



Review Paper

## Reforms of teacher education in Ethiopian: a historical analysis

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to give an over view of historical foundation of teacher education and point out the gaps found between teacher education reforms in Ethiopian context. It also encompasses selection and admission criterion, quality of teacher preparation, attitude and perceptions towards teaching profession, and competitive spirit to be a teacher starting from the very beginning of teacher education program to date. The study also clearly present the ups and downs of historical paths that teacher education program passes through and analyze them by thematizing it in to four different areas based on chronology. The admission and selection criteria of teachers along different policy reforms is analyzed and interpreted accordingly and their implication for current teacher education program is forwarded. The finding revealed that there was lack of adequate research from the side of teacher educators concerning the would be educational reforms, maintenances, and on giving direction as experts and professionals. Which is a result of lack of initiation among professionals to conduct research and waiting for a call from MOE for a research. This is a top down approach whose implication is doomed. Similarly, there was imposing a change from the Government side and resisting the change from implementers. So, to bring into being quality teacher education program and education in general, teacher education program and education system demands a bottom up reformation.*

**Keywords:** Teacher education, Education reforms, Selection and admission criterion.

### Introduction

Ethiopia is a country found in east Africa, known for her independency during colonial time and sign of liberty. By the same token Ethiopia is also unique among Africa countries for having her own alphabet, traditional education, and calendar. The history of education goes back to 4<sup>th</sup> century of Aksumite kingdom<sup>1</sup>. This article focuses on teacher education program and selection criteria starting from prior time of modernity to present.

Teacher education curricula differ from country to country as well as within the same country it differs across school level such as pre-school teacher education, primary school teacher education, secondary school teacher education, and graduate level teacher education program. One program is different from the other based on its purpose and objectives. For instance, undergraduate teacher education programs focuses on both the "what" and the "how" of learning where as graduate teacher education program focuses only on the how of learning and practice<sup>2</sup>.

Nowadays there are about 36 teachers training colleges that educate teachers for pre-schools and primary schools across the country. Similarly, about 20 different universities were selected

by MOE to offer add-on/ Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) programs for selected candidates. After completion of Add-on program those candidates will becomes a teacher in secondary school. This article gave due attention to reformations of teacher education in Ethiopia.

### Teacher education in Global Scenario

Different modalities of teacher education have been used across the world. The most common models are concurrent and consecutive models of teacher education<sup>3</sup>. Concurrent modality uses both content and pedagogy training simultaneously. It is used in countries like China, Korea, Taiwan, USA, Japan, Singapore, UK, etc whereas consecutive modality is applicable on the applicants already have bachelor degree relevant to the subject area. It focuses on the "how" of teaching – pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical skills, not the "what" to teach and consists of both formal instruction and supervised practice<sup>4</sup>.

Indeed there is no as such clear feature of consecutive modality of teacher education found in literature when compared with concurrent modality<sup>5</sup>. One of the merits of this program is giving a chance for those of working in other sectors to join teaching at some point in their career<sup>6</sup>. To this contrast this

modality has limitations like: time consuming, little consideration to school content knowledge, lack of integration content and pedagogical knowledge and so forth as compared with concurrent modality<sup>4</sup>.

### **The Purpose and Role of Teacher Education in National Development**

No one talks about development without education. We cannot talk about education without teachers. If there is a teacher there is education to be learned. So, teachers and education are inseparable. In other way there is teacher if there is a teacher education program. Teacher education can be regarded as the bedrock for national development<sup>7</sup>. It is a teacher education program that takes a lion share to translate the needed skill, knowledge and attitudes to meet societal needs; to produce well qualified professionals in all aspects of sects; and to produce good teachers for all school levels<sup>7</sup>. In general, teacher education is highly interlocked with national development. The role of teachers in making sustainable development is unquestionable because teacher is a responsible person on translating educational policy into practical action.

