

Situational Analysis of Ethiopian Education*

Gizaw Tasissa**

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The level of development of the country, which could not step up from subsistence life, is also the reflection of educational development.

Modern education in Ethiopia is now more than a hundred years while the pace of development is less than 1% per year in terms of gross enrollment rate.

This short paper attempts to provide a short description of the development of education in the country. It analyses the state of education during the feudal system, the socialist regime and federal government. Though this requires a large document and deliberation, it gives a bird's eye-view on the situation.

Pre 1991 Situation

Modern education in Ethiopia has passed through challenges and still remains as a challenge for the development. The spirit of constructive dissatisfaction and quest for development has marked its development. Concerns about the course of education were expressed beginning in the early 1950s.

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Particularly during the Haileselesie regime dissatisfaction with the educational system continued with reference to its inability to satisfy the aspirations of the majority of the people, parents, government officials. The dissatisfaction was also manifested in student demands, often echoed by parents.

Accordingly, the National Commission for Education was established (1972) to find solutions for these problems. Education Sector Review was launched. In the course of this, the debate was mainly concentrated on the following issues:

- Objectives that give due recognition to Ethiopian cultures and languages were not clearly stated.
- The present educational system is too elitist, formalistic, and rigid, despite attempts to diversify it through pre-vocational streams.
- The present system in which each educational level is designed to prepare student for the next levels is wasteful.
- Educational opportunity like other infrastructure elements is not equitably distributed.
- The administration of education is highly centralized and inhibits flexibility and local community participation and initiative.

The conclusion drawn by the review participants from the foregoing concerns are that education should aid in the transformation of the Ethiopian society by playing a vital role in the lives of all citizens. To this effect, the system must be restricted and changed (ESR1972).

During this time the gross enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary levels was 16.3, 4.1 and 0.2 respectively.

The pupil-teacher ratio showed

primary	52:1
junior	37:1
secondary	31:1,

which indicates low enrollment of the students. This was so because school distribution was concentrated in urban areas. There were 2297 (1 to 6), 342 (7 to 8) and 95 (9 to 12) schools. Nine TTI's and 12 faculties were sources for teachers and other professionals, which could not even lightly address the problem especially at higher level learning institutions.

Only 18% of the teachers had diploma qualification to teach in the secondary schools. The others 20% and 62% were non-certified and certified at certificate level respectively and taught at any level as required.

Though different non-formal education programs were functioning, their contribution toward bringing about a sustainable development is negligible.

The Sector Review presented alternative strategies or models for development of the education system as follows:

Alternative I: would continue the present system, with certain significant modifications to speed attainment of mass education at the primary level and revisions in curriculum. This is to make both primary and secondary education more practical and meaningful to a great majority of students.

Alternative II: calls for 4-4-4 system. This structure demands that for 1-4 curriculum changes to be work oriented and environmental.

Alternative III: would provide two parallel educational channels:

- Students aged nine and older will be enrolled for minimum formation for 4 years and prepare them for useful employment and subsequently for non formal education or entry to primary schools.
- a basic formation program which would enroll students aged 12 and older who had not attended school previously and who after two years would enter a three year *secondary formation program*.

Though this attempt was appropriate, the situational analysis seems an overview and the solutions suggested were shallow. This is because the review couldn't find the reasons behind the failures of education in terms of access, equity and quality. Whatever the review pointed out, it was attacked and was believed that it was the cause of the social upheaval, though some programs such as emergency teacher employment were commenced.

The political system (socialist Ethiopia) which took turn from the feudal system couldn't respond to the major problems that were pin pointed by the Education Sector Review. However, the major task was done in the area of illiteracy eradication. Its integration of the needs and cultural background of the beneficiaries was superficial and hence its contribution to development was negligible. At the outset, the campaign had contributed much to illiteracy eradication but later this relapsed due to lack of correct and sustainable management.

