



TEACHER EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The main focus of this study is on teacher education in Ethiopia, with particular reference to its reforms and policies. In Ethiopia, with the emergence of various education reforms and policies, and with the discourse of Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) the complete infrastructure of the educational system shows signs of development. Teacher education in Ethiopia is directed towards developing both the students and teachers equally, to stand on par with the educational systems of other societies. This article highlights various aspects of teacher education in Ethiopia and focuses upon its various reforms and policies established to develop teacher education in the country. We explore the changes in the teacher education system and approaches that have emerged since 1900 to the present time in Ethiopia. We also provide examples of institutions and programs that are particularly successful in implementing some of the key policies. The concluding part of the study reflects on a new paradigm in teacher education highlighting the ICT and plasma teacher phenomenon.

Keywords: Ethiopia teacher education, Education Reform, Teacher Education System Overhaul, History Teacher Education Ethiopia.

Introduction

In considering raising the quality of teaching, one must begin at the teacher level. Teacher development must be seen as a continuum of learning, with teachers located at various places along the continuum (Craig et.al, 1998, p.1). Coexistent with this however is the fact that to improve any educational system the most important factor to be kept in mind is to improve the quality of teachers along with the standard of teaching. This is necessary because a person who would educate others must be educated first and should possess a broad background of general cultural training. It is also necessary to educate teachers because only teachers who have themselves experienced a liberal and valuable education can lead the students towards development by exhibiting resourcefulness and enterprise in their work.

All major issues concerning educational changes require staff development activities to implement these changes in the educational infrastructure from top to bottom levels that is, from administrators, school principals, teachers, to technical and administrative support personnel. Moreover with the advent of information and technologies in the education system the teachers are now under pressure to learn how to cope with these technologies in their classrooms, and how to use the hardware and software to enhance the teaching and learning process. The situation involves considering the needs of updating and developing teachers' knowledge to be competent enough to deal with the ongoing pressures. As with teaching itself, teacher education features a profusion of advice, little of which is anchored in reliable knowledge or shared across programs.

Teachers' education is also a part of professional development of teachers. First of all we will define the term professional development. Professional development basically refers to overall development of the profession of an individual. Various researchers have their own perspectives and definitions of professional development, such as (Glatthorn, 1995) states that "teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (p. 40). The concept of professional development of teacher covers a broader aspect than the career development or the staff development aspect. When looking at professional development one must examine the content of the experiences, the processes by which the professional development will occur, and the context in which it will take place (Ganser, 2000; Fielding & Schalock, 1985). Previous studies confirm that development of teacher education provides teachers with satisfaction besides financial gain and it also have a positive impact on a teacher's beliefs and practices that may lead to better teaching of and learning by the students. Educational development also has a positive impact on the implementation of various educational reforms in any country. It is a known fact that educational changes require staff development activities to implement these changes in the educational infrastructure from top to bottom in order to be effective. Also with the advent of information and technologies in the education system the teachers must learn how to cope with these technologies in their classrooms and how to use the hardware and software to enhance the teaching and learning process. All these situations give rise to the need to update and develop the teachers' knowledge and skills to be competent enough to deal with the ongoing pressures. The only one way to tackle this problem is to develop or improve the education of teachers. By positioning educational policies and practices firmly within their historical framework, the Ethiopian government took a self-decreed vow to use a political approach for the development of teachers from the core, and thus explicitly articulated these issues which have come to preoccupy the current state of education.

This article deals particularly with the development of teacher education in Ethiopia. Teacher education in Ethiopia since the times of the Coptic Church to present can be documented as one of flurried activity with dramatic changes. Major changes are evident significantly in policy making and the rationalization of the teacher education system. The changes are remarkable, both systemically and in terms of underlying educational philosophy and curriculum. This study attempts to survey and analyse major teacher education documents regarding policies and proclamations, and approaches and challenges to the teacher education system.

In the first part of this article we will examine the systemic changes in teacher education system since the time of Coptic Church's involvement to the present time through the historical introduction of education and training policy by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

(FDRE) government in 1994. We begin with a note on the research methodology used in this article, followed by a review of the extant literature on the history and present scenario of teachers' education in Ethiopia. The study also provides an overview of current teacher education policies and reforms in the country. Further it explores teacher development programs in the light of these national teacher education reforms and policies. In the second part of this article, we examine the rich and inclusive debate about "A New Paradigm for Teacher Education in Ethiopia" that has invaded the new educational philosophy and teacher education system in Ethiopia over the last decade and the challenges faced by the system. Finally we conclude this article with some recommendations and suggestions that address concerns related to these policies and programs.

Research Methodology

The main aim of this study is to ascertain important works and developments in the area of teachers' education in Ethiopia highlighting the educational reforms and policies. For this purposes of this study both primary and secondary source of information was used. We categorized source topics, so as to identify the gaps between theory and practice. A brief introduction on the past and the present education system within the country is provided to make the reader acquainted with the knowledge base within the area and broaden the scope of further research on the topic. Next we focus upon various educational policies and reforms taken up by the Ethiopian government to improve the quality of education in the country and move on to discuss the different types of professional development programs. Further we highlight some new paradigms in teacher education. Finally, we summarize and discuss the issues arising from our study and, provide some general conclusions on the state of the field which is followed by indicating some gaps for potential future study at the end. The primary information was gathered by interacting with Faculty of Education at Bahirdar University from 2010-2011, which is one of the pioneer pedagogical institutes in Ethiopia. The secondary source of information was gathered from the vast expanse of literature related to the topic present in the Bahirdar University Library and on the internet.

