FULL LENGTH ARTICLE

Ethiopian Education Reform: From Tradition To Nowhere, A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT
Reform approach in education plays a decisive role in determining the success or failure of the reforms. The purpose of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is, therefore, to examine how education reforms in Ethiopia were initiated in the last eight decades. To this end, 43 research works were screened using google search and,by applying valid exclusion criteria, a thematic synthesis systematic literature review was conducted on 30 research works (26 articles published in peer reviewed journals and monographs and 4 policy researches). The analysis builds on Chin and Bennes's (1994) Strategies for Effecting Change. The findings show political regimes in the history of Ethiopia often employed the power-coercive strategy for reforming education. Moreover, despite their irreconcilable difference in ideology, the constituents of education reforms in the three regimes remained similar in the last eight decades. On the basis of our analysis, conclusions were drawn and implications for future research and reforming education were suggested.

Key words: Education; Ethiopia; Reform; Regime; Top-down

INTRODUCTION
Nations around the world are reforming their education system with the intention of meeting the challenges of globalization and the consequent competition that entails (Cheng, 2009). The approach followed is critical to the success or failure of the intended educational reform (Fullan, 2007;Pietarinen et al., 2016). The literature is, however, ambivalent between the bottom-up reform approach and a top-down approach mixed with-bottom-up elements (eg.Fullan, 2007) since success stories exist for both of these approaches whereas success stories of reforms prescribed from above are sparser(Fullan, 2007; Schlechty, 2009).

In this paper, we analyse educational reforms introduced in Ethiopia in the last eight decades.Consequently, reforms initiated in the three regimes that ruled over Ethiopia namely the Imperial (1916-1974), the Derg[1] (1974-1991), and EPRDF[2] (1991-2018) are analysed. Recently, a new education reform is in progress following a political reform in 2018. Therefore, findings from the present review could provide lessons to help rethink the various reform approaches followed in the history of the country's modern education. The analysis focuses on answering the following research questions: How

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[1] A military ruling group who overthrow the emperial regime in1974 (See BahiruZewudie, 1999)
[2] Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front

were reforms introduced into the Ethiopian education system? What constituent features of the education reforms were common to the three political regimes?
The article is organized into five sections.Section one introduces the issue, whereas section two sets the background and then provides brief account of the analytical tool against which the findings from this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) were interpreted. Section three and four, respectively, deal with methods and interpretation of findings. The final section discusses the major findings along with implications and conclusions drawn based on the findings.

Ethiopia is a Sub-Saharan African country with a long tradition of education though much of its education history is linked to *'traditional'* education whereby religious institutions had overwhelming responsibility. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Mosques have played a decisive role in the provision of the service. However, the Church education was dominant partly because it had support from the state (Solomon, 2008). Moreover, the indigenous education which was given mainly by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was designed to prepare church functionaries such as priests, monks, and *debteras*[3] and civil servants such as judges, governors, treasurers, and general administrators for their subsequent roles (Solomon, 2008; Wube, 2014). Thus, it is clear that Ethiopia had its own traditional education before the advent of modern education into its system. Nevertheless, its education had not been designed to 'extend … understanding of the world, but to preserve and transmit unchanged from generation to generation' (Girma 1967, p.4 cited in Solomon 2008, p.36). Given the philosophy of education of this type, change in any form rarely occurs and if it occurs, it could take place by the sole diktat of the Church or the Mosque.

State-lead education with a prefix 'modern' was introduced in the first decade of the 20th century (Seyoum, 1996; Tekeste, 1996).This did not mean that the long standing traditional education evolved into modern education (Solomon, 2005). Close examination substantiates this assertion; despite not being directly colonised (with only a brief occupation by Italian forces), Ethiopia's education in different historical epochs was highly influenced by foreign powers' diplomacy: France(1908-1935), Italy (1936-1941), Britain (1941-1952), USA (1952-1974), and the USSR and the GDR[4] (1974-1991) (Wube, 2005; Tekeste, 2006; Alemayehu &Lasser, 2012). Continuous foreign shaping, thus, resulted in limited relevance of modern education to the country's context.. Balsvik (2005, p.9) succinctly describes this fact in the following way:

> Modern Education in Ethiopia was …not attuned to the country's needs. Patterns of education, curricula, [teachers] and texts [that] intended to further the interests of the most industrialized countries were transplanted to one of the least developed rural economies in the world.