The current education sector strategy reviewed the status of educational system at a time when the socialist system was abandoned and the New Education and Training Policy was reinstated. Accordingly, in the educational system of the Derg regime, the curriculum had not been properly developed to meet the societal and pedagogical demands. The learners profile and the corresponding educational structure and inputs to achieve it were not

well defined. This was because the educational objectives in relation to the societal needs were not clearly formulated and stated. The content of the curriculum was overloaded by theoretical knowledge with little emphasis on practice.

The evaluation system did not enable to assess the progress of the students. For one thing, this was because of the fact that the profile of the students at each grade and level was not clearly set. On the hand procedures for assessing theoretical, practical and aptitude of the learners were not clear.

At that moment (1994) there were 8120 primary schools 1378 junior and senior secondary schools.

There were 15 technical and vocational schools with a total enrollment of 3255. The quality and the type of the trades offered in these schools could not match with labor demand and market orientation.

Higher education was provided in 10 colleges and 2 universities with a total number of 17,930, which was much lower than the least developed countries enrollment.

The non-formal education lacked proper direction and an appropriate organization. It was not well coordinated and integrated with the formal one. The interrelationship between different levels of education and training was inadequate. The educational structure was highly centralized. The level of access showed that only 20% of the primary school age children had the opportunity to schooling. About 1/3 of grade one students dropped out. Dropout and repetition rates in grade 9 were 17% and 20% respectively.

Classes were overcrowded and there were 80 students per class. The 11 primary school teacher training institutes, four teachers college and one university were the sources for teachers' training at all levels. The student-teacher ratio was adequate and showed 26:1

for primary school and 32:1 for secondary school. Though the number is satisfactory there are only 82%, 30%, and 40% who qualify to teach at primary, junior and senior secondary school. Eighty five percent of the technical/vocational teachers do not have the required degree qualification. Besides, training of teachers for secondary level lacked pedagogical quality and the graduates joined the profession without professional conviction.

After the decline and disappearance of the socialist system in the country the transitional government embarked upon the preparation of an educational policy (1994) based on the major problems encountered by the former regime.

The policy encompassed overall and specific objectives, implementation strategies, including formal and non formal education, from kindergarten to higher education and special education. It emphasized the development of problem solving capacity and culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach focusing on the acquisition of scientific knowledge and practice. By stressing the problem solving approach the policy incorporated expansion of education and provision of basic education for all.

Post 1991 situation

Though the problems are still prevailing, provision of education has shown significant increment since the realization of the policy (1994). However, it could not be commensurate with the existing demand. The internal efficiency, quality and the response to the problem of adult illiteracy are at a premature level. The review is referred to the comparison of the years 1996/97 - 2000/01.

The situation at present shows that 2% of the pre-school children (aged 4 to 6) attend kindergarten. The participation rate for primary (1 to 8) is 61.6%, and grades 9 to12, 17.1.

The average annual increment for primary level is 4. Other things remaining the same, it seems that the target year 2015 would be the year universal basic education would be achieved. To this is end other measures such as family planning programs, socio-cultural and economic variables need to be managed and addressed and be integrated in holistic and participatory approach toward the achievement of the goal. The expansion of the first cycle primary school demands an accelerated growth of the subsequent levels.

The number of primary schools in the country grew at an annual rate of 3.2% during 1996/97 - 2000/01, (1386 primary schools were built in these years).

Regarding equity in gender and rural urban disparity, there was the reduction in the regional disparities with wide differences between non pastoralists and other regions. From 47.5 percentage points in 1996/97 in favor of boys, the gender gap in apparent intake rate was reduced to 21.6 percentage point in 2000/01. Net intake also showed the same trend (5.5 to 3.7). The gender gap of GER 30.2 in favor of boys (1996/97) for the 1st cycle primary was brought down to 25.1 in 2000/01. But the gender gap for the whole 1-8 has remained the same (20).

Regional disparities show mixed results. All regions, except Somalia, have increased their GER during the last four-year period.

During the four years under review, the urban rural disparity in primary enrollment has shown a declining trend. Urban primary enrollment grew at an annual growth rate of 7.7% and that of the rural, 16.5%.