History of Teacher Education in Ethiopia (1900 -1990)

Before expanding upon the topic it seems sensible to first review a brief history of Ethiopian teacher education in the chronological order. A historical review of teacher education development in Ethiopia from 1900 to the present consists of different phases of religious, social and political experimentation, reorganization, and independence. Without mentioning the traditional or Coptic Church education system in Ethiopia, history of teacher education cannot complete. Ethiopia has a long and rich tradition of indigenous education most notably associated with the Coptic Church, which has been a powerful institution in the area of contemporary Ethiopia for over 1000 years (Pankhurst 1974). The traditional church education relates back to the fourth century CE during the Aksumite civilization and controlled most of the education institutions across the country for about 1500 years. From 13th through the 16th centuries CE the Coptic Church (Church) had an unopposed influence over both social and political systems in the country giving rise to well a defined church education system and literature as well. The Church education may be divided into three phases that seem to parallel the Western-oriented education system. The primary schools, secondary schools, and the higher education in the Western – oriented education are more or less parallel to "Qum tsehefet", "Zema Bet", and "Quoine Bet" schools respectively in the Ethiopian indigenous Church school system (Habtemariam, 1970).

The approaches to teaching and learning embedded in the traditional or Church education system include: obedience and complete subservience to authority (Amare, 1967, p.7); a heavy dependence on rote learning, a close relationship between learning and doing, and the mastery of what is essentially a stable body of knowledge passed on through the generations (Ridley & Bridges, 1997). The Church strongly opposed the establishment and running of secular types of schools. After all, these schools did not evolve from the traditional schools of the Church or the mosque. Rather the schools were alien to the Church in their curriculum, the teaching staff, and books, and even the media of instruction were foreign to the Ethiopian situation (Haileselassie, 1999, p.1).

Modern education was introduced in Ethiopia under the rule of the Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) in 1908 that was more than 100 years ago. A school was established and named Menelik School which was probably inspired by the missionary schools taking center stage of the world by the mid-nineteenth century CE. The school was highly opposed by the authoritarian Church that enjoyed a virtual monopoly over education. The Church feared the undermining potential of a state school system managed by the Europeans. The opposition from the Church was overcome by Emperor Menelik II who bowed down against a number of demands of the Church (Negash, 1996, p.101).

It was during the time of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930 –1974) that a significant development was registered in the education sector. The development was virtually in all aspects of education: educational structure, teacher training, educational management and co-operation (Kassaye, 2005, p.107). During this period the medium of instruction was Amharic and education focused mainly on training in communication skills (reading and writing) as well as the rudiments of mathematics necessary to run a modern bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, the focus shifted towards giving priority to education and consequently many schools and higher learning institutions were established. The main aim was to produce qualified teachers and administrators capable of running the state machinery smoothly. Since then various reforms and policies were introduced in the system to improve the quality of teacher education in the country. The lines of this development were drawn in 1944-5 when the first teacher training program was initiated with the implementation of Primary School Teachers' Training Programs at Menelik II School in Addis Ababa. Adding to this development was the University College of Addis Ababa in 1950 that was established to train secondary school teachers. Later on the Faculty of Education emerged at Haile Selassie I University (now Addis Ababa University) in 1961 that was the first faculty explicitly concentrating on the preparation of secondary school teachers (Marew et al., 2000). Following this trend, the Kotebe Arts and Mechanical College started upper primary teacher training program followed by a secondary teacher education program in five main subjects, including, English, Mathematics, Sports, Physical Education, and Amharic around 1990s. At the time there were about 12 teacher training institutes around the country. These institutes imparted training to more than 6 thousand primary school teachers every year of which, Haramaya University, Dilla College of Teacher Education and Health Sciences, and Bahir Dar University were the pioneers.

The Bahir Dar Teachers' College, at the time known as the Academy of Pedagogy, was established in 1972 by the Imperial Government of Ethiopia with aid from UNESCO and UNDP. The Academy of Pedagogy started functioning in 1973 under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. The faculty initially offered training to educationists such as guidance and counseling experts, educational administrators, and curriculum coordinators. Gradually, the faculty was developed into a college that offered a complete two year teacher education course in

Adult Education, Amharic, English, Geography, Mathematics, and Physics. Diploma courses were launched in 1980 to train teachers for junior secondary schools.

In the course of development some of these colleges were geared up to train upper primary school (grades 5–8) teachers. There are now over 15 such colleges, which increased the country's institutional capacity to preparing over 30,000 teachers during 2005 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2005). Riding high on these developments, Ethiopia's capability to prepare teachers for different levels, primary, secondary and higher education, has grown both qualitatively and quantitatively along with the implementation of non-conventional teacher education programs.

