

# Foundation of Curriculum in Ethiopia: Historical, Philosophical, Psychological and Sociological Perspectives

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## **Abstract**

*Foundations are the forces that influence the minds of curriculum developers, which affect the content and structure of the curriculum. These forces are beliefs and orientations as well as conceptions of learning and the needs of society. Foundation of curriculum is rooted with the foundation of education. Historically, modern curriculum and education in Ethiopia is associated with traditional church education, mainly the Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church curriculum is not well organized and written as a document and the duration of the program is not explicitly given; it depends only on the achievement of the individual and his motivation. The notion of education in Ethiopia is started in sixth century, the entrance of Christianity. The church continues to dominate the education system in Ethiopia until modern education was introduced in 1908. Many social problems forced the Emperor to think of modern education and hence he launched it with many resistances from the church. For many years the philosophy of church education influences modern education, the attitude of secretiveness that is keeping knowledge secret from others and rote memorization. However, the contents and purpose of education depends on the political ideology of the Emperors. Human beings require social interaction. This concept of social being leads to the view of living together. In Ethiopian culture there is no experience sharing rather there is secretes an individual cannot share his/her knowledge to others, because of not to be harmed by others. However development which implies quality education is the result of our interaction, our debates and shared vision. Contemporary educationalists argue that education must serve the purpose of social life that brings people together (social reconstructionism). The very important foundation for modern education in Ethiopia is sociology. Emperor Menelik II who introduce modern education is because of the sociological crisis the country felt at large. Of this economic issue takes largest account. The church school epistemology which is emphasizing on rote learning and memorization, affects the pedagogy of modern education in Ethiopia. Hence reform is required in the education system, from rote memorization to conceptual understanding, from modernism to post modernism.*

**Key words:** sociology, psychology, philosophy, rote memorization, modernism, post modernism, quality education

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## Introduction

Foundations are the forces that influence the minds of curriculum developers. These forces are actually beliefs and orientations as well as conceptions of learning and the needs of society. Curriculum developers need to make decisions about the goals of the curriculum, what content to include, how it should be organized, how it should be taught and how to determine effectiveness of the curriculum. To decide the above issues philosophy, psychology, sociology and history plays a pivotal role. These have been accepted as the foundations of a curriculum. Of the above decisions four of them are questions raised by Ralph Taylor in 1949 in his book basic principles of curriculum and instruction. Foundation of curriculum is rooted with the foundation of education. This article therefore elaborates the historical, sociological, philosophical and psychological foundation of curriculum in Ethiopia.

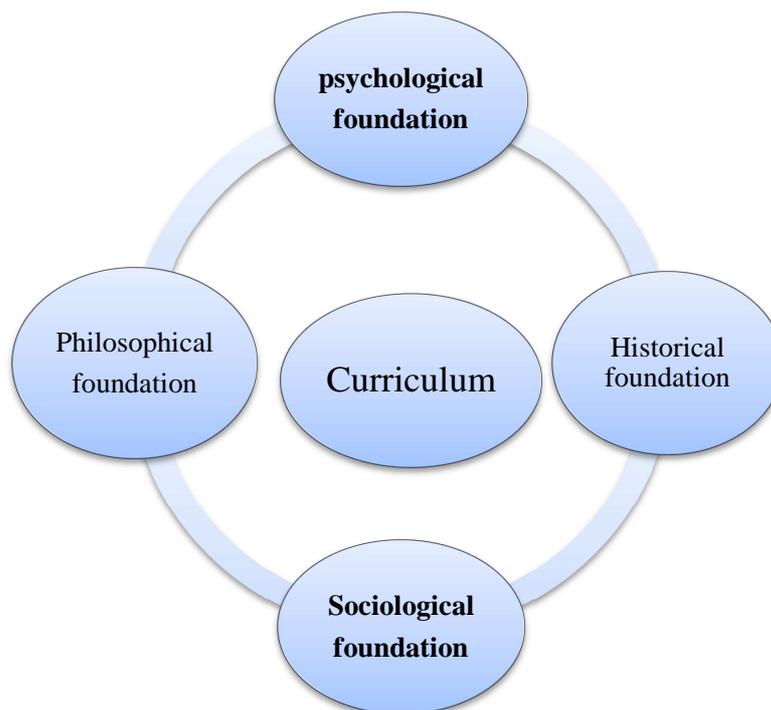


Fig. Foundation of curriculum

Debate is still continuing as to the definition of curriculum. It has varied definitions and this variation is due to our position or