Nevertheless, this is not surprising except, perhaps for the relative subtlety of foreign domination on Ethiopia, the history is all the same in sub-Saharan Africa where education was frequently unreceptive to local, national or regional contexts (Tekeste, 2006).

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[3] Member of the clergy who is well versed in the Ethiopian church rituals
[4] German Democratic Republic

This Systematic Literature Review (SRL) employs Chin and Bennes (1994) strategies of effecting change as a framework for anlaysis. According to these authors, reforms can be introduced via three different change strategies namely empirical-rational, power-coercive, and normative re-educative. Quinn and Sonenshein (2008) name these strategies as telling strategy, forcing strategy, and participating strategy respectively. These strategies have been developed with the intent of answering how government and other change agents approach reform processes (Quinn, 2004). Thus, when reforms are introduced using the empirical-rational strategy, change agents introduce reforms following a strongly rational justification and clear demonstration of the change to beneficiaries whereas if reforms are introduced through the power-coercive strategy, those who initiate the reform assume the highest power which enables them to decide both on the approach and constituents of the reform. That is, a more powerful body imposes its will on a less powerful body (Quinn &Sonenshein, 2008) based on the assumption that implementers are complaints who need directions and sanctions (Nickols, 2016; Hofman et al., 2017). The third strategy, which is less commonly used as reform strategy, is the normative-reducative strategy. This change strategy, unlike the other two strategies, focuses on trust building between change agents working in the top hierarchy and in the bottom (Chin &Bennes, 1994). Thus, reforms introduced using this strategy is the collaborative effort of various stakeholders operating at different level of hierarchy.

The three strategies differ mainly in the kind of relationship that exists between change initiators and implementers. Consequently, the more democratic is the relationship between change initiators and implementers, the higher is the likelihood to include voices from grassroots level implementers. On the contrary, the more autocratic is the relationship between the two, as in the case of the power coercive strategy, the higher will be the likelihood for implementers to comply with the demands of change initiators.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is produced based on review of secondary sources. Consequently, education reform documents which have been introduced in the last three political regimes in Ethiopia namely:Imperial regime of Haile Selassie-I (1916-1966), Derg regime (1967-1991), and EPRDF regime (1991-2018) and research works conducted so far on the issue were the data sources. Procedurally; words/phrases such as 'Reform', 'Policy', 'Education reform', 'Policy reform', 'Ethiopia' were the key words used to search for articles and reform documents in Google and Google Scholar. A total of 43 publications and documents were accessed. However, publications which are conducted in specific geographical areas of the country were excluded due to lack of comprehensiveness.The selection of documents was based on the priority areas.That is, documents which underscore on the reform approach, purpose of reforming education, priority areas emphasized by regimes, strategies set to accomplish purposes, and on actors in the reform process were selectively reviewed.Consequently, a tota1 of 30 research works (26 articles published in peer reviewed journals and monographs and 4 policy researches conducted by the Ministry of Education, Education Strategy Centre and the World Bank) were screened for review. The absence of local/international research works conducted so far on the issue and in the research setting has limited our review to focus the works indicated.

We employed thematic synthesis, a category of SLR often employed when predefined research questions are answered using thematic analysis (Thomas &Harden, 2008; cited in Xiao & Watson, 2019). Consequently, criteria of comparison (themes) emerged via descriptive coding technique (Saldana, 2013).Specifically; each paper was scanned for content and descriptive codes were, then, given manually to the findings. Next, major findings were tabulated to obtain repetitive patterns and consistencies across the papers reviewed (see table in section four). Finally, five major themes namely reform approach, purpose, priority, strategy and actors were emerged as criteria of comparison.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
This section presents an analysis and interpretation of how the reforms initiated in the last three regimes of Ethiopia have been consistent with organisational change literature. Consequently, we have employed Chin &Bennes's (1994) strategy of effecting change as a conceptual tool. By applying this analysis framework, therefore, we tried to seek answers for the research questions we framed in section one of this study: How were education reforms introduced into the Ethiopian education system? What constituent features of the educationre forms were common to the three political regimes? The summary of each regime vis-à-vis these criteria is given in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Syntheiss of Reform approach and reform elements across political regimes of Ethiopia