Present State of Teacher Education in Ethiopia

The main principles, education, and objectives, and goals of education in the country are enunciated in the various proclamations by Ethiopia's government (UNESCO, 2010, p.3) To expand the educational infrastructure, access to educational opportunity, and to improve the quality of education, Ethiopia's government adopted an Education and Training Policy in 1994. The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy aimed to achieve four educational goals namely: quality, access, relevance, and equity. The training of qualified teachers is conducted simultaneously with the expansion of the education system. The government also established new teachers training colleges and upgraded the existing ones as it felt that to improve the quality of education, not only the academic qualifications of the teachers should be improved but the education institutions that impart educational ethical values and the methodological approaches of the teachers should also be improved. As it is presented in the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy, teachers are expected to have the ability, diligence, and professional interest, and the physical and mental fitness appropriate for the profession (Ministry of Education, 2012, p.1).

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (1994) helped to chart out the Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs) I, II, and III consecutively with an aim to meet the educational goals of the nation. Under ESDP it was recognized that to improve education both qualitatively and quantitatively, the teacher training system should be increased to provide adequate numbers of qualified teachers to meet the demands of the greatly increased enrolment in educational institutions. ESDP also made the authorities realize that not only the quantity of qualified teachers should be increased, but the quality of teachers should also be improved.

In Ethiopia all teacher education activities are organized under the aegis of Federal Ministry of Education through the Department of Educational Programs and Teacher Education. The primary school teacher training programs and training for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teachers is supervised by Teacher Education Department of the General Education sub-sector, while the secondary teachers training program is the onus of the Higher Education Department. In addition to the teacher education policy, a teacher education reform called Teacher Development Program (TDP) was also implemented by the Ministry of Education which is currently jointly funded by six donor countries. The MOE also provides guidelines for the training of pre-school teachers.

Following this, a policy program called Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) was initiated in 2003 to develop the objectives and strategies of the teacher's education. According to MOE's description, the TESO policy represents a paradigm shift (MOE, 2003) that officially follows the international trends of active learner-focused education. Among the actions taken, formal schooling was given a slightly modified apparatus or structure. Similarly, post-secondary

and higher learning institutions were restructured to affect a two-tier four cycle approach. That is First Cycle Primary (1-4), Second Cycle Primary (5-8), First Cycle Secondary (9 and 10) and Second Cycle Secondary (11 and 12) (Tessema, 2006). Though, TESO was implemented with great hope, the desired result are yet to be achieved. It was observed that the authorities are not yet fully prepared and adept in initiating changes to teacher education programs as outlined and described in TESO. It was also observed that schooling and teacher preparation activities are not proportional and are not aligned with each other in their aims and practices. At present, Ethiopian teacher education is characterized as a terrain of persistent contradictions, challenges, and chaos. Engrossed in and obsessed with the rhetoric of system overhaul and reform, state actors officially opted for a swift and sweeping change in the structure and content of teacher education since 2003 (Tessema, 2006). In the next section of this article we are going to discuss in brief the various reforms and policies instituted in Ethiopia and their consequences with regard to the development of teacher education.

Teacher education: Policies and Reforms

The world is heading towards globalization which can be defined as a multifaceted process of change involving economic, political, and cultural aspects regarding global markets and practices. Recently the term globalization has become well associated with educational contexts. “Globalization has become an influence in nation-states’ social reforms as education sectors adjust to the new global environments that are characterized by flexibility, diversity, increased competition, and unpredictable change” (Sahlberg, 2004, p.67). Burbules & Torres (2000) explored the diversity of various responses to globalization in the context of different countries and found that it has an impact on educational policies and practices in countries around the world. Expanding upon these statements we wish to assert that the main objective of current teacher education programs is to prepare teachers to teach in the context of educational globalization. By the term educational globalization we mean to say that, a drastic change has been observed in the education sector around the world. Misra & Bajpai, 2010, rightly state that to place “the total education system of the world under one roof” requires the unification of teaching curriculum, methodology, and upgrading of knowledge and systems to maintain efficiency and effectiveness by which transformation of knowledge is acquired in a justified manner to attain the goals of life (p.1).

We have already mentioned the influence of the Ethiopian Coptic Church educational system in the previous section. The Ethiopian Church developed a school system which not only served as focal sites for learning religious ideals and mores but also prepared the nation’s religious and governmental leaders (Fufa). But as a contradiction, the Church’s education failed to reach all corners of the country and this was a serious issue of concern. In general, according to Wodajo (1960, p. 9), “Ethiopian Christian education system lacked grains of progressiveness, lifelikeness and accessibility.”

With regards to Ethiopian education system, the most decisive turn took place in 1991, when Ethiopia experienced a shift in political power that promised to introduce a major change in the national education system. Extensive reforms in the educational infrastructure had taken place in Ethiopia earlier in 1934-1974 during imperial period and later on in the Derg regime extending from 1974-1991. To an extent these reforms ensured that changes in the system of education led to new institutional structuring for teacher preparation activities which necessitated some revision of the existing curriculum and modalities to affect the changes. Tirusew, (2006) in his “Introductory Note on the Educational System and Teacher Education in Ethiopia” described

the various structures of delivery of teacher training programs prevalent in the country during previous regime in Ethiopia which include: 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). He also mentions that the reforms in education were not built upon empirical evidences and principles. This statement drives at the inference that the efforts of restructuring educational system lacked vision regarding issues such as continuity, discontinuity, power, knowledge, and core values of teacher education.