In Ethiopian context, teacher education program seems frustrated in many angles. No one is willing to join this program because of low income and low infrastructure when compared with other sects<sup>5</sup>. So, it is up to the teacher education program, ministry of education and all concerned body to prepare the would be teachers for the society in order to assure continuation of development programs.

**Objective of the study:** To clearly figure out ups and downs of Ethiopian teacher education reforms and forward their implications.

### **A brief history of Teacher education in traditional education up to 1908**

Ethiopian traditional education goes back to Aksumite kingdom of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A. D. The prominent objective was to train priest, monks, teachers and debteras<sup>8</sup>. The church education has three phases: 'Fedel Bet', Mesahift Bet' and 'kene Bet' which is almost parallel with the western education system that is primary school, secondary school and higher education<sup>9</sup>. Education structure of traditional education was: seven years to *Zema*, nine years to *Sewasew* (grammar), four years to *Kene* and ten years to Old and New Testaments. Starting from the very beginning of traditional education to 1944/45 there were no formal teacher education program like that of today<sup>8</sup>. The priests and loyal families were in a position to select and admit the would be teacher based on the individuals content knowledge. Religious leader were authorized to choose media of instructional, content to be learned and instruction, and manage the whole educational system at all<sup>1</sup>. There was feverism on selection and admission of the prospective teachers since then there was societal respect for teacher profession. Teachers were considered as knowledgeable other than others<sup>8</sup>.

### **An overview of teacher education from 1908 - 1974**

The history of modern education goes back to Imperialist Minilki II since 1908<sup>10</sup>. It was a u-turn in history of Ethiopian education in all aspects to make it modern like western type. Modern education was not introduced overnight but rather comes over a lot of resistance from both inside and outside countries. There was an ideal quarrel among religious leaders and government. This was marked as the first reform in Ethiopian history of education. Religious leaders were against of modern education in order to preserve religious dogma from false teachings<sup>11</sup>. In contrast the government need it for the purpose of diplomacy for the sake of preserving sovereignty of the country<sup>8</sup>.

During early stage of modern education both teachers and contents were imported from aboard countries<sup>10</sup>. So, teachers were forcing students to know, understand and fit foreign curriculums and different national exams to stay in the enterprise of education<sup>1</sup>. Curriculum contextualization, student's education background, language problems, school milieus, and so forth factors were not taken into consideration. From 1908-1944 there was no teacher education program.

The syllabus, teaching materials and teachers were all imported from England to prepare Ethiopian students for the General Certificate Examination of the University of London<sup>10</sup>. Since then Ethiopian students learn subjects like French, English, Arabic, arithmetic, science, History, Gymnastics, music, handicraft, geography and art<sup>12</sup>. Among those subjects more focus was given to French, then to English which enables the government to have diplomatic relationship with abroad<sup>1</sup>.

From 1941 onwards education was rapidly expanded whole over the country, but there was lack of teachers. In order to address the problem it was mandatory to have Ethiopian teachers. So, teacher training school for primary school was opened in Minilik II School in 1944/45 which was the first in its kind and the first Ethiopian primary school. But secondary school teacher education was started in the faculty of Arts of University College of Addis Ababa in since 1950/51 and later on it has been a full faculty of education since 1962<sup>13</sup>.

Many teacher training institutes were established from 1960 - 1970s like Harar, Debre Berhan and Jimma Teachers Training Institute (TTI) was launched. Teachers Training College (TTC) like Kotebe and Bahir Dar was established and Haileselese-I University for primary, and secondary school was opened. The trainees were selected from best performers of Grade-10 students and trained for 2 years for primary school whereas Grade-12 students and trained for a period of 5 years (one year to complete their secondary school and four year of university level education i.e. Be'ade Mariam Laboratory school from 1962 - 1978)<sup>13</sup>.

From the early stage of modern education till Derg regime, teaching profession have good resections from the society, good salary when compared with other sects, and top scored students were selected to join the program<sup>14</sup>.