The distribution of textbook could not reach the target 1:1 but rather 2.5:1 at an average and 5:1 in many cases. Student section ratio is 73, and 80 for primary and secondary schools, certainly indicating conjection which inhibits participatory learning and eventually affecting the quality.

Pupil teacher ratio is 63 and 49 for primary and secondary schools, respectively. Though this is chunked information, when seen in terms of urban and rural areas, it is suffering from a large disparity in student teacher ratio. 96% of primary (1 to 4) school, 25.5% of the 2nd cycle and 33.7% of the secondary school teachers qualify to teach at their respective levels.

The internal efficiency shows that drop out rate went up from 15.7% in 1996/97 to 17.8% in 1999/2000. While this decreased from 29.4% to 27.9% for grade 1 in the same year, however, the dropout rates remained high especially for grade 1.

Repetition rate for 1-8 has a declining trend (from 11% to 9.1%). This is more prominent in grade 1 (16.7% to 10.6%) in the periods mentioned above.

Secondary education

In the last four years 55 new secondary schools were built and this brought the number of the schools to 424. The GER for this level increased from 8.4% to 12.9% in 2000/01. GER for girls increased from 7% to 10.9% during the same period. Gender gap in this regard increased from 2.9 percentage to 3.9 in these years in favor of boys.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

According to ESDP-II, development of the TVET sub-sector of education in Ethiopia is still in its infancy. It remained a neglected sub-sector of education until recently.

International comparative data show that in 1994, the proportion of TVET to academic students at the second level of education in Ethiopia was nine times less than that of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. When compared to Europe, this proportion was 36 times less for Ethiopia.

Until 2001, the scope of and access to TVET was limited. Only one out of eight school leavers had the opportunity to join TVET institutions. The participation of girls in TVET was about 25% of the total enrollment. Majority of female students chose training in traditionally female occupations such as secretarial and home services.

In 2001, there were 13 government TVET schools in the country enrolling a total of 4561 students. Government run TVETs enrolled 2631 students while 1930 students were enrolled in non-government TVETs. Of the total students enrolled, 17.1% were female.

In addition there were 25 skill development centers functioning in four regions-Oromia, Tigray, SNNPR and Amhara regions. A total of 8156 trainees were enrolled in these four centers, out of which 2486 (30.4%) were female.

Currently, both public and non-public agencies provide short and long term technical and vocational training using both formal and non-formal approaches. First, there are higher education institutions which train top-level professional and technical personnel. Second, a number of technical and vocational training schools, institutes, and colleges train personnel at the middle and lower occupational levels. Third, training centers attached to public and parastatal agencies provide training to meet primarily their own internal manpower needs. Fourth, informal on the job apprentice training takes in non-farming occupations at work places.

The quality of training remained poor due to limited funding, lack of appropriate and adequate equipment and facilities, insufficient number of qualified instructors, inflexible and outdated occupational standard, lack of adequate functional relationship between training centers and the real world of work, lack of stockholders' participation in curriculum design and implementation, and inefficient management.

The Education and Training Policy and the Education Sector Strategy assign high priority for the development of technical and vocational education and training programs in the country. The policy and strategy stipulate the provision of technical and vocational training in different areas to students who have completed the primary and secondary levels of education. It emphasizes the need for expanding the vocational and technical training facilities, development of relevant curriculum, improving the standards of trainers and the complementary role of the private sector.

The government has exerted an extensive effort in restructuring the technical and vocational education and training program during the past two years. The restructuring envisages expansion of the intake through addition of new courses, institutions and rehabilitation of existing ones, and increasing the entry opportunities into TVET programs.

As a result of the restructuring and expansion efforts that are underway in TVET starting 2001/2002, considerable expansion and diversification of the TVET system have taken place. In 2001/2002, there are 126 government run and 40 private institutions in operation designated to provide TVET programs. Curricula for 24 training areas were developed in modular form for 10+1 and 10+2 levels. However, at this stage, all training centers are not expected to offer training in all occupations. In 2001/2002, the annual intake capacity for TVET institutions reached 36462 in 123 government TVET schools and centers.