approach or philosophical basis or our understanding of the world in general. According to Ornstein (1987), the best known approaches to curriculum definition are *behavioral, managerial, intellectual, humanistic and re-conceptualist*. Each of them have their own position, for instance behaviorist hold the view that goals and objectives must be specified and organized in step- by- step manner.

Managerial approach on the other hand is interested in relating themes such as change and innovation and how curriculum specialists and supervisors can facilitate these processes. But curriculum specialist is seen as a practitioner not as an educational leader, they are simply a change agent. Intellectual is a knowledge oriented approach is sometimes called traditional (Ibid). Humanistic approach holds the view of progressivism. They believe that the formal or specified curriculum is not the only curriculum to consider; the informal and hidden curriculums are also useful. Re-conceptualists focus in moral issues of education and controlling as well as preserving existing order. That means they are resistance and have political character for culture, meaning and knowledge.

My approach for defining curriculum is not out of the above approaches but not specifically tied only in one approach. I call it **post behavioral** approach. I would like to start with the aim of education. Since we are living in a world full of problem, the aim of education is to solve problem (personal, social, national or any), to solve problems we use our natural mental ability (thinking), our experience, our sense organs etc. The solution we provide varies from problem to problem and also one problem may have many solutions. I believe that the knowledge that we acquired from formal schooling is part of our experience. So what is curriculum? The term curriculum is usually tied to schooling; thus it is simply a guide that helps us in the process of knowing. It includes subject matter, goals and objectives, learning experience etc. But it should not be prescriptive as that of behavioral approach. Its role is just to help us negotiate the ways towards an end and it should be rich, recursive, interactive.

Students must create meaning (new knowledge) by freely interacting with the content, with the teacher and with their peers. The notion of 'hidden curriculum' and 'null curriculum' can be included here, because whether you planned it or not the hidden or null curriculum lies on the road of meaning making. Students feeling, attitudes and behavior are not curriculum by themselves but are human character. We have to understand and accept personal differences

among students are another important thing for students' self-development but should not be considered as curriculum by. A program without goal is like running on a field without terminal point, which is unreachable and is therefore wastage of time and energy; the same is true for education. Hence schools must have pre-specified clear goals and objectives and the document that contains all this is called curriculum. Real learning takes place if the learning environment is good. To me good learning environment includes: fully equipped libraries, committed and disciplined teachers, inspired school principals to produce a change and continues follow up and motivation from parents. I do not agree with the definition that 'curriculum is every experience that students have as a result of schooling'. If this is true what is not curriculum? Is every conversation a curriculum? Curriculum just answers the following questions, what is thought in schools?, why it is thought?, when it is thought?, and for whom it is taught?.

Studying foundations of curriculum helps us to describe how foundations of curriculum enable learners for curriculum development and to develop critical understanding about curriculum.

### **Historical Foundation of Curriculum in Ethiopia**

Knowledge of history is indispensable to understanding who we are and where we fit in the world and how we differ and related to the past. In Ethiopia, the notion of education has embedded in the heart of church education (Orthodox Church). However, according to Bekeke (1991), modern school did not develop directly from traditional institutions. This is because there was a great resistance at that time to accept the modern education by church leaders. In Ethiopia, western modern education is introduced in 1908, though there is traditional education starting from the entrance of Christianity in Ethiopia sixth century.

The purpose of church education was to provide religious education and to promote doctrine. Through its history, the church enabled the country to develop its own script that made it the only country Sub-Saharan Africa (Teshome, 1979).



the church is rich in historical resources

Ethiopic alphabets used in written Amharic and other Ethiopian languages

In church education there is a traditional curriculum even though they didn't know whether it is a curriculum or not that was designed for the training of priesthood, preservation of culture and values of Christianity. Moreover the traditional curriculum produces civil servants such as judges, governors, scribes, treasures and general administrators. The age of admission to a church school was fixed to seven to ten years. For many years our modern schools follow this notion until the kindergarten schooling is introduced.