Approximating other formal education systems, Ethiopia's teacher education programs have experienced a drastic structural change which indicates a remarkable structural and curricular realignment in all teacher education activities. A major change includes reduction in duration of pre-service secondary teacher education from four years to three. A prescriptive approach was adopted to formalize and "legitimize" the official education rhetoric or vision as well as its subsequent actions (Tessema, 2006).

The present government of Ethiopia recognized the importance of improving education as a key to the success for overall development of the country. This government issued various policies and reforms to improve the education system in the country. Some of the policies and reforms like Education and Training Policy (1994), Teacher Education System Overhaul Program (TESO), and Teacher Development Programs (TDPs) are discussed in this article. Like all other formal education, teacher education programs have undergone structural changes over the years. Notably, a structural and curricular realignment was made in all Ethiopia's teacher education activities. For instance, pre-service secondary teacher education was reduced from four years to three. Other aspects of secondary teacher education were changed apparently to conform to the change in the duration of time, including a prescriptive approach being adopted to formalize the programs under the official government vision. In the same fashion, a formalistic and homogenous approach was pursued to address what the government perceived as the past "flawed" teacher education practices in Ethiopia (Tesema, 2006).

All the above mentioned Ethiopian education policies are based in nature and scope on active learning, student centered, and problem solving approaches associated with constructivism. Within this policy context, teachers are now faced with the complex task of ensuring that their students engage in meaningful learning, learn through various forms of active learning, and learn to use higher-order thinking skills. This requires understanding and skills that go far beyond the traditional teacher-centered approaches of the past based on memorization of facts and information (USAID/EQUIP1/AED, 2006).

Visionary Teacher Education Programs

At present some visionary teacher education programs in Ethiopia have already embarked on the journey to prepare teachers for the global age and a few of them like the Education and Training Policy (1994), Teacher Education System Overhaul Program (2003), and Teacher Development Programs (TDPs) are discussed below.

Education and Training Policy. The Education and Training Policy (1994) was framed to focus upon four educational goals namely quality, access, relevance and equity. This policy was basically drafted to meet the overall educational developmental challenges within the country with greater stress on the teacher education programs. In fact the close relationship between learning and doing as a commendable approach of the traditional education was included in the present Educational and Training Policy of Ethiopia.

The policy statement refers frequently to the employment of learner-centered, active learning, and problem solving approaches in different contexts (Serbessa, 2006, p.3). The education policy ascertains that teacher trainees have the proper knowledge, skill, ability, diligence, professional interest as needed along with appropriate physical and mental fitness to meet the demand and challenges of the profession at different levels. Highlights of the policy regarding teacher's training and recruitment are:

- Teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education, will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction, through pro-service and in-service training.
- The criteria for the professional development of teachers will be continuous education and training, professional ethics and teaching performance. (FDRGE, 1994, p.20-21)

The Education and Training Policy has a basic objective to, "Develop the physical and mental potential and the problem-solving capacity of individuals by expanding education and in particular by providing basic education for all" (FDRGE, 1994, p.7). In general terms we can say that the policy is devoted to attaining competency at both student and teacher levels. In a country like Ethiopia with a diverse population, both competency and diversity issue are significant. The diverse population produces diverse students who need a diversified teaching staff. In view of this, MOE considered the need to develop a new gender and diversity sensitive selection criteria for primary and secondary school teacher trainees. Because of the change in the required qualifications, MOE developed a new selection guideline in 2011 (MOE, 2013, p.26).

According to these new selection guidelines teachers are trained at different levels. The primary level teachers are trained both for the integrated school curriculum (1-4) and for the linear subjects being taught in the upper primary (grades 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 (MOE, 2013, p.29). In 2011-2012 there was a total enrolment of 173,517 primary teachers (EMIS Data 2011/2012) of which 51,637 are in the initial training program and 90,436 are in the summer upgrading program. The remaining candidates were enrolled in the evening program.

Secondary school teachers were given training for three years until 2010, but 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. The main aim of PGDT was to fill the content and pedagogical gaps that were present in earlier secondary education teaching programs as observed in teaching and classroom practices in secondary schools. The total enrolment in all secondary teacher training programs in all universities for 2011 – 2012 was 66,103 with the majority in the PGDT and with about 10 percent enrolled in the regular program (MOE, 2013).

The Education and Training Policy aims to improve the structure of education in relation to the development of student profiles, educational interventions, method and language of instructions at different levels, recruitment, training, methodology, organization, professional ethics, and career development of teachers. In fact according to MOE, the Education and Training Policy has enabled Ethiopia to attain remarkable achievements in the education sector over the past few years. Though impressive achievements were observed in Ethiopian education

due to the increased supply of qualified and trained teachers, their competence however remains questionable. The quality of education of teachers needs improvement that will lead to increased efficiency.

Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (1994) aimed to assert four educational goals of the nation namely quality, access, relevance, and equity. To date, the country's education is entangled with complex problems related to relevance, quality, accessibility, and equity. The objectives of education do not take cognizance of the society's needs and do not adequately indicate its future direction.