Still several major issues related the organization and maintenance of quality of TVET need to be addressed in the future. The issues include development of standards for TVET educational facilities, a system for certification and accreditation of institutions, assessment of additional trades to be included in the curriculum, evaluation of existing training programs, and training of sufficient number of qualified TVET teachers to meet the demand. Moreover, designing of modalities to strengthen the private public partnership in the

provision of TVET education, and establishment of closer collaboration between the work place and training institutions are yet to be accomplished.

Tertiary Education

The higher education sector witnessed rapid expansion during the four years between 1996/97 and 2000/2001. Four new universities- Mekelle, Jimma, Bahir Dar, and Debub were established through the amalgamation and raising of the status of the existing colleges and institutions. Five new private and non-governmental higher education institutions were accredited up to 2000/2001.

To meet the manpower requirements of the economy and development, new professional training programs were started in education, engineering, health and business in Dilla, Alemaya, Mekelle, Jimma, Arba Minch and Bahir Dar. The following table shows the enrollment:

Table 1: Enrollment in Higher Education Institutions

Program	Enrollment						% of Program
	Government		Non-government		Government and Non-government		
	MF	F	MF	F	*MF	F	
Diploma	46835	11164	19091	10146	65926	21310	64.74
Undergraduate Degree	34556	5489	-	-	34556	5489	33.94
Postgraduate degree	1347	99	-	-	1347	99	1.32
Total	82738	16752	19091	10146	101829	26898	-

Through the opening of new and the expansion of existing higher education institutions, the total enrollment in higher education institutions in 2001/02 is 101,829 in all programs (regular, evening and kiremt). This shows an increase of 16.5% compared to the previous year. Out of this 18.75% are from non-government

* MF = Indicates Male and Female

institutions (diploma). Female enrollment share is about 26% of the total enrollment.

Adult and Non-formal Education

This sub sector seems to be the missing strategy towards development particularly in the rural areas. Though it is considered in the policy, its implementation seems to be unsatisfactory.

Non-formal education is delivered as an alternative to the formal education in order to provide basic primary education for all. The basic education program has a three-year cycle and is equivalent to the formal basic education (Grade 1 to 4). Under this program, education is provided for out of school children and adults.

Enrollment for the out of school children (aged 7 to 14) in 2000/01 was 320,581 and showing an increase of 14.1% from the previous year. The number of young and adult participants (ages 15 and above) in the same year was 1,049,061. There was a high drop out rate (as high as 16%) due to cultural factors, mobility of people, high work load at home for female participants, low quality of facilitators, and lack of incentive for the facilitators. To achieve UPE by the year 2015, expansion and effective use of this program is of paramount importance. This is possible with forming linkage with the formal basic education by defining the competency of non-formal basic education completes and its equivalence to the formal basic education competency level so that participants in the non-formal basic education can enter the formal system.

Public and Private Sector Participation in Education

In order to provide sufficient and quality education, there has been a need to involve the community at large, NGOs, and private investors in the provision of education and in making them contribute in terms of cash, labor, skill/knowledge, etc. In this regard they have participated actively in building schools and providing schools with

instructional materials, equipment, furniture, etc. After the proclamation that encourages the private sector has been declared, over 125 kindergartens, 70 primary schools, 6 secondary schools, 2 technical and vocational institutes and 5 colleges have been established and accredited. Thus, all in all in 2000/2001, there are about 964 kindergartens, 558 primary and 46 non-government senior secondary schools in the country. the enrollment figure is 109, 358 in kindergarten, 338, 158 in primary, and 13,748 in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The intention of providing education for all schoolage children has not yet been achieved in the country. About 40% of the schoolage children have no access to school. There is also high disparity along the lines of gender, urban and rural areas and regions in all education development and efficiency indicators. The efficiency level is negligible. As a result there is a considerable educational wastage.

The situation indicates that there is a long way left for education to bring about a reasonable level of development and improve the livelihood of the citizens. Integrated and participatory approach seems imperative to step up the situation. This approach calls for the identification of specific factors contributing to the deficiency of overall development and tackling them in the specific context. This becomes possible when strategies are specifically designed and made operational.

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