The curriculum in this period is not well organized and written as a document. The duration of the program is not explicitly given; it depends only on the achievement of the individual and his motivation. The church has many values and sometimes all the modern things emanate from church education. For instance, medicinal plants, ethics and the like are contribution of church education. Calculation of calendar they call it "Bahere Hasab" is introduced by the church, even the counting of thirteen month till now that makes our country unique is because of church education. Hence modern education in Ethiopia is rooted in church education (Orthodox Church). The teaching method is one way and students' task is to memorize as the teachers lectures. There is only one truth which is God. Knowledge is gained rather than created.

Modern education is launched in Ethiopia by Emperor Menelik in 1908; the aim was that the need to cope up with western ideas and modernization, the need for innovations such as national currency a state bank, construction of bridge, hospitals, hotels and railroad, postal service, telephone and etc Maheteme Selassie (as cited in Bekeke, 1991). The school was first directed by Egyptian Coptic professor Hanna (as cited in Bekeke, 1991). In this school there was about 150 students' only boys, most of whom where sons of the nobility, including two future

Emperors: Lij Iyasu and Teferi Mokonnen (Emperor Haile Silasie). The establishment of modern school then spread throughout the country and the curriculum includes subjects like science, mathematics, drawing, English, French, Arabic, physical training and home management.

The first minister of education in Ethiopia was appointed during the time of Lij Eyassu (1913–1916) (Maaza, 1966) after which the opening of a number of primary schools followed. It was during the time of Emperor Haileselassie 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. Ethiopian education after 1936 –1941 was generally modeled following the British education system. The syllabus, teaching materials and even teachers were all imported from England to prepare Ethiopian students for the General Certificate Examination of the University of London (Nuru, 2000)

During the Italian occupation, education in Ethiopia is also occupied by the Fascism ideology and their purpose was to produce more soldiers, to inculcate Italian culture, to improve Italy's economic position (Kasaye, 2005). In this period all educated Ethiopians were terminated by the fascist and so the post war period is associated with many problems. The need for educated man power assisted the spread out of modern education throughout the country and this is assisted by the British. But there is no clear cut structure for the education system. **The first curriculum** guide for six years of elementary education and elementary school curriculum which is from grade one to six was published in 1947/48 by a committee of foreign staffs (Bekeke, 1991). In this curriculum all subjects are thought in Amharic in grade one and grade two. Through grade 3 to 6 Amharic was thought as subject and the other subjects being thought in English. Subjects in elementary are: Amharic, English, science, art, geography, history, arithmetic, music, handicraft and physical education. The concern of schools was to prepare students to pass examination (Maaza, 1966).

The first curriculum was not based on the economic, social and cultural realities of Ethiopia; rather, its components were copied from other countries. Textbooks for primary education were translated from other languages without reflecting the Ethiopian situation. The secondary school syllabus was based on the London School Leaving Certificate Examination. Moreover, the

methods and materials used for classroom instruction were inadequate as there was a shortage of textbooks and other teaching aids. The Bible served as an Amharic textbook from grade one to four. As a result, non-Christian peoples were obliged to follow the Bible (Ayalew, 1964, cited in Bishaw & Lasser, 2012).

The revised version of the first curriculum, known as the **second curriculum**, became operational in 1949. The pattern of school organization was an 8-4 structure that is eight years of primary education and four years of secondary education. The major reason for the change of curriculum was the need to expand education and alleviate English language deficiencies (Ayalew, 1964, cited in Bishaw & Lasser, 2012). As a result, the language of instruction became English starting at Grade 4. Generally, the curriculum continued to be detached from the cultural context of Ethiopia. It was replicated from Great Britain and African countries like Kenya and Sudan.

