was also a need for a careful monitoring of the impact of new policy decisions on the attrition of first-cycle primary education teachers, the quality of teacher training, and the supply of qualified teachers (IER, 2005).

"The ARM held in June 2001 reviewed the recommendations of the MTR and developed an action plan with special focus on improving educational *quality and efficiency, education of girls*, development of complementary basic education program for those who are not currently served by the formal system, and capacity strengthening at all tiers of the educational planning/administrative structures" (FDRE & UNICEF, 2001, p. 58, cited in IER, 2005).

To generalize, based on the analyzed documents; increasing number of schools; improving teacher training programs; eliminating school fees; developing quality assessment strategies; revision and improvement of alternative basic education; training and empowerment of community structures such as PATs, KETBs; appropriate utilization of cluster resources; and maximizing teaching-learning resources etc. are mentioned as solution strategies.

## 4.3. The Reasons Behind for the Coming of the ESDP II

Even though the researcher was analyzed twelve documents, he couldn't get reasons which talks about the coming of ESDP II. But, based on conducted interview, the project designed expert elaborated the reason behind for the development of ESDP II as follow:

> …it is difficult to implement the designed education policy of Ethiopia as it is rather, it is advisable to breakdown activities, or policy issues in to different phases(ESDP I, II, III etc.) based on priorities. But, priority does not mean simply facilitate issues which come firstly rather processing interlinked issues altogether by differentiating degree of implementation. For example, access and quality are the major issues in the instructional process. Thus, it is difficult to achieve quality before assuring access.

Therefore, as the expert added, access was taken as the major area in the ESDP I and quality followed in less degree. This is one reason for the coming of ESDP II because the degree of implementation access and quality different here. As a result, while the degree of access decreases, the quality also increases from phase to phases.

The second reason for the coming of ESDP II was to keeping internal coherences of instructional processes. Thus, as the expert noted, while facilitating the primary education, it is also preferred to think forward about the secondary education process, and then think over about the tertiary level.

Generally, getting internal coherence and making simple the policy document of education by breaking down activities in to different phases are mentioned as the causes for coming of other ESDPs in addition to EDSP I.

## Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation
### 5.1.  Summary
Objective of the study was to assess the status of ESDP I of Ethiopia: how the program was effective, the faced challenges, the taken corrective measures, and the reasons for the coming of ESDP II. To achieve these objectives, Evaluative research type was considered, and the researcher developed three basic research questions. Documents such as ESDPs, reports of MoE, other related research findings, and higher officials of MoE and ESDP were taken as population of the study. Of these, by considering relatedness and relevancies, some documents were selected purposively, and the higher officials were also included in the study via snow ball sampling technique.

Document analysis and semi-structured interview were used as data collection instruments. Accordingly, the required data was collected, and analyzed qualitatively. The finding of the analysis indicated how the quality of instructional process neglected in the expense of achieving the universal primary education by 2015.  This means, based on obtained reports, imbalance was observed between supply and demand aspects of the program. In addition to, lack of awareness of the society towards the program, shortages of required resources (both human and material), the occurred war between Ethiopia and Eretria etc. considered as faced challenges.

### 5.2.  Conclusion
 Although ESDP I was designed and implemented to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, it was remained poor and ineffective. Early dropout of school and low education quality was observed. There was also a great fall in education quality and it warns that the present scenario of declining quality in Ethiopian education will continue unless serious and urgent attention is given and measures are taken by all concerned bodies

### 5.3.  Recommendations
Policies and strategies for supporting out-of-school children in Ethiopia and closing the remaining net enrolment gaps will require making hard decisions by policy makers, particularly given the current context of inequity and inefficiencies. Addressing the five dimensions of out-of-school children (OOSC) will also require a much stronger policy framework for bridging the resource divide, which has primarily focused on supply side policies without adequate attention to the demand side barriers and bottlenecks to OOSC.

New approaches to addressing the 5DEs will also require short-term and longer-term policies which attempt to address the structural inequities which characterize the out-of school children's profile (MOE and UNICEF, 2012). Hence, the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus , in collaboration with other stakeholders, should make a concerted effort and take appropriate actions in order to solve the barriers and bottlenecks related to out-of-school children and enable the education system attain quality education by ESDP V.

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