### **A brief history of Teacher education During Derg regime**

In Derg reign since 1974 - Marxist Leninist ideology overwhelms the country. The regime departs government from religion. The major aim of education was *for production, for scientific research and for political consciousness*<sup>10</sup>. To realize this, education was given into two phases: transitional curriculum for general education and polytechnic education curriculum. In both curricula Marxist Leninist ideology was promoted. Academic, vocational, technical and ideological issues were its contents. On the other hand, the polytechnic based curriculum focused on polytechnic education across primary, secondary and tertiary schools in order to produce a middle trained manpower<sup>15</sup>.

The educational structure of military regime was: primary school (from grade 1- 6), junior secondary school (from grade 7 - 8), senior secondary school (from grade 9 - 12) and higher education (which took four years for teacher educators). There were extensive works done during Derg's regime especially on preparing teachers<sup>16</sup>. According to Tirusew teachers were selected and admitted to teacher training programs as follows: community teacher training (Grade 8 +1); primary teacher preparation (Grade 8+1, 8+4,10+2, 12+1); secondary teacher education (Grade 12+4); and technical and vocational teacher education (Grade, 10+3, 12+3). On top of this, scholars also pointed out that selection and admission of candidates was held based on the interest of the learner to join teaching profession, up grading teachers teaching in junior secondary schools based on their academic performance and attitude towards teaching profession, and directly bringing those of students who have interest to join teaching profession from grade 11 to university in order to take an adequate professional training<sup>4</sup>. The length of teacher preparation for secondary school was four years and pedagogical courses comprises 28 credits, 25 credits, 18 credits changed overtime based on the complaints of the academic units, regardless of the recommended 34 credits by UNESCO.

The cause for turning down of education in general, and teacher education in particular in Ethiopia was Derg regime<sup>14</sup>. By the same token Tesfaye blame Derg regime for deprofessionalizing of teaching. Tesfaye claim that the campaign of '*Idget Be Hibret Zemecha*' which refers as 'development through cooperation and work campaign' led schools, colleges and TTI to the shortage of teachers. In order to compensate and overcome the educational crisis faced government recruit untrained teachers the so called '*Degoma Memheran*' which put teaching profession under question on issue of quality and social acceptance. On top of this the candidates assigned to teacher education program was very poor. The allocation system was incomparable with that of

Emperor Regime who selects very tough students to the program<sup>14</sup>.

Teachers graduated from different institute were assigned to different school levels based of their educational status<sup>14</sup>. Those of degree and above holders were assigned to grade 11 and 12, 65% degree and 35% diploma graduates were assigned to grade 9 and 10, 70% diploma and 30% TTI certificate holders were assigned to grade 7 and 8, and TTI certificate holders were assigned to primary school. On top of this the maximum workloads for teachers were 30 periods per week. But things were not implemented properly as they were proposed due to factors like massive extermination, lack of interest to become teachers, and high rate of voluntary teachers turn over.

Generally, it was observed that there was a lack of qualified teachers; shortage of text books; lack of clarity, coherence and consistency in subject matters; a significant number of untrained teachers selected for adults, military, primary schools teachers, and so forth were employed to serve as teacher; and there were symptoms of declining interest to continue in the profession<sup>4</sup>.

### **An overview of Teachers education from 1991 to date**

There was a lot of educational crisis concerning shortage of qualified teachers, shortage of budget and supply of basic educational materials, and there were mismatch between text book and national objective during Derg regime<sup>8</sup>. In order to tackle such problem from its base, Ethiopian Transitional Government (ETG) did a lot of work especially to maintain quality education. Accordingly some policies and reforms were done on education like: Education and Training Policy (1994), Teacher Education System Overhaul Program (TESO), and Teacher Development Programs (TDPs) from time to time to bring educational revolution. Now let us see policies and reforms done by transitional government.