The curriculum then is changed to 6-2-4 that is six years of primary education, two years of junior secondary education, and four years of senior secondary education structure and become operational nationwide starting from 1963, which is **the third curriculum**. In this new structure, Amharic continued as language of instruction at the primary level, which was divided into academic and non-academic components. Amharic, English, arithmetic, social studies, natural science and health and safety subjects were included in academic syllabus. The non-academic subjects were morals, agriculture, arts and crafts, home makings, physical training and games as well as music (Bishaw & Lasser, 2012). Subjects offered in junior secondary schools were history, geography, mathematics, science, Amharic, English and physical education.

Despite there were a great efforts made by the Emperor to make education relevant for nation-building and modernization, the educational reforms of the third curriculum did not go far enough to address the educational deficiencies of the country. The education system was criticized for being discriminatory, academic-oriented and irrelevant to the world of work and for being foreigner. More importantly, it was criticized for being urban and male-biased. Most of the schools were located in a small number of areas, such as Addis Ababa, Shoa province and Asmara.

However, the quality of teaching was far better during the Imperial system of governance than what came in the succeeding years (Negash (2006). He calls it “the golden age of modern education in Ethiopia” (p. 12). He also depicts that throughout the 1940s and 1950s there were too many schools for students; and incentives such as clothing, school materials and boarding were quite common and was efficient to motivate students. Also Brilliant students were attracted to join vocational secondary schools such as agriculture, laboratory science and teacher training through free food and lodging again. According to Negash (2006), Jobs were plentiful and salaries were closely tied to academic qualifications. During this period the returns to investment in education were clear to understand. After just a few years of education, children from subtle backgrounds found themselves in high positions with an income that could have been more than ten times the per capital income of their parents (Ibid). That is why Negash call it as a golden age. This is actually a potential driving force for Ethiopian parents to send their children to schools. They were highly attracted by the economic return of education. The Emperor and his government then believed that they were laying down the foundations for the modernization of the country though the government had no coherent strategy. But the curriculum was ad hoc and left to teachers who came from different countries with different backgrounds.

To conclude, although the traditional schooling has left us with rich literary heritage like the alphabet itself and a lot of useful resources, it is not proved to be a good foundation and point of departure for the modern education, since the church was the greatest resistance to the modern education; that is because religious view and modernization are two conflicting phenomena’s. Most of the well-known contemporary writers of the country, like the Haddis Alemayehu, Mengestu Lemma, and Poet Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin are the outcomes of Ethiopian Orthodox church schools. There are many musicians who refer the church school as their vocal basis. However, this foundation of church education in the country does not have much influence on the development of modern education again. I will describe the driving force that leads Ethiopia to launch modern education latter on.

These days, students who attend the church school also go to the modern school simultaneously. The church currently have fully fledged curriculum and possesses the theological college, with the aim of further education in spirituality. On the other hand, many churches have started opening modern elementary and high schools that provide secular education with some touch of

Christianity in order to keep the students in line with their dogmas. The resistance now seems to cease.

### **Philosophical Foundation of Curriculum in Ethiopia**

**Philosophy:** Is defined to be love and search of wisdom by logical means and moral self-discipline. It is again an investigation of the nature, causes or principles of **reality, knowledge,** or **values,** based on logical reasoning (Dictionary definition). Philosophy plays an important role in deciding the aims of education, content and learning experience. The following are called tools of philosophy:

1. Metaphysics – asks the question what is real?- theory of reality
2. Axiology – asks the question what is good? – theory of value
3. Epistemology – asks the question how do we know what is true?- theory of knowledge

Using these three tools, I will try to see the notion of curriculum in Ethiopia, past and present. The following are the known educational philosophies: Idealism, Realism, Existentialism, pragmatism.

The basic questions which we consider for inculcating philosophical application in curriculum are as follows (Bhattacharyya, n.y):

- ✚ What knowledge aspect may assist students to think critically for mental development?
- ✚ Which may reflect vital subject-matter that has born in nature?
- ✚ How does learning leads to development of inner potentiality?
- ✚ Does the content relating one human being to another involving human development?
- ✚ Which content emphasize individual students moving away from being finite to increasingly becoming infinite human beings through development of values?