Teacher development program. In addition to the Education and Training Policy (1994), another major teacher education reforms namely Teacher Development Program (TDP1) was implemented in 1997 under national educational development adjudication. The program was designed for implementation at all levels of the education system employing MOE's 11 Regional Education Bureaus (REBs) and their Colleges of Teacher Educations (CTEs) and 9 universities. The REBs, CTEs, and universities also expanded their function as implementing agents in schools. Beneficiaries were therefore primarily students, teachers, teacher educators, educational leaders and implementing technical staff (MOE, 2009). TDP1 aimed to improve the system of teacher education methodology along with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of those concerned with the teacher education system. TDP initiatives are coordinated by MOE and are jointly funded by six donor countries. Implementing a structural change in 2003-04, TDP 1 program was revised and was informally known as TDP 2. The functional duration of TDP 2 was extended for a period of 8 years as an important component of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQUIP). Most of the activities related to teacher education and teacher development in Ethiopia are combined under the TDP reforms.

Both TDP 1 and TDP 2 were launched with primary development objectives that included the improvement of components of TESO, the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP), and the Leadership and Management Program (LAMP). TDP has already made several improvements based on its significant work undertaken since 2007 (Teachers Development Program Blue Print, 2007). The English Language Improvement Program (ELIP) proved beneficial for more than 1,050,000 teachers and English Language Improvement Centers (ELICs) were set up at some TEIs. LAMP was started under TDP in 2005-2006 as a means to build the competencies of school principals and supervisors in planning and management that led to certificate and diploma qualifications.

Teacher education system overhaul (TESO). In 2002 MOE conducted a study on the quality and effectiveness of teacher education in Ethiopia. Upon recommendations from the study report, MOE established a task force to produce the national framework for the Teacher Education System Overhaul Program (TESO). TESO was drafted as a main program to address all the issues regarding the teacher education programs. TESO key points are described below.

TESO consists of a national framework for teacher education system overhaul and a national curriculum guideline for pre-service teacher education program. Tessema explains TESO's role, accordingly:

With the emergence of the discourse of TESO, teacher education in Ethiopia has been struggling to change rhetoric and practice by reaffirming a managerially driven reform performance. The terrain is now characterized by globally dominant reform mottos and change agendas such as paradigm shift and system overhaul. (2007, p.3)

TESO focuses on five programs on a priority basis with its main emphasis on the recruitment, training, and education of teachers. It also concentrates on school based and student centered learning, practice oriented training, and self-preparedness for the teaching profession.

However, several works concluded in their observations and findings from interviews with teacher educators responsible for implementing the new policies, that the rhetoric of policy documents and the state owned media preaching and practice are not aligned (Engida, 2006; Kassahun, 2006). This study also concluded that implementation of TESO included changes both in structure and content of school curricula through reductions of programs from four to three years at universities and by moving away from subject to vocational emphasis that includes practicum for teacher education. TESO proposal requires perception and expertise that is highly improvised compared to the traditional teacher-centered methods which relied primarily on memorization of facts and information.

Continuum of Teacher Professional Development in Ethiopia

A teacher's professional quality is comprised of different skills and competencies that need specific training for mastery. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) led by Meles Zenawi in 1991, recognized the need to upgrade the quality and professional competence of existing teachers through in-service training. Professional development of teachers is an important aspect of professional life of teachers as it has a significant positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices along with its role in supporting the students' learning. In recent years the term professional development has broadened in nature and scope, and today it is being considered as a long term process that provides various opportunities and experiences to the teacher in a planned systematic way which helps them to improve and develop in their profession. Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995) describes professional development as a collaborative process, while Scribner (1999) asserts that professional development may look and be very different in diverse settings and even within a single setting it can have a variety of dimensions. Teachers believe that they must be empowered as transformative agents who through professional development should cultivate their knowledge of practice (Scribner, 1999, p. 2). Professional development of teachers would enable them to be well prepared with the necessary pedagogical skills needed at different levels and also make them adept at handling the current technology successfully as part of their teaching.

There are different types of teacher professional development programs that were developed and implemented in different countries to support professional development of the teachers throughout their career. Teacher professional development should be conducted at all levels across primary teacher development to university teacher development.

The TGE recognized the need to upgrade the quality and professional competence of the existing teachers through in service training in 1994 and commissioned Livingstone to undertake research in this area. Livingstone (2001) after his research study asserted the need for staff development and made specific reference to the fact that endorsement should be considered, for different forms of learning: for prior learning in another institution or field; for formal learning through established routes; for experiential learning, usually in the workplace. It is best if such a scheme is national and is operated by all institutions in comparable ways (p. 55). Teacher professional development in Ethiopia is undertaken as a priority issue to enhance teaching effectiveness of teachers to teach the students in increasingly diverse contexts and at high levels. It is to support their professional growth so they may transition over their careers into roles of

high status and responsibility within their profession. In Ethiopia, it is now mandatory for teachers at all levels that they should go through a negotiated continuous professional development program (CPD), completing a minimum of 60 hours of approved activities each year, as the basis for their on-going professional development. The various teacher professional development programs introduced by Ethiopian government include: the Higher Diploma Program for faculty staff, English Language Improvement Program, and Teacher Development Program which was discussed in the above section.