Criteria	*Imperial*	*Derg*	*EPRDF*[5]
Reform approach	Education reforms were top-down prescriptions from the government, in fact suggested by foreign experts (Mulugeta, 1959; Balsvik, 2005; Messay, 2006; Tekeste, 2006; Solomon, 2020)	Education proclamations were given by the WOSP[6] and curriculum development was dominated by experts from East Germany (Seyoum, 2005; Tekeste, 2006)	The policy has been formulated without genuine participation of main stakeholders (Siyoum, 1996 &2005; Mulugeta, 2011). It has been spearheaded by the PM office, MOE, and donors (Mulugeta, 2011)
Purpose	**prepare** a dynamic society that is alert and responsive to development measures [of the country][7](see also Akalewold, 2021about the assertion made on the three regimes)	**mould** citizens who have an all-rounded personality [and] arming them with the required knowledge[8]	**Cultivate** citizens with an all-round education capable of playing conscious and active role in the economic, social, and political life of the country (MOE, 2002, p.15)
Priority	Access, quality, equity, relevance, efficiency (World Bank, 1990; Tekeste, 2006)	Access, quality, equity, relevance, minimum wastage (World Bank, 1990; Seyoum, 2005;Yodit, 2009	Access, quality, equity, relevance, efficiency (MOE, 1994)
Strategy	Competent teachers & school administrators, curriculum& resources (World Bank, 1990)	Competent teachers & school administrators, curriculum and resources (World Bank, 1990)	Competent teachers & school leaders, curriculum, and resources (MOE, 1994)
Actors	Experts from Europe & the USA dominated the education system (Tekeste, 1996). 51 Ethiopians and 30 international experts studied ESR (Tekeste 2006)	Educational experts from USSR & GDR dominated the regime's education system (Tekste 2006, Alemayehu&Lasser, 2012) EGESE which was conducted by a total of 61 taskforce members was financed by UNICEF, World Bank and the Swedish International Development Authority (Seyoum, 2005; Tekeste, 2006)	44 Ethiopian nationals from MOE, AAU & other government offices were recruited to design ETP (Seyoum, 2005) 25 professionals for preparing TESO, 11 of which were foreign experts (MOE, 2003)

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[5] Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
[6] Workers Party of Ethiopia
[7] Opening Speech in the conference of ESR by Emperor Haile Selassie, p.ii in ESR document
[8] Report by President MengistuHailemariam, report presented at the Workers' Party formation, p.100 cited in ERGESE report

RESULTS

a) Reform approach
Western-based education, which is commonly called 'modern education', has traditionally experienced policy change following the demise of old regime from power (Tekeste, 2006; Mulugeta, 2011). Consequently, the three regimes on which this review focuses, had formulated their own educational reforms once they succeeded to political power. Hence, based on the analysis framework, we attempted to answer how the three political regimes in Ethiopia approached reform process.

To start with the imperial regime, series of reforms which were presumed to make education contribute for economic development of the country were introduced especially after the end of Italian occupation in 1941. Solomon (2020), who studied history of education policy formulation in Ethiopia, asserted that reforms formulated during this regime had limited input from key stakeholders. This finding is supported by different scholars who studied the issue (Messay, 2006; Teksete, 1996; Mulugeta, 2011). The Western countries, according to Messay (2006), were the sources of these reforms. The statement given below clearly supports this assertion.

The most important characteristic of the entire set-up of modern education in Ethiopia was that it was imposed from the UK, the USA, and influenced by various other European countries and, thus, essentially constructed to serve a different society than the Ethiopian one (Balsvik, 1979, Quoted in Messay,2006, p.12). The successive reforms introduced to structure Ethiopian education since 1947[9] were proposed by British and American experts (Solomon, 2020).Not only the structures but also the prospective education plan (1961-1973), which aspired to markedly improve education hitherto provided, was suggested by foreign advisors (World Bank, 1990). Even the first proclamation,which was enacted to introduce modern education, gained legitimacy through the force of law (Solomon, 2020) which; in fact, is not surprising since the country was seen as 'rudimentary' so as   to be able to initiate reform ideas other than which was already known to them.

The Derg regime is characterized by successive proclamations which were meant to reform Ethiopia's education in line with the socialist ideology (Tekeste, 1996; Messay, 2006). One of these proclamations was ratified in 1975 to provide 'New Directions to Ethiopian Education'[10] (World Bank, 1990). These proclamations were impositions of the Derg regime (Seyoum, 2005) initiated with noparticipation frommain stakeholders of education such as teachers and other grassroot level practitioners.

