

Teacher Education in Ethiopia: A Paradigm Shift

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Abstract : *Education is universally acknowledged in vast body of literature as an essential element in the process of national development. Today, with a great understanding of the function that education has to the society and to the country as whole, Ethiopia is striving to expand education at all levels (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education) with the intention to transform society. To this end, new goals of access, equity, quality and efficiency have been articulated/ formed at national level in Ethiopian education and training. To respond to this growing rapidly changing demand of education, teacher preparation has also changed in haste in the past decades. In similar manner, the Ethiopia teacher development program has passed through different reforms and improvements.*

Keywords: *Education, Paradigm Shift, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Teacher Education, Tertiary Education.*

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged in vast body of literature as an essential element in the process of national development (UNESCO, 1997; UNESCO, 2005; TGE, 1993; GCE, 2000; Psacharopoulos, 1985; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). It unlocks human potential and helps individuals to better understand the world in which they live, to address the complexity and interconnectedness of problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, urban decay, population growth, gender inequality, health, conflict and the violation of human rights that threaten our future and also seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future.

Today, with a great understanding of the function that education has to the society and to the country as whole, Ethiopia is striving to expand education at all levels with the intention to transform society through education. To this end, new goals of access, equity, quality and efficiency have been articulated/ formed at national level in Ethiopian education and training. To respond to this growing rapidly changing demand of education, Teacher preparation has also changed in haste in the past decades. In similar manner, the Ethiopia teacher's development program has passed through different reforms and improvements.

The purpose of teacher education is to produce effective practicing teachers (George et al., 2000), the question of how trainees can best be prepared to become effective classroom practitioners. Therefore, in Ethiopia new teacher education program is designed to strengthen the quality of teaching at secondary school level and fill gaps identified in the knowledge, practice and commitment of teachers prepared through programs (MoE, 2007, MoE, 2009-b). The new program is also intended to bring the

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preparation of secondary teachers in line with international standards which comprise a degree in a relevant subject followed by a professional qualification.

Menilik – II and Haileselese – I Period (1989-1972)

The first modern school in Ethiopia was established in 1905 and opened to the public in 1908. From that time up until 1944, there was no teacher education system, and Western teachers and principals populated the schools (MoE, 1973). A teacher training system for primary schools was initiated in late 1940s and still the academicians were foreigners. The then curricula of Emperors consisted of French, English, Arabic, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics, History, Geography, Gymnastics and sport as well as Amharic. This initiative matured in the 1960s. There were institutions offering Certificates, Diplomas and B.A. degree. During this time, Primary Teacher Training Institutes were established. Best performers of Grade-X students were recruited and trained for 2 years. One Secondary School Teacher Training Institute was established under the Haileselese-I University. Best performers of Grade-XII students were recruited and trained for a period of 5 years (one year to complete their secondary school and four year of university level education) (Be'de Mariam school).

However, in the early 1950s even the government itself sensed a general dissatisfaction with the education system of the Imperial regime. This dissatisfaction grew and the government initiated a study called the Education Sector Review (ESR) in 1971. It was then suggested that the rural population be made the target of educational policy. However, this reform process was abandoned in September 1974.

Derge Era (1974-1991)

After closing the educational institutions for some time, the Derge continued the training of teachers for three levels, viz. elementary (Grade I-VI), junior secondary (Grade VII-VIII) and secondary (Grade IX-XII). At the same time a significant number of untrained teachers were employed to serve as teacher. In 1982, the Derge argued that the education policy of the Imperial regime was elitist (favoring some regions and urban areas) and that the curriculum did not take into account the concrete conditions in the country (Negash, 1996). Accordingly, the government launched a reform study called 'Evaluative Research of the General Education System in Ethiopia' (ERGESE) in 1983. Its influence, however, was masked by the Ten Year National Perspective Plan (1984 -1994) that was launched by the government in 1984 and that set policy statements for education (Tefera, 1996). Accordingly, new curricula that reflected the new policy were developed (Engida, 2002) and the teacher educators during the Derge regime (1974-1991) were increasingly Ethiopians rather than foreigners.