### **Idealism and Curriculum**

For idealists, reality is made up of absolute truth, truth is perfect and eternal not found in the world matter. The source of all knowledge is God. They believe that we can't rely on our sense as they deceive us. It seems a religious education and the aim of education is transmission of cultural heritage. The teacher is a role model to be imitated by students and teaching is through lecturing. Search knowledge by question and answering. This influence have been manifested in our education system, students are tested to ensure that they achieve the required goal. Students are expected to read, memorize and imitate. They search truth through ideas. The curriculum

focuses on literature, art, science and mathematics. But, an important feature of idealism is that education must equip students with wisdom of goodness, discipline, order and self-control.

### **Realism and the Curriculum**

For realists, reality is made up of natural laws and facts. All knowledge is derived from experience through sense organs and reason. We perceive the actually existing physical world. The goal of education for realist is to equip students with knowledge and skill that will be used to understand their environment. Realism is somewhat an improvement of idealism on the continuum because, reality and truth comes from science and art and let students search for truth using their own senses rather than ideas. But it is not without weakness; the major limitation is that it is too dependent on the sense organs.

### **Existentialism and the Curriculum**

Existentialists believe that individuals are placed on this earth alone & must make good judgment in their environment. People must create themselves and create their own meaning. For existentialist, the curriculum focuses on the needs of individuals, both cognitively and affectively. They believe that education must stress individuality. Individuals are responsible of every consequence. Individuals should be given a place for the creation of concepts like peace, truth and justice. Hence, the focus is on humans and their ideas.

The teacher should understand his own “lived world” and help students to understand their world. Both teachers and students learn from each other & their relation is friendlier. The instruction must empower students to make choices about what and how they will learn. The teacher should help students to understand themselves. Students and teachers must learn cooperatively from each other by posing questions, generating activities and working together.

The curriculum focuses on art and literature giving little emphasis for science and mathematics. This view of existentialists is now not acceptable for the fast growing world in technology and science. But the main contribution of existentialism is that curriculum must be designed from the stand point of students rather than a collection of subjects.

Now existentialists give more freedom for students and the teaching learning process is two ways as compared to the previous philosophies idealism and realism. But, the drawback here is that the emphasis on meaning lies within each individual and so may doubt external reality. An

individual may be wrong in the process of meaning formation. Hence it is better if their meaning is real and solves the existing problem. Another drawback is that the school does not provide the same subjects to everyone, since not everyone would enjoy the same things and so this seems impossible especially in Ethiopia. The interest of an individual may be unrelated to the growing world.

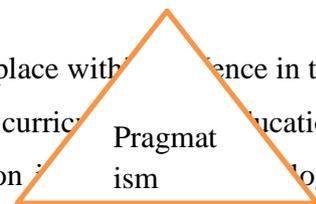
### **Pragmatism and the Curriculum**

It is the philosophy that encourages people to find processes that work in order to achieve their desired ends. The main theme of pragmatism is that an individual must adapt to the constantly changing world. They study the past but they are generally more interested in contemporary issues and in discovering solutions to problems in present-day. This notion influences the educational system these days, in that the focus of education is for solving current problem. That is why technical and vocational training center is established in Ethiopia. Its main focus is to solve current problems of the society.

The goal of education for pragmatist is for growth and better life. Education has a moral influence and should pay a vital part in helping us to become the kind of moral persons who are interested not only in promoting our own growth but also in promoting the growth of others. The teacher is a facilitator not authoritarian. The method of instruction is problem solving, experiential learning, inquiry methods, and field trips. Learning is in groups and in individual. There is no rote memorization and imitation it is replaced by individualized studies. The curriculum focus is all rounded including hygiene, social study, mathematics and science. This philosophy influences and open doors for modernization and post modernization. An important feature is that solving problems scientifically and adapt to the changing environment. If we put on the continuum again pragmatism is on the broadest extended line.