The downfall of the Derg regime followed a new education policy commonly known as the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (ETP). Although MOE (2002) and Genet[11] (2018) claim that preparation of the ETP was participatory; scholars who studied the

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[9]A 6-6 structure (1947); an 8-4 structure (1949); experimental curriculum (1954); and a 6-2-4 structure (1963).

[10] This reform was made to accomplish four intertwined goals namely Ethiopia first, Hebrettesebawinet, National Democratic Revolution Programme, and Commission for the Establishment of the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia

[11] Minister of Ministry of Education between 1991-2006

issue conclude its conceptualization and formulation, like its predecessors had followed an 'opaque model' of policy formulation (Seyoum, 1996 &2005; Mulugeta, 2011). Even before the ETP, there was a *de facto* education policy which was in action since February 1993, and this *defacto* policy is thought to be the handmade initiative of the Prime Minister Office (PMO), funding agencies, and the Ministry of Education (Tekeste,1996; Mulugeta, 2011). Not only the ETP but its directives such as the Education Sector Development Programs were initiated and endorsed by the government without genuine participation of the main stakeholders (Mulugeta, 2011). This confirms the incessant infiltration of politics into the country's education in general and reform per se in particular.

A further pertinent assertion about the process is given by Seyoum (2005) who argues that there was limited participation of stakeholders in discussions organised to enrich the draft ETP. Nonetheless, from a policy research point of view, he describes the intent of participation as ratificatory not formative being to ''simply endorse the draft in its entirety rather than serving to contribute to the enrichment of the policy (p.28).'' This is not surprising since public policy making in other sectors over the years and in education sector in particular had little engagement of stakeholders other than those who controlled the political scene (Mulugeta&Cloete, 2006; Mulugeta, 2011). Little input or ownership of these policies from the main stakeholders such as teachers led to resistance against the reform and, consequently, to the failure of reform implementation (Solomon, 2020).This implies that the tradition of reforming education had little changed in the last three regimes and follows the top-down approach. This might be because of the fact that successive regimes in Ethiopia had a firm embedded belief that ''successful change is based on the exercise of authority and the imposition of sanctions'' (Nichols, 2016, p.3).

However, there were attempts to initiate educational reforms on the basis of evidences from stakeholders. National studies such as ESR (MOE, 1972) and ERGESE (1986) were attempts of this kind. These researches were meant to provide rational justification and clear demonstration of the change to grassroot level implementers, though the recommendations from both studies remained shelved (Tekeste, 1998) as a result of fierce resistance (ESR) and acute shortage of resources to implement the suggestions (ERGESE).

b) Constituent features common to the three of political regimes
The findings resulted from this SLR (*see inter-regime analysis matrix in Table 2.1*) reveal that purpose, priority area, strategy and reform actors have been common issues. In this sub-section, therefore, we attempt to elaborate the findings synthesized from previous local researches.

Every nation, based on its socio-economic status, political ideology, culture and global trends, defines the purposes for education it provides. This purpose may change overtime depending on various conditions prevailing at Glocal level. Consequently, the three regimes in power in the last eight decades had set purposes for the education they had been providing. Critical observation of the purposes of education that each regime aspired to provide shows that the mission of preparing the generation for a distant future was left intact. During the imperial regime, for instance, the primary role of education was to ''**prepare** a dynamic society that is alert and responsive to

development measures [of the country]'' (MOE, 1972, p.ii)[12]. The Derg regime, in turn, aspired to ''**mould** citizens who have an all-rounded personality [and] arming them with the required knowledge'' (MOE, 1986, p.3)[13]. Similarly, the EPRDF sought to **cultivate** citizens with an all-round education capable of playing conscious and active role in the economic, social and political life of the country (MOE, 2002, p.15) [Emphases added].

Thus, one can observe that the country's education system hitherto operating, albeit their irreconcilable ideological differences, appears similar with regard to the aims of education. Each had aspired to produce citizens with adequate skill of creativity and scientific inquiry who could function within the state ideology (see ESR, 1972; ERGESE, 1986; & ETP, 1994). This shows that *preparing* citizens for a better personal and common goal each has defined in the distant unknown future seem the aim of education (See also Akalewold, 2021).