To improve the quality of teachers as well as education, MOE initiated a training program for teachers of primary and secondary schools under Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) in 2005 called Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It was mandatory in CPD that teachers spend 60 hours in professional development activities each school year. CPD focuses on improving the teaching-learning process with emphasis on active learning, practicing continuous assessment, and managing large classes. The MOE gave CPD priority status assuming that it is the right of teachers and is of great value for national development (USAID, 2006). The aim of CPD is to improve the performance of teachers in the classroom and raise student achievement. It is a career-long process of improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes centered on the local context and, particularly, classroom practice (Chalchisa, n.d, p. 2). The main aim of CPD in Ethiopia is to improve the teaching and learning processes through introduction of active learning, periodic evaluation, and facilitating enrollments. To some extent CPD has achieved these goals as the number of Teacher Education Institutes in Ethiopia has increased from 24 in 2007-2008 to 32 in 2010-2011. In 2012-2013, total enrollment in CTEs is 175,142 (all programs including regular, evening and summer classes) of which 104,802 are males and 70,340 are females (MOE, 2013). This data speaks for itself demonstrating a strong annual increase in CTE enrollment over the past five years. There are 43,890 graduates in both Linear and Cluster Models of which 18,928 are female (43.1%) in the year 2012-2013 (MOE, 2013). The number of graduates from Colleges of Teacher Education increased for the past five years, particularly the number of female graduates.

The CPD program is a privilege for teachers as it helps them to update themselves with new outlooks, approaches, and policy directions. The CPD guideline states that “serving teachers and head teachers have the right to access high quality and relevant continuous professional development opportunities. If they are also expected to renew their teaching licenses there will need to be clear links between CPD, re-licensing and career progression” (MOE, 2004, p.3). In due course, TESO recognized the need for certification and licensing of teachers associated with CPD (MOE, 2004). The licensing and re-licensing of the teachers is also dependent on the successful completion of the CPD by them. Here we suggest that besides getting handsome salaries teachers should also receive recognition for some of their in-service training which will motivate them to excel in their careers.

The Higher Diploma Program (HDP) was introduced by MOE in 2003 to meet the identified needs of teacher educators and support the implementation of the TESO program, the aim is to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia through a licensing program that will develop the skills and professionalism of teacher educators (MOE, 2004, p.5). HDP is a one year in-service training program with an aim to create a reflective teacher and improve the standards of teaching and learning in the country. Boud (1985) defines reflection as “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it” (p. 19). The presence of classroom observation by the program leaders and observation from

peers during classroom teaching increases the novelty and effectiveness of the program (Hunde, 2008, p.52).

The Higher Diploma Program is functioning in Ethiopian colleges and universities with the assistance of a coordinating unit of expatriate members. This coordinating unit is functioning under the aegis of MOE. The course offered under the HDP is compulsory for all the faculty members with required full attendance. Technical rationality is the dominant guiding pedagogical theory in organizing learning experiences. This is evident in the module set up by the volunteering expatriates. HDP consists of mainly adult participants and encourages them to memorize, imitate, and implement national directives and prescriptive teaching principles. The program imparts technical knowledge and skills needed by the trainee teachers to contribute to classroom practices. The HDP showed very positive effects on the teachers and to date has been successfully implemented. It is now a compulsory qualification for all teacher educators and is run in every Teacher Education Institution (TEI) in Ethiopia.

The government of Ethiopia decided that English will be the medium of instruction for secondary and higher education in their education policy. To achieve this goal an ambitious project called the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP) was established in 2003 with the objective stated as “The Ministry of Education devised a strategy to improve the level of English of teachers” (FDRE, 2004, p.6). ELIP focused on improving English language proficiency and teaching skills of primary and secondary school teachers throughout Ethiopia. A study on the success of ELIP by Lund University (2005) states that, “ELIP has increased the teachers’ confidence to use English and introduced them to modern teaching methods.” It has shown them how to develop their own materials for language learning, how to create a friendly atmosphere and foster better relations with students (British Council, 2010). ELIP had a significant impact on the teacher’s professional development throughout the country and up to the date of this study more than 150,000 primary and secondary teachers benefited from this project. Delivery of this program involved training of 1,200 Key English Language Trainers (KELTs) and 200 Key English Language Training Advisers (KELTAs).

More than 30 English Language Improvement Centers were established in different Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) of Ethiopia that provide language support to the teacher trainees and administrative staffs along with providing technical assistance to teacher educators. ELIP became a priority program of Ethiopia's wider Teacher Development Program (TPD), an essential element in the realization of the third phase of the country's Education Sector Development Program (British Council, 2010).

Educational reform provided for the establishment of Pedagogical Resource Centers (PRCs) in educational institutions all over Ethiopia to improve and standardize the quality of education. The PRCs were basically established to develop a learning center where teacher educators can carry out professional development programs through research and training programs.

The PRCs were established with a fundamental aim to train the educators on different teaching complexities such as how the teachers’ organize their work, how they mobilize their resources, understand purposes of the education offered, determine the desired learning outcomes, design the right course content, and organize the teaching-learning process for the different institutions. After the completion of the training process, trainees are encouraged to establish similar centers in their respective institutions, so that the other teaching staff may benefit through such trainings and improve their competencies continuously. These centers also facilitate the training of teachers on the school campus itself. With appropriate reference

materials, visual aids and computers, the centers can magnify the impact of the trainings that encourage staff to put into practice new techniques and methodologies (Yizengaw, 2003, p.8).