### **Sociological Foundation of Curriculum in Ethiopia**

Sociology is the science of society and the social interactions taking place within it. In this section I will consider issues from society that have an influence on curriculum and education. The very important foundation (driving force) for modern education is pragmatism and sociology. Emperor Menelik who introduce modern education is because of the sociological crisis the country felt at large. The sociological issues at that time was: the need for educated man power



(innovation), coping up with western modernization, changes needed by the society such as hospitals, transportation, economics issues, the need for innovations such as national currency a state bank, construction of bridge, hotels and postal service. These social problems forced the Emperor to think of modern education and hence he launched it.

Human beings require social interaction. This concept of social being leads to the view of living together. Education should stand for humanism, reason and tolerance (Nehru, an Indian first Prime Minister). In Ethiopian culture however, there is no experience sharing rather there is secretes an individual cannot share his/her knowledge to others but he/she keeps secrete and apply only for her/himself, because of not to be harmed by others. Of course it true that many individuals were harmed of this situation and so it is one of the bad cultures that Ethiopia has. However development comes through our interaction, our debates and shared vision. Contemporary educationalist argues that education must serve the purpose of social life that brings people together (social re-constructionist). It is from this point of view that the current 5 to 1 grouping is introduced in the education system. Because of the above bad culture and lack of engagement it fails to produce change as it is required.

### **Psychological Foundation of Curriculum in Ethiopia**

Psychology became an accepted science in the nineteenth century and was defined as the science of consciousness. Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior. It gives insight into: Child development, learning, inquiry techniques, educational objectives, student characteristics, learning process, teaching method and evaluation procedures. Generally, it is concerned with the question of how people learn and behave. “After being the dominant paradigm in American psychology for some decades, behaviorism was overtaken by a variety of research results that yielded anomalies revealing its limitations as an overall account of psychological functioning” (Wakefield, 2007). Researchers continue their investigation and develop the field of cognitive science, which includes the study of thinking, perception, emotion, creativity, language, consciousness and learning (Harman, 2008)

As it is discussed above, the Orthodox Church education has had an important place in the socio-cultural history of Ethiopia. Some of the impacts of the approaches to teaching and learning used in traditional education on contemporary state education are respect to authority, heavy dependence on rote learning, a static body of knowledge passed on through generations; which is

the influence of behaviorism. Psychologists and educators explain how people acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes. This phenomenon is called learning theory. There are three known learning theories: behaviorism, cognitivist and constructivism.

### **Behaviorism**

The founder of behaviorism was **John B. Watson** (1878-1958), who noted that consciousness could be studied only through the process of self-examination, which is extremely unreliable research tool. Because consciousness could not be reliably studied, he said, it should not be studied at all (Watson, 1913, cited in Matthew & Hergenhahn, 2009). To be scientific, psychology needed a subject matter that was stable enough to be reliably measured, and that subject matter was behavior. Watson felt that the main concern for the psychologist should be behavior and how it varies with experience. Watson then argued there should be no more self-examination, no more talk of instinctive behavior, and no more attempts to study the human conscious or unconscious mind. Behavior is what we can see, and therefore behavior is what we study (Ibid).

The behaviorist's main point was that behavior should be studied because it could be dealt with directly. Mental events should be ignored because they could not be dealt with directly. Behaviorism is a theory of learning that stress on repetition and reinforcement in order to develop desired habits. B.F. Skinner was a major contributor to operant conditioning focusing on positive and negative reinforcement or punishment.

Behaviorists regard all behavior as a response to a stimulus. They assume that what we do is determined by the environment we are in, which provides stimuli to which we respond, and the environments we have been in previously, which caused us to learn to respond to stimuli in particular ways. Behaviorists are unique amongst psychologists in believing that it is unnecessary to speculate about internal mental processes when explaining behavior: it is enough to know which *stimuli elicit which responses*. Generally, behaviorism gives low emphasis or no input from learners and also it does not take into account all the ways in which students learn.

### **Cognitivism**

Cognitivists' were unhappy by behaviorists' view that learning is an observable behavior and they shifted towards the view that learning is a complex cognitive process such as how people reason, solve problem, learn language and process information.

A Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, studied the learning and progressive problem-solving of children from the very earliest stages of life. Piaget's starting-point was the notion that the mind had certain in-built capacities for making sense of its surroundings and that during the process of maturation these unfolded in much the same way as did physical growth. For example, just as (given favorable circumstances) most children will learn to walk, so Piaget thought they also learned such concepts as the existence of objects, conservation of volume, causality and so on (Matthew & Hergenahn, 2009).

### **Constructivism**

Constructivism is a psychological and philosophical perspective contending that individuals form or construct much of what they learn and understand (Bruning et al., 2004, cited in Dale, 2012). A major influence on the rise of constructivism has been theory and research in human development, especially the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) believed that children's play had an important role in constructivism and learning. His theory develops that we learn through assimilation and accommodation. Piaget's theory of constructivism is one of "Cognitive Constructivism". An example was his belief that children could not reach maturation, they cannot take on certain tasks until they mature psychologically (Dale, 2012). Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934) on the other hand believed that knowledge is first constructed in a social context and collaborated with other individuals or groups. This is known as "Social Constructivism".

Constructivist theorists reject the notion that scientific truths exist and await discovery and verification. They argue that no statement can be assumed as true but rather should be viewed with reasonable doubt. The world can be mentally constructed in many different ways, so no theory has a lock on the truth. This is true even for constructivism. Knowledge is not imposed from outside people but rather formed inside them. A person's constructions are true to that person but not necessarily to anyone else. The majority of constructivist theorists were in the

early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the idea of constructivist teaching is still alive and is preferable.

The Ethiopian secular culture and spoken languages were not given appropriate emphasis and level of importance in the curriculum of the traditional schools and modern schools. Even though the current Ethiopian education policy seems taking into account the psychological importance in the development of children's mind (ETP, 1994) by introducing new approach than the previous three curriculums, it does not give much emphasis on it. The policy depicts that primary school children should learn in their native languages. This is a good feature of the curriculum, but students are still challenged with the change of language when they reach secondary school. This will have a great effect on their meaning making, because they can't make meaning without understanding and communicating confidently. Thus the Policy should consider the pedagogical difficulty that students encountered and make decision to pose quality education in the country by taking into account the language importance in all levels of education.

### **Traditional VS Modern Education in Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian church education is rooted in idealism. The aim of education is transmission of cultural heritage and preparation of future priests. The teacher is a role model to be imitated by students and teaching is through lecturing. An important feature of church education in Ethiopia is that education equips students with wisdom of goodness, discipline, order and self-control. The Ethiopian church education was fully idealism. However, this notion is not limited only on church education but also to the modern education established in 1908. This influence have grown in our education system, students are tested to ensure that they achieve the required goal. The schools task was really to prepare students to pass the exam, students are expected to read, memorize and imitate. Few years ago in even our universities memorization were practiced and students were directed towards passing the exam.

The authoritarian role of the teacher in our schools now and her/his expectation of passive behavior of the students have no difference from the church schools. Education was viewed as the process through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. The agents of education were considered to be teachers who impart knowledge, and learners who have little roles in the process. Generally, knowledge was considered sacred and unchanging and thus to be

learned as it is. This wrong concept of epistemology affects the pedagogy which emphasized rote learning and memorization which was the main methodology in the church school also. This problem was spread into the modern system of education to have developed into common and persistent constraint of the process of teaching and learning.

The notion of problem solving was introduced in Ethiopia after the Dergue regime has been destroyed by EPRDF. The EPRDF destroyed the past philosophy 'education for education purpose' and emphasize on a pragmatic approach by valuing education in terms of only solving immediate problems (Areaya, 2008). But basically the education system is not geared towards this philosophy. It is hanged up by the past epistemology that relies on rote memorization and focus on exam instead of growth and better life. For pragmatist, the teacher is a facilitator not authoritarian. The method of instruction is problem solving, experiential learning, inquiry methods, and field trips. Learning is in groups and in individual. There is no rote memorization and imitation. But this notion really does not exist in the schools; one major reason is absence of good environment in general and large class rooms in particular. Another reason for this upon my observation is low engagement of students in the learning process and taking no responsibility of their own learning.