With regard to priority areas, the three regimes seem to focus on similar priority areas which the education system is committed to address. Analysis of the objectives of the third five years' prospective plan (1968-1973) (quoted by the World Bank, 1990, p.42) shows expanding access, narrowing urban-rural gap in enrolment, quality, relevance, and efficiency of education were top priority areas which the imperial regime planned to address. The objectives were to: (i) provide educational opportunity for an increasing number of people, and particularly for the rural population; (ii) provide an educational system which would be in harmony with Ethiopia's ancient cultural traditions; (iii) provide an educational system within which children could develop positive attitudes towards manual work and practical skills; (iv) place appropriate emphasis on the quality of education. According to the same source, the objective was also to improve the efficiency of the education system hitherto operating.

Access, especially to primary education, seems the concern of all the regimes. The imperial regime, like other African states, for instance, adopted a resolution[14] to accomplish Universal Primary Education until 1980 (World Bank, 1990; Tekeste, 2006) though this remained aspirational. This also was true for the Derg regime since there had been efforts to quantitatively expand access to primary education (World Bank, 1990; Tekeste, 1996).

Like the imperial regime, the Derg regime had also introduced a ten-year perspective plan which hoped, among others, to ''produce skilled manpower in such numbers, proportions and quality [and] provide education which will meet the basic needs of the people'' (World Bank, 1990, Pp.84-85). The words/phrases like 'in such numbers', 'proportion', 'quality' and 'basic needs' implicitly or explicitly refer to access, equity, quality and relevance respectively. Other scholars also reported similar findings especially on the position of the Derg regime in prioritizing access (MOE, 1986; Seyoum, 2005; Yodit, 2009) and equity (Tekeste, 1990; Yodit, 2009). The issue of

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[12] Opening speech by Empror Haile Selassie at ESR conference.
[13] A report presented by Present MengistuHailemariam at the workers' party formation, p100 cited in ERGESE report, p3
[14] This was after a conference on the education of African States which was held in Addis Ababa in 1961.
[13] An American educational advisor to the then Ethiopian education system

wastage, which is an indicator of inefficiency, was also among the priority areas on which the Derg regime aspired to curve out (MOE, 1986).

Similar to reforms in other two regimes and more vividly, the ETP has identified access, equity, quality, relevance, and efficiency as its priority areas for which the regime strongly criticized its predecessors and promised to commit itself (see Tekeste, 1996; Yodit, 2009;). However, these are not unique to the ETP as its predecessors also pinpointed these issues either tacitly or explicitly and envisioned to address them all, though the gap between rhetoric and reality on the ground continued widening.

The third commonality relates to strategies designed to realize the purposes emphasized in successive educational reforms. Syntheses of the researches included in this SLR reveal that curriculum, teachers, school leadership, and resource initiatives have been among the major common strategies. The policy documents in each regime have plenty of prescriptions regarding these issues. Tekeste (2006), for instance, argues that the upgrading of teacher competence in teaching methodology and subject matter has been the concern of the education reforms across regimes.

Educational reforms enacted during the imperial regime also prioritized the strategies. Between 1947-1963, the country had experienced four different education structures, within each reform, curriculum, teachers, and resources were critical elements (Solomon, 2020). Even prior to these reforms, curriculum reform proposed by Professor Ernest Work[15] suggested teacher education to be one of the top priority areas (Solomon, 2020) and, hence, teacher training institution was opened (See Semela, 2014).

Similarly, during the Derg regime, these issues were the major thematic areas of an extensive evaluative research. It states that ''curriculum and teaching-learning process, administration, …and logistics'' are among the areas of concern for school quality (MOE, 1986, p.iv). This is because the technical team that conducted ERGESE, directed by the Derg regime, set the evaluation around these issues (Solomon, 2020). Consequently, in one way or another, the strategies suggested to materialize the goals of the then education reform, ERGESE, seem very familiar to that of the imperial regime; i.e., developing context-friendly curriculum, staff, schools and the sector with qualified personnel and fulfilling resources which are required to implement the reforms.

The ETP has also adopted these strategies as pillars of achieving the objectives set in the policy (MOE, 1994).One can scan the policy document and understand the emphasis given to these strategies each of which has been well elucidated in separate sections. The directives prescribed by MOE to further elaborate the policy have also emphasized on these strategies to accomplish the objectives of the ETP. The intention of the policy was to transform the education system hitherto given (Seyoum, 2005) although the strategies through which the government aspired to transform education seldom differed from the strategies of the preceding regimes. Learning through mother tongue is, however, a strategy set to implement the policy which reforms in the preceding regimes lacked[16].