A New Paradigm for Teacher Education in Ethiopia

Always on the track for ways to improve the quality of education, the Ethiopian government increasingly focused on the restructuring and realignment of school curricula. The change in structure and content of school curricula resulted in an upgrading of teacher education from a mere subject area to professional courses including workshops and live seminars for teacher education. Owing to these advancements, Ethiopian education now includes new areas, such as action research, civics, and ethics. English language skills and information and communication technology (ICT) were also added as an imperative for education due to their application in specific professions.

The advent of ICT has opened up new dimensions in the education sector all over the world along with placing more demand and responsibility on the shoulder of teachers. This universal change is reflected in an UNESCO statement, “One of the Millennium Development Goals is achievement of universal primary education by 2015. We must ensure that ICT technologies are used to help unlock the door to education (2005).”

ICT has been introduced in the Ethiopian education system to strengthen and expand the quality of education nationwide. The Teacher Education Program in Ethiopia emphasizes enhancing the capacity of teachers in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning processes of various basic subjects especially in secondary schools. On one hand ICT helps teachers to use devices such as cell phones, computers, and Internet services, which make it easy for them to communicate with colleagues in other schools and campuses. On the other hand ICT readily facilitates communication between student and teacher both on the campus and off the campus. Further, ICT also helps in becoming technologically advanced by providing hands on practice for teachers, enabling them to access information through teacher portals, websites, office software, multimedia programs, and sharing information within and across the schools in the country. Literature suggests that teachers should be provided opportunities to contemplate on their practice while implementing new technologies in their system so that they can be directly involved in imparting quality education rather than remain passive consumers of learning (Papert, 1990; Butler & Leahy, 2003). Bhatta (2008) explained that equipping students with computers and other educational content will have limited impact on the teaching and learning process unless and until teachers are fully comfortable with new approaches to teaching associated with ICT learning.

The Government of Ethiopia is making giant strides to improve student and teacher access to quality enhancement tools and training. Camara Education Ethiopia, as a key partner of the MOE and signed a five year agreement in 2011 to supply ICT equipment, educational content, technical support, and teacher training to schools and teacher training institutions across Ethiopia. It has already provided an estimated 17,500 computers to nearly 1,000 institutions and 3,000 trained teachers (Camara Blog, 2013).

Introduction of digital television instructional delivery or “plasma teacher” in the Ethiopian classrooms in 2004 has revolutionized the education process around the globe, irrespective of the consequences. The plasma teacher is officially called Educational Satellite Television Program. Its teachers impart lessons in natural sciences, mathematics, English, and civics through plasma display screens on television in place of traditional teaching classes. An FDRE Education report states that installation of satellite receiving devices known as Plasma

Display Panels (PDPs) in every classroom at secondary level are necessary (FDRE, 2004, p. 8). The introduction of plasma teachers in Ethiopian schools has been quite successful and highly applauded by teachers as it makes their jobs easier. An important advantage of this system is that it helps to develop a standard syllabus all over the country as plasma teaching materials are uniformly transmitted to the students via satellite in all parts of the country, irrespective of any contextual differences among them. The teacher candidates who operate the plasma display panel are given training as to how to operate the television to impart the lessons through the media.

Besides these advantages Plasma Teachers have some limitations and drawbacks. Firstly, the plasma teachers or the narrators on these televisions are not Ethiopians and they carry out lessons in an English dialect that is alien to students in Ethiopia. Secondly, students are exposed to harmful effects of watching television for several hours a day for 5 days a week which may cause an adverse impact on their health. Next, the traditional form of interaction between the students and the teacher is terminated as the human teacher is present in the class just to operate the plasma teachers. It erodes the relationship between student and teacher as students as they increasingly rely on the television (Tessema, 2006). Moreover, the plasma screens and the teaching materials are expensive which a poor country like Ethiopia cannot afford. Therefore it constantly depends on financial aid from World Bank loans and other external donors to meet the needs of this ambitious project.

Mathematics and science are two basic academic subjects that form the foundation of the education and training programs included in teacher education. The Ethiopian government has initiated a countrywide teacher education and training program which aims to increase the quantity and quality of mathematics and science teachers at different teaching levels. The Mathematics and Science Teacher Education Program focuses on increasing the capacity of teachers in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning mathematics and science and increasing the number of qualified and efficient mathematics and science teachers in schools all over Ethiopia.

In connection with mathematics and science teacher education African Virtual University (AVU) initiated a teacher education and training program was initiated in 2005 to improve the quality of teacher education across Africa. The program was launched as a part of AVU's policy to meet the challenges of the teaching profession in Africa which was funded by the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) together. Since 2005 when the project was launched, a total of 54 modules were developed for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Basic ICT Skills, and the Pedagogy and Practice of Integrating ICTs into Science and Mathematics. These materials were developed collaboratively with subject matter experts from 10 countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) that are participating in the project (Diallo, Thierry, Aguti, Villet, & Wangeci Thuo, 2008). The project fulfills the purpose of teacher capacity building in two ways. The first motive is to improve the competencies of teachers in the use of ICT in imparting mathematics and science education, and the second purpose is to develop the capacity of teachers to deliver ICT Education. To develop the curricula for the sciences, mathematics, basic ICT skills, and professional education, AVU worked with the ministries of education and participating institutions of the ten African countries including Ethiopia. Over its 13 years of existence, the AVU has trained more than 43,000 education students, has established 53 centers in 29 countries, and has acquired the largest Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) network in Africa (AVU, 2013). The working partner of AVU in Ethiopia is Jimma University.