Generally, the modern education launched in 1908 does not have another dimension other than the philosophy of church education. The notion and philosophical basis for education that is rote memorization is highly manifested in modern schools of Ethiopia for a long period of time. However, the contents and purpose of education depends on the political ideology of the Emperors, for instance during the Dergue regime they hold socialist ideology with Marxism-Leninism philosophy; the purpose of education was to equip students with socialist ideology and strengthening their military arm.

### **Implications and Insight into the Future**

Currently the educational system is criticized of quality. Though there are many factors for the decline, lack of conducive environment in general and large classroom in particular plays a pivotal role. This is because collaborative work and the notion of active learning that the policy dictates are unthinkable in such situations.

Due to the country's economic level it is clear that, Ethiopian students hope learning to over through their poverty and then help their poor parents. But, unemployment makes the graduates hopeless and initiates them to migrate, seeking a promising work in other countries which leads to brain drain. Thus, learning must lead to immediate value hence unemployment should be resolved. Find job opportunity outside the country officially as of many other countries if all jobs are assumed to be saturated inside the country through. Another solution might be producing flexible curriculum that serves the needs of all students that helps develop the higher-level skills, by including native language as a medium of instruction at all levels of education. Negash (2006) stated as follows to mention the importance of language in Ethiopian education system, "modernization through westernization is a project doomed to failure and it results loss of identity".

Most important, Ethiopia must invest heavily in teacher training and development. Ethiopia has a deficit in quality teacher training and continuing education (Hoot, Szente, and Tadesse, 2006, cited in Bishaw & Lasser, 2012). Thus, the training of teachers should be made a priority in such a way that teachers implement the curriculum as required and fill the pedagogical gap. Training teachers would not solve the problem by itself; rather a good care and incentives have also been provided for teachers. Nowadays, the salary and incentives given for teachers are becoming worse and teachers are suffering of sustaining themselves and their family using their salary. So teachers are intending to quit and many of them already quit the profession. This condition really does not encourage students to join the teaching profession and so consideration must be given.

The philosophies of modernism and post modernism have a strong impact on the design of the school curriculum, leading to far-reaching consequences (Dennis, 2002). Therefore, clear conceptions of modernism and post-modernism are important for addressing contemporary curriculum analysis. Through the history of Ethiopian education, there was a shift from traditional to modern education as it is discussed above; since modernism is now on anomalies, I believe that it is now time to shift the system to post-modernism. In Ethiopia, there is a burden of dissatisfaction for students as well as teachers and bureaucratic inflexibility and unresponsiveness to change among all stake holders as a result of modernism. Some of features of modernity are: inflexible decision-making, unmanageable structures, linear planning,

unresponsiveness to changing societal needs, loss of meaningful senses of community (Hargreaves, 1994). He stresses that modernity is not only problematic but is in a crisis state.

In contrast, Post-modernism has an eclectic nature; it depicted that creating and choosing is more important than ordering and following. Therefore, it is important to choose and combine traditions selectively, that is elect those aspects from past and present which still appear most relevant.

Dennis (2002) asserts that since change is exponential, it is not possible to say with certainty what the citizens of the twenty-first century will need from their schools. And thus the post-modernist view assumes that the aims, objectives, content, pedagogy, evaluation and direction of the curriculum are not fixed, but fluid. In a modernist curriculum, evaluation is basically conducted to separate winners from losers. However, in Post-modern curriculum, there is no ideally set standard, no principle which serves as a universal reference point. The teacher would play a central role in the evaluation process but would not be the exclusive evaluator; evaluation would be collective and interactive. It would be used as feedback, to help students to develop intellectual and social powers through dialogue and constructive critiques (Doll, 1993, cited in Dennis, 2002). But it requires highly professional staffs that are confident, resourceful and ready to meet the challenges for successful implementation of the curriculum.

Post-modern curriculum possess the features: process-oriented rather than focus on the product only, lays emphasis on the development of higher order thinking skills and fosters creativity, the teacher is no longer the authority in the classroom but a facilitator, helping children construct knowledge. Knowledge is not simply transmitted, it should not be prescriptive and system-driven, foster self-organization.

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