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[16] Nonetheless, the Derg regime used to provide the literacy campaign via mother tongues, using 15 of the local languages (World Bank, 1990, p.112)

To conclude; teachers, curriculum and resources were placed at the centre of the strategies set to realise the purpose of education in the three regimes. They all aspired to recruit teachers/school leaders from able applicants, introduce a curriculum which is tailored to the country's context and to fulfil the resources which are needed to implement the reforms.

The other constituent which is common to all the regimes relates to the types of main actors in initiating the successive reforms. Our synthesis of previous researches, which are included in this SLR, shows donor agencies and policy elites pervasively dominating educational reforms since the time of its introduction. The continuous dominance of funding agencies and source nations is best described in sequence by Seyoum as ''first came the French, then British followed by Americans, then Russian and, now, indirectly through the World Bank, Americans once again."(2005, p.34).

Thus, during the imperial regime,the education system was dominated by western allies especially by experts from Europe and the USA (Tekeste, 1996). For instance, education and in particular curriculum construction, after the evacuation period, (1941) fell into the hands of British experts. Consequently, the curriculum including textbooks and the education structure used were that of the East African British colonies (Solomon, 2020).

During the Derg regime, the United States of America, one of the main partners in the development of the Ethiopian education sector during the imperial regime, was replaced by educational experts from Eastern Germany (Tekste 2006, p.18). ERGESE was financed by UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Swedish International Development Authority (Tekeste, 2006). Teachers, parents, and the society at large had no or at best an extremely limited voice (Mulugeta & Cloete, 2006; Mulugeta, 2011).

With regard to education reforms enacted during EPRDF, teachers from Addis Ababa and some regions of the country had participated in workshops organized on the draft ETP. Similar approaches were also followed in the successive reforms initiated to translate the policy (Seyoum, 2005; Genet, 2018). Nevertheless, researches show that little has been changed in the power relations between policy elites/donors and main stakeholders such as teachers. That is, the intent of inviting teachers and other stakeholders seemed more that of endorsement of the draft in its entirety but not its enrichment (Seyoum, 2005). Thus, it seems that funding agencies had more voices than main stakeholders in influencing post-1994 education reform. This can be confirmed by looking into the TESO document. Out of the 25 experts who drafted TESO document,11 were foreign experts (See MOE, 2003).

The influence of foreign actors in reforming education is best described by Solomon (2020) as follows: ''foreign educational advisories who were not conversant with the in-house organic nature of the country usually recommend irrelevant experiences to the country's educational practice [which] has led us to invest our meagre resources on areas which have little contribution to the advancement of the country's educational system.'' (p.21)

The resemblance of education reforms (thought/enacted) in priority areas, strategies, and main actors is best described by Mulugeta (2011) in the statement quoted below.

> The manner in which a group of expatriate and Ethiopian educators who drafted the Education Sector Review were assembled in 1972 (under Haile Selassie's Imperial regime) is as much the same as the one organized to draft the Evaluative Research of the General Education System in Ethiopia (ERGESE) in 1983 (Dergue regime) and the Education and Training Policy in 1993 (the current government) (p. 267)

It was not only the reforming approach but also were the constituents of the reforms under full control of the functioning government in the respective regimes. This is unique feature of the power-coercive strategy to reform in which practitioners are thought to be compliant subjects who should do what they are told to do under imposed sanction and control from government (Leana& Barry, 2000). Thus, the resemblance among the regimes in the above-mentioned constituent features of educational reforms ever tried in the history of Ethiopian Education might be due to the fact that the power-coercive strategy to change is almost in the DNA of each regime. The involvement of the same international actors from donor agencies might also be another reason for this resemblance. Severity of the poverty level in the country might also force the regimes not to initiate reforms which could properly respond to the needs of the society they had ruledover.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings derived from analyses of secondary data reveal that educational reforms enacted in the three regimes had little involved the voice of grassroot level practitioners. Instead, policy elites acting within the political circle dominated both initiation and institutionalisation of education reform ideas. In fact, the policy elites had continued suggestions from funding agencies such as theWorld Bank, UNESCO and USAID (Tebeje, 2013).