Challenges in Teacher Education in Ethiopia

Some of the major challenges in the field of teacher education in Ethiopia are problems of quality and relevance of program of studies, and research that is inefficient in resource utilization. According to MOE, the key challenges for the ESDP III (2005-2010) related to teacher education are the following: full adoption of TESO by the Regional governments and Teacher Education Institutions; changing the focus of teacher training from theoretical to methodological approach to enhance the quality of teachers; consolidation of the CPD's through cluster schools, and implementing research on projections for teacher demand in the future (UNESCO, 2005, p. 6).

As it is reflected in the challenges indicated by MOE, it is not enough to merely establish reforms and policies rather it should be ensured that the implications of the reform decisions are properly interpreted and addressed by the authorities concerned. A gap was observed between the rhetoric and the practice of TESO which requires immediate resolution as it is not just a simple change but a fundamental transformation within the whole system. This gap includes the need to expand access to its programs. The other challenges faced by teacher education are inadequate capacity for professional development within the education system, lack of transparency within its processes, and the need for a participatory approach of the leadership and management of educational institutions.

Recommendations and Suggestions

To improve the condition of teacher education in Ethiopia in terms of both the quality and quantity of the teaching staff, various steps must be taken by those concerned. The teaching staff should be endowed with more new facilities along with allocation of resources to the various teacher training institutions. The professional competence of the trainers has to be improved in order to upgrade the quality of training.

It is recommended that the priority training areas in teacher education such as professional development in pedagogy, use of ICT, language, science and mathematics, fine arts, music, and physical education should be emphasized in different institutions. It is also suggested to review the undergraduate and post-graduate part-time teaching qualifications to identify the needed qualifications of the teachers and upgrade them. Besides, upgrading teachers' qualifications, efforts should be made to improve the syllabi content of civic and ethical education in pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

Care should be taken that the initiatives undertaken to improve the teacher education should not lag behind in its sight and tempo; as they must be able to meet the knowledge and demands of the social, economic, and political conditions prevalent in the country. The curriculum for teacher education should be modeled in a way so that it focuses on core classroom skills and pedagogies that are more effective in gaining desired results. Further, the duration of the teacher education course including training needs review for regarding its practicality and effectiveness.

Ethiopians are now better aware of the problems, contradictions, and other issues embedded within the teacher education system. At this stage, it is time for them to ponder the situations seriously and find the appropriate solutions to these problems. It is the best time for them to rekindle new vigor and life in the pedagogical institutions and professional development centers to propel overall national development. It is a most appropriate time to take the necessary action infused with greater determination and commitment towards improving the condition of teacher education in the country. As Bahruth & Steiner (2000, p.143) rightly state, "in our

profession we have two choices: We can succumb to the mainstream and become programmed toward deskilling our intellect, or we can become critical pedagogues and liberate ourselves and those who choose to join in the dialogue.” It is also recommended that emphasis should be on proper tackling of the major challenges in the ensuing activities of teacher education in Ethiopia. If the recommendations and suggestions mentioned are achieved, certainly Ethiopia will get an opportunity to develop a quality agenda for a developing future.

Conclusion

To bring about change in any existing system is a difficult task as is the case with the Ethiopia’s teacher education settings that need a lot of effort and patience to bring about a significant transformation in the total system. The teacher education institutions are now being controlled by centrally planned and standardized curricula produced through MOE for all educational institutions in Ethiopia. Recently these initiatives are taken on a large scale to make educators highly skilled in the subject matter knowledge, language skills, pedagogical skills, practical knowledge and other areas through long term or short term training sessions and workshops. In addition the objective of upgrading the quality and relevance of teacher education at different levels involve some additional important measures that are currently underway to initiate a new active learning paradigm in teacher education in Ethiopia. At present Ethiopia is undergoing a major transition in its educational system on a positive note including teacher education. Based on this study, it may be observed that the teacher education policies and reforms have achieved many of their planned outcomes and objectives to a certain extent. Still there is more to do in order to realize total achievement. Research evidence shows that various kinds of teacher training, capacity building, and work experience, many of these found in the current Ethiopian education policies and programs, have positive effects on education quality (Workneh and Woldehanna, 2013). Currently, Ethiopian teacher education is engrossed in and obsessed with the rhetoric and processes of system overhaul and reform as a result of the Ethiopian government’s official mandate for change in the structure and content of teacher education since 2003 (Tessema, 2006). Teacher education in Ethiopia is undergoing a continuous change to adjust to a wide variety of arising situations in the country including the political, social, economic, and cultural contexts. It is hoped that its education system will continue to improve to meet the needs of today and the needs of the future.

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