The New Era in Ethiopia Education System

Following the overthrow of the Derge regime in Ethiopia, a number of efforts are made, aimed at transforming society through education. By the new democratic government, new goals of access, equity, quality and efficiency have been articulated/formed at national level in Ethiopian education and training policy of 1994 to reform all aspects of education system. In this context the New Education and Training Policy states the general and specific objectives of the education, an overall strategy and areas of special attention and prioritized action. Among the areas of special attention and prioritized action, one focuses on teacher training and over all development of teachers and other personnel. To facilitate the implementation policy in the eras of teacher education, a task force was formed to study the problems of the quality and effectiveness of the teacher education system in Ethiopia. The study by MoE reported the multifaceted problems; this in turn led to the preparation of Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) document in order to address the serious problems identified in the study.

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Accordingly, Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) were implementing Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program which was initiated by the MoE and intended to bring about paradigm shift in the Ethiopian teacher education system.

A Paradigm shift implies change in what is valued in society, and what knowledge society thinks should be learned in schools. Currently Ethiopia is striving to accommodate the development of all nations and nationalities. Teachers are essentially agents for positive societal change. Those adhering to the shifts in educational paradigm (that the knowledge for example, depends on interpretation) can very effectively work to empower communities that endure a lack of opportunities (MoE, 2003)

The need for paradigm shift within pre-service teacher education was demonstrated by a series of research findings. A series of meeting involving teachers from all over the Ethiopia offered comments, which reinforced the finding of the studies. The major points drawn were:

- The professional competence of teachers is deficient
- The content knowledge of teachers is unsatisfactory
- The teaching skills and techniques are very basic
- Teachers do not match up to the standards and expectations of their profession
- There are failures in school management and administration including lack of knowledge of the ETP and proper implementation of the career structure
- There is a mismatch between Teacher Education and school education
- There is a lack of professionalism, and ethical values in the Teacher Education programme.
- The quality of courses and methods of teaching are theoretical and teacher Centered
- The Practicum receives inadequate emphasis and is inefficiently implemented at all levels of Teachers Education
- Student assessment does not adequately identify difficulties and potentials in order to enhance students' learning
- Action research was given little or no attention at all levels of Teacher Education
- TEIs, schools and communities have insufficient links between them
- Immediate action was required to address all these problems and hence TESO was started by developing the national curriculum guideline for pre-service teacher education programmers'.

In response to this, the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program in Ethiopia made the Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) the beginning point for the paradigm shifts; set out five competences for teachers at all levels to exhibit in the professional context. These competences are:

- Competent in producing responsible citizens
- Competent in subject (s) and content of teaching

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- Competent in the classroom
- Competent in areas relating to the school and the educational system
- Competent in the value, attributes, ethics and abilities essential to professionalism in upholding the professional ethics

To implement the aforementioned competences as strategy, the TESO document recommended the pre-service teacher education program; introduction of practicum, professional courses and research, academic areas (the combination of content and methods), assessment, certification of teachers, gender balance, life-skills and civic course.

Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program required that would be teachers to spend a significant portion of their pre-service training time in schools, observing teachers, schools, classroom, the school environment and practicing teaching specific subject related to their field of study with the intention to integrate campus experience with the school based practice experience in meaning full way.

To achieve the goal of training effectively, different approaches to teacher education have been emerged in teacher preparation program around the world. One of such approach was the introduction of practicum in teacher education which was the most valued component of teacher preparation (Hill and Brodin, 2004; High and Tuck, 2000; Glikman and Bey, 1990), which provides a firm foundation for future professional development (MoE, 2003), and has been a site where student teachers can practice the art of teaching in real school context (Knenedy, 2006) and has the power of experience to critically shape the student teachers perception of teaching and learning (Gustafson and Rowell, 1995).