Despite the three regimes' seemingly incompatible ideologies, the prescriptive education reform tradition has been common to all whereby policy decisions from the national level are passed on to lower levels (Cerna, 2013) by government bodies or policy persons working on behalf of governments (Burch, 2007; Fullan, 2007; Hammond, 2012; Sikes 2014). This tradition might be thought by reform initiators to indoctrinate the regime's ideology. Nevertheless, too much prescription may develop a reluctant attitude and firm resistance among school level actors during implementation of the reforms as a result of the inadequate buy-in problem (Hargreaves, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2012). It may also force grassroot level implementers to experience what Fullan (2007) calls 'false clarity' which is a faulty understanding of a true character of the reforms.

Continuous dominance of funding agencies may decrease the relevance of the curriculum since text adopted from the source countries of funding agencies may not be compatible with the context of the country (Crossley & Watson, 2000; Tabulawa, 2013). The findings show different countries dominated modern education in Ethiopia; i.e., the French, British, USA, Russia and East Germany, for instance, were countries which influenced policy and programs including curricula (Tekesete, 1996; Seyoum, 2005). This has made the relevance of reforms inadequately tailored to the country's development needs.

With regard to the purpose of education each regime envisioned to realize, the variation among the regimes seem only in ideology each wanted to instil in the generation. Consequently, 'preparing the generation for a distant future' seem a commonplace of the three regimes. This shows that utilitarian conception of education was the philosophy adopted by all three of the regimes. Education, guided only by this kind of top-down transmission is the silent killer shutting down the inherent zeal of children towards learning (Darling-Hammond 2012, Senge et al., 2012). If reforming education is limited to preparing the generation for a distant future, as Sengeet al. (2012:25) note, ''the end result is a lack of motivation and engagement, waste of their potential and a diminishing of the contribution that they could make to society.''

A well thought educational reform gives space not only for economic value of education but also for other societal needs too. This is because of the fact that education, which is relevant for the 21st century, is defined in terms of four pillars namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Delorset al., 1996). Even the world of work that prevails in the 21stcentury necessitates autonomous thinking which is essential to adapt oneself in situation of rapid change. According to Mezirow (1997, p.8), education in the 21st century has to prepare a productive and responsible worker by empowering the individual to think as an autonomous agent rather than to uncritically act on prescribed ideas.The findings were contrary to this grand assertion; that is, education reforms initiated in the country in the eighty years overlooked change strategies other than the power-coercive one, and pillars of education other than preparation. This calls for rethinking of education and educational purpose (Wan & Gut, 2011) when reforming education which government provides. One possible suggestion to this could be, in addition to preparing the generation to a distant future, it is important to embrace essential needs of societies living in the century and not primarily for some future role they may or may not take in the adult world (Barnes, 2011).

The results also show that the three regimes resembled each other in the priority areas they aspired to address, the reform approach and voices valued. Analysis of reform documents such as prospective plans, proclamations, and policies which have been endorsed to direct the country's education help establish this similarity(Seyoum, 2005;Yodit, 2009; Mulugeta, 2011). Some of these issues seem competing goals which are difficult to achieve simultaneously. For instance, providing quality education for a huge number of children equitably may be hard to realise due to limited resources.This shows that a holistic view of addressing the priorities seems common to the three regimes. However, in countries where there is an acute shortage of resources, addressing all the priorities simultaneously appears difficult for a country like Ethiopia. Large scale evaluative researches undertaken to study the status of education in three of the regimes show the weaknesses of Ethiopian education in the last eight decades have been linked to these issues.To mention a few, meta-evaluative researches undertaken like ESR (1972), ERGESE (1986) and the ETP study (1993) reported problems related to access, equity, quality, relevance, and efficiency.The nationwide education research recently conducted to develop the country's education roadmap (2018-2030) also identified these priority areas as issues which need future action (MoE& ESC[17], 2018).

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[17] Education Strategy Centre

The strategies set to realise the goals of education in each regime also resemble one another and are directly or indirectly related to teachers, school administrators, curriculum, and resources. In other words, accomplishing the purpose of education is equated to recruiting qualified teachers and school administrators, quality curriculum, and resources. Of course, there is nothing wrong in prioritizing recruitment.But, bringing talented teachers/school administrators into the profession from the top tier, which each regime anticipated to accomplish, was unrealistic and not yet achieved.

Similarly, quality curriculum emerges from quality professionals who have, in fact, professional autonomy at the grassroots level. In the absence of such professionals, curriculum development falls by default into the hands of foreign experts who know little about the context where reformed curriculum is being implemented. This tendency may lead to problems related to relevance, a problem which has been experienced by the three regimes.It may also bring the forms and contents of education which a country provides under de facto subjugation of countries which give expertise support.