Ethiopian Education and Training Policy clearly show that education policy of Ethiopia encompasses five general objectives. On top of this, there are also about fifteen specific objectives listed clearly to realize major objective. In order to meet the listed objectives the policy clearly indicates that teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction through pre-service and in-service training. And also indicated that teachers will develop their profession through continuous education and training, professional ethics and teaching performance<sup>17</sup>.

### **Ethiopian Teacher education before TESO**

Teacher Development Program (TDP I) was designed since 1997 for all levels of teacher education program to benefit students, teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders and implementing technical staff. The aim of TDP was to improve

teacher educators' knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are related to teacher education. Teachers training before TESO program was classified into four different levels that was offered through pre-service, and in-service program: primary first cycle (from grade 1 - 4), primary second cycle (from grade 5 - 8), first cycle secondary school (from grade 9 - 10), and second cycle secondary school (from grade 11 - 12)<sup>18</sup>.

## Ethiopian Teacher education during TESO

Ministry of education conducted a research in consultation with various Teacher Education Institutions on the quality and effectiveness of teacher education in Ethiopia to give life to the five general objectives of education of the country listed in the policy document<sup>14</sup>. Then the research conducted by ministry of education came up with report that shows lack of content knowledge, lack of pedagogical knowledge, lack of practices, too theoretical and teachers centered, and teachers' competence is below the standard and expectation. So, based on the results of the study MOE established a task force to produce the national framework called Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program. TESO was drafted by task forces to address issues of quality and effectiveness of teacher education. It focuses on programs such as recruitment, training, and education of teachers; school based and student centered learning; practice oriented training, and self-preparedness for the teaching profession<sup>9</sup>.

On top of this, emphasis was also given to professional competence<sup>15</sup>. TESO program includes changes like reduction of study year; introduction of practicum program throughout three years training; offering of action research courses that fosters problem solving skill of the student teachers; and paradigm shift from traditional teachers centered approach to student centered approach<sup>4</sup>.

According to new selection guidelines teachers are trained at different levels for different school levels. The primary level teachers are trained both for the integrated school curriculum (grade 1-4) and for the linear subjects being taught in the upper primary (grade 7-8). Currently there are two modalities of primary teacher's preparation: the Cluster Model, and the Linear Model. Both of these models prepare teachers with a 10+3 training program and award candidates a diploma in teaching. For 10+3 program about 54 credit hours content courses, 27 cr.hrs professional courses, 14 cr.hrs practicum courses and 13 cr.hrs common courses totally 108 cr.hr was given. Secondary school teachers were given three years training program. The course breakdown was about 70 credit hours content courses, 35 cr.hr professional courses, 15 cr.hrs practicum courses and 20 cr.hrs common courses of total 140cr.hrs was given for degree program<sup>4</sup>.

The intended objective of TESO was to bring a paradigm shift on teacher education system<sup>19</sup>. In contrast to this, ministry of education identified major problems of TESO program such as

lack of content knowledge, poor implementation of active learning, lack of professional commitment and lack of interest<sup>20</sup>. But those things are also weakness of the prior TESO program<sup>21</sup>. No change at all concerning teacher education program<sup>14</sup>. This happens due to either lack of clear and coherent direction of teacher education, ignorance of local context, or the need for the reform was not started from bottom and move up rather from top to down to fulfill the interest of donors<sup>22</sup>.

## Ethiopian Teacher education after TESO

In order to alleviate weaknesses of TESO program MOE again comes with new idea. That is Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT). The intended objective of PGDT was to equip trainees with the knowledge and skills needed, to become reflective practitioners, to develop understanding of the nature of teacher profession, to provide teacher trainees with theoretical and practical experience, and so forth<sup>20</sup>. On top of this, a framework was prepared for admission criteria to the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) based on the research result conducted by ministry of education<sup>20</sup>.

The selection and admission criteria to be considered are: B.Sc or B.A in areas related to secondary school subjects, interview and entrance examination, and teaching profession ethical standards. In fact those are very common points considered in many countries like USA, and UK as selection criterion.

Now days for pre-school and primary level teachers are trained separately. Even in primary teachers training there is an integrated school curriculum (for grades 1-4) and for the linear subjects being taught in the upper primary (grades 5-8). For both pre-school and primary school requires teachers graduated with diploma from college (10+3) in teaching. From 2011 onward a new system of secondary teacher preparation called Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) was implemented by 10 universities in Ethiopia.

Under this system, the teacher trainees are given one year of professional and practical training before they were employed in a mainstream teaching job. Unfortunately, things become upside down. MOE decided it to start in summer modality since 2011 for the first time.

This is because of the fact that there were no Bachelor of Education graduates in 2011 throughout the country<sup>19</sup>. One of the aim of PGDT was to fill the pedagogical skill gaps that were present in earlier secondary education teaching programs as observed in teaching and classroom practices in secondary schools<sup>23</sup>.

Tesfaye listed out some limitations of the program as excluding primary teacher preparation, packed too many courses, inadequate to address the enduring challenges of the teaching profession, and wrongly propagated as a panacea<sup>14</sup>.

## Summary

Teacher education program in Ethiopian context can be divided into: Pre-service and In-service. In-service teacher training is a training that is offered for trainee in order to fill the skill gap on content and pedagogical knowledge. Such training is given to the trainee through summer, evening and distance modality. Pre-service teacher training program is a regular program that prepares prospective teachers for different school level. Student teacher was assigned to the program from the very beginning of the training. Such training has been implemented in Ethiopian context starting for the very beginning of history of teacher education to 2010 across different institutions. From 2010 onward there are two different modalities that Ethiopia is following. For primary school there is an in-service and pre-service program like as former periods. PGDT is the only teacher education program in Ethiopia that is given for the candidates through summer modality. In fact it is recently launched to be given pre-service.

Currently, PGDT came to the floor in order to fulfill limitations of TESO program. But there are still challenges of: i. Content knowledge: graduates of B.SC and B.A for different corners of universities lack integration with high school level content knowledge. So, it is observed that there is a content knowledge gap. ii. Attitude: most of student teachers have no good attitude towards teaching profession because of many reasons like salary, social value, school politicized, and so forth. iii. Very few works was done on teacher professional development when compared with other sects. iv. Lack of sufficient and effective mentors on different qualification areas. For instance mentee who graduated in and teaches mathematics needs to be mentored by a mathematics graduate mentor who teaches mathematics. v. Lack of critical follow-up during practice is observed. vi. Still there is misunderstanding of PGDT program from the stakeholders.

## Conclusion

Through out the history of Teacher Education in Ethiopia: i. Imposing a change from the Government side and resisting the change from implementers were taken as a challenge. The MoE invites a particular group of stakeholders to develop a program and enforce the wider stakeholders to implement it. For instance, for TESO, staff members of College of Education were invited and the Science Faculty members were not positively responding for the implementation of the program. Similarly, MoE involved pure Mathematicians to design a Postgraduate Mathematics curriculum for Teachers. So, the implication is that the Teacher Education program is not being run in organized way. ii. On the other hand, educational researchers were appreciating the past. For instance, in Derg time, Haileselassie regime Teachers were assumed as more qualified. At the beginning of TESO, the late programs were admired. Mekasha and his colleagues highly argued that the former (TESO) was better.

There are unqualified (Degoma) teachers even today due to shortage of teachers based on the contemporary Set Standard.

Students who complete grade 10 are being assigned at elementary schools. They are also given a Post of Facilitator at Functional Adult Education or Alternative Basic Education programs. Graduates of pure or applied subject fields are being employed to teach without prior pedagogical training.

These contexts imply in turn that Teacher Education is not being administered by an organized and reputable institution.

We conclude that MOE has to ensure the involvement and consensus of all stake holders of Teacher Education on Teacher Education programs. Besides, a reform and implementation has to be based on continuous research outcomes.

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