

***The Implementation of the Middle Level TVET Program in Addis Ababa:
The Case of Entoto TVET College & St. Mary's University College***

Antonios Philiche Babisso, St. Mary's Catholic School, P.O.Box. 28, Addis Ababa

Abstract

In the current Federal Republic of Ethiopia, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is regarded as a key national investment that focuses on the development of its citizens based on the principle of nation building. It is widely believed that the proper training of the youth with different levels of scientific and technical skills will contribute a lot in realizing the development goals of the country. To this end, currently, the government has designed and nation wide implemented the middle level TVET programs.

Since the introduction of these programs, however, people have been continuously questioning their effectiveness. This study attempts to analyze how these programs were implemented in Addis Ababa, by taking two purposefully selected TVET colleges: St. Mary's University College and Entoto TVET College. Besides, it also attempts to elucidate the major bottlenecks that hinder the quality of the implementation of its programs in Addis Ababa.

For the execution of the study, an instrumental qualitative case study design was employed. In this endeavor, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews and document reading. To secure the verbal data, both formal and informal in-depth interviews were conducted with students, teachers, academic deans, a vocational counselor and apprenticeship supervisors.

The data collected during the study revealed that the quality of the implementation of the program is affected by many factors related to the selection and placement of the students, the design and implementation of the curricula, and the reality of the graduates' unemployment possibilities in the country.

Consequently, it has indicated that the implementation of the program in these colleges was marked by the existence of: theory-laden instructions; relatively better implementation atmosphere in the private college; and lack of awareness of the stakeholders for effecting quality implementation.

Based on the findings of the study, some valuable suggestions were forwarded for those stakeholders who were frequently mentioned during the course of the study.

2. Background of the Study

The development of any country depends on the active and responsive participation of its population. Without having adequate workforce with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, one cannot imagine changes that lead to development in the social and economic sectors. Several educators claim that education is the cornerstone for any development. Tucker (1992) in Mekonnen (2004), for instance, writes, the quality of the economic performance of a country is a function of the quality of its human resources; and that, in turn, is a function of the performance of its education. While strengthening this, Atchoarena and Esquiu (2002), on their part, also contend that no country can give up training its young people because their technical skills are needed to increase productivity both in the formal and informal sectors of its economy. Therefore, it is justifiable that every government's economic development policy usually includes human resources development component, most of which will be realized through education in one form or another. Indeed, among the different categories of education it is the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) that is largely believed to determine the competitive strength of a country's productive workforce.

Technical and vocational education serves different purposes. Smith (1990:262) writes, it is used to: (a) provide skills and experience considered valuable by students; (b) facilitate the mastery of both non-vocational and vocational skills needed by students; (c) provide hands on learning opportunities; (d) provide curricula that are closely related to everyday life needs of students; and (e) serve as an alternative for potential school dropouts.

TVET offers a specific training in a particular vocation for ensuring the students' transition from school to the world of work.

In this regard, it is assumed to be the main means through which the youth are prepared for paid or unpaid employment; or for additional careers requiring other than a baccalaureates or advanced degrees (Bent & Kronenberg, 1966; Mesay, 2004; Smith,1990).

The current rationale for the indispensability of TVET rests on four arguments. McNeil (1996:332) indicated that first, it serves a national interest by (a) conserving and developing resources; (b) promoting a more productive agriculture, (c) preventing waste of human labor, and (d) helping to meet an increasing demand for trained workers. Second, it helps in realizing equity by helping the youth, the refugees and the hard-to-employ to find a place in the economy through training in general or specific occupational skills and the related work habits. And finally, it helps in facilitating the students' understanding about various issues related to society, technology, work, environment, and their own future career developments.

Modern TVET programs can be organized in either of two schemes: school-based and/or, enterprise-based TVET provision schemes. Comprehensive schools, polytechnic or general schools, special technical and