To sum up, though they differ in ideology, it seems to be beyond reasonable doubt that reforming education in Ethiopia in the last three regimes has shown little variation with respect to the reform approach they followed (top-down), their purpose of reforming education (preparation for the next stage of life), priority areas they aspired to address (access, equity, quality, relevance, & efficiency), strategies they set to materialise purpose (teacher, school administrator/leader, curriculum & resource) and actors they involved in successive reforms (little voice to grassroots level implementers). According to Resnick and Hall (1998), repeatedly reforming education using same assumptions and theories is the underlying reason behind the failure of successive reforms and suggested that "if today's reform goals … are to be met, the past procedures and theories and assumptions need to be changed (p.92)."This is partly because reforms across the three regimes seem to follow a supply driven model in which the main actors on the demand side (teachers, parents, students…etc) seem voiceless (Mulugeta, 2011). This is the typical feature of governments who embrace the power-coercive strategy to reform education (Chin &Bennes, 1994; Quinn &Sonenshein, 2008; Nickols, 2016; Hofman et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Studies show that the process of reforming education plays a decisive role for the success or failure of education reforms. Despite heavy criticisms which each regime against the regime that preceded it, the reform tradition seemed to continue to follow an 'opaque model'which is closed to the main stakeholders. The reforms which have been undertaken in the last three regimes, for instance, seem to overlook the voice of grassroots level practitioners and especially of teachers (minimum diversification of voices). This has led practitioners to develop either resistance or reluctance to the reform initiatives which later may lead them to create false clarity or lip service implementation depending upon the levels of coercion enforced by education authorities at the top. Thus, a shift of reform tradition from mere p**rescriptive** approach (**supply-driven**) to at least a blend of top-down and bottom up approach (supply-demand mix) seems essential so as to incorporate the voice of previously voiceless stakeholders and to create a fertile ground for implementation of the reforms. Creating space to try out school level reforms could also help grassroot level implementers adapt and localise nationwide education reforms.Moreover, the age-old domination of Western ideas

infiltrated through multilateral organizations on reforming the country's education needs serious attention and short-term and long-term strategies need to be designed to tailor education to the needs of the country.

The analyses reveal that preparing the generation for an unknown distant future seems to have been a common aim of reforming education over the last eight decades. But, in this dynamic world in which things are uncertain, knowledge and skills acquired today may be obsolete tomorrow. This seems contrary to the 2030 agenda that aims to connect education to sustainable development.That is, unlike the education reforms we reviewed, the goal of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is to transform life through education (UNESCO, 2015). To realise what has been planned in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), reformers need to frame the purpose of education in the country in a manner that maintains a fair balance between what education serves the generation for today and for tomorrow's needs.But, if the traditional 'distant future' continues as a theme, learners may lose the taste for what education is intended to be.

Access, equity, quality, relevance and efficiency have been priorities which the past three regimes had aspired to address and for which each regime had criticized its predecessor for not addressing the problems linked to these priorities. There is an educative lesson from past regimes that the rhetoric of addressing priorities simultaneously appears unrealistic. Thus, further prioritization needs to be an agenda that future education reforms should critically consider.Moreover, qualified teacher/school leaders, quality curricula, and adequate educational resources were taken as silver bullets for accomplishing the purposes which educational reforms of the past three regimes aspired to achieve. In particular, recruiting school practitioners (teachers & school leaders) from the top tier of students seems to have been a rhetoric common to all the regimes. Nevertheless, winning the war for talent seems an unrealistically hard to achieve plan for sectors like education. If it is to one day be realistic, given the existing school context, it seems difficult for this cohort to work happily. Thus, it sounds convincing to rethink the definition of talent which, in the current organizational learning literature, refers to ability to learn continuously.

Despite the three regimes' apparently contesting ideologies and different contexts, a common thread of change as imposed by diktat and non-recognition, indeed suppression of grassroot voices impeded the efficacy of their stated desire for change. To break from this tradition, a model and, indeed, culture of learning continuously must be nurtured, inculcated, brought to acceptance and celebrated. This would help practitioners effectively learn and further develop reforming ideas in the world of work and schools.It also necessitates that the reform process cultivates and includes the voices of all practitioners, learners and stakeholders crucially encouraging the freedom to initiate and try-out school-level reforms by grassroot level practitioners. Let the voices of the previously voiceless resound!

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