It is within the context of national policy and standards that the new Degree plus Postgraduate Diploma system of preparing secondary teachers was developed. The document that shaped the new PGDT program, viz. Curriculum Framework for Secondary School Teacher Education Program in Ethiopia, identifies problems with the capacity of existing secondary school teachers that contribute to inadequate quality of education at the secondary level and outlines a program to improve quality of teachers to be prepared in future (MoE, 2009-b). This is the new Degree plus PGDT program for preparing secondary school teachers that is presently in its first year of implementation.

In the frame work, the roles of the different stakeholders are defined and the selection and admission procedures are outlined. According to the frame work, the admission criteria to the Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) are:

- B.Sc or B.A in areas directly related to secondary school subjects
- Interview and Entrance Examination (Subject matter, English language and aptitude)
 - ✓ To assess students' readiness, predisposition, and motivation to become secondary school teachers.
 - ✓ To assess students' language and communication skills.
 - ✓ To assess any previous engagement with children or school.
- Teaching profession ethical standards will be considered during selection.

Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) program was supposed to be given in regular program consisting of three terms. Unfortunately, by the decision of MoE it was started in 2011 in summer modality for the first time. This is because of the fact that there were no B.Ed graduates in 2011

throughout the country. To cope with the shortage, the new PGDT program was started in July 2011 summer, i.e. from July to September. TESO practicum is the major focus area of the PGDT program. In the original guideline of PGDT, practicum at secondary schools has three parts: practicum I, II and III. The total credit given is 4 for practicum III while I and II have no credit. When the program is launched in summer term, implementation of the guideline became impossible. To tackle the problem, a consultative meeting consisting of Training College Deans and PGDT Coordinators, REB representative was organized by the MoE from September 19-23/2011 at Adama Ras Hotel. This is justified in the Practicum Implementation Provisional Guideline as:

In the original implementation guideline of practicum for secondary school teachers training, Practicum has been structured as three courses. These courses were mainly designed to fit the original plan of the winter PGDT training. As student teachers in this training would stay boarded at their TEI, implementation and the scheduling of practicum activities could have been easier and requires mainly the agreement between the TEI and the partner schools and/or centers. Nevertheless, as a result of the timing chosen for the current in-out-in PGDT training, lack of synchronization between the actual and the intended practice as stipulated in the guideline, is likely to occur during implementation of practicum. Hence, rearrangement of activities and drafting of implementation schedule is essential (MoE, 2011).

In the meeting, after discussion on the problem and possibilities of different alternatives, the participants developed Practicum Implementation Provisional Guideline for practicum I, II and III. The percentage evaluation for Practicum I is 15%, Practicum II 60% and Practicum III 25%.

Practicum I: In this practicum, student teachers complete requirements within 15 days after their deployment to schools. The key role is played by their mentors.

Practicum II: After practicum I student teachers will perform Guided Teaching for at least 2 months with the support of their mentors and they submit all records of assessment scores to the supervisor by the end of the first semester.

Practicum III: After student teachers completed and reflected on practicum I and II, they will be engaged in Independent teaching for 2 months. At this time the student teachers are evaluated by the university supervisor.

To conduct the practicum as agreed it was decided that the mentors of the student teachers, and the tutorial centers should be selected and sent to MoE and then MoE should send the list to the universities so that mentors will be trained before students left the campus and start working. Moreover, universities should give orientation; provide the practicum guidelines (both the original and the provisional) and the distance course materials. Besides, the Teacher Training Universities agreed to train mentors, supervise and give tutorial for distance courses in their nearby Woredas (Districts), Zones or Regions (States). Based on this agreement, Haramaya University agreed to train the mentors of student teachers working in Somali Region, East and West Hararghea zones of Oromia Region and Awash areas of Afar Region. Student teachers working in the above mentioned areas attended their first term classes from Haramaya, Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Jimma, Wollega, Wolayta Sodo, Dilla, and Wollo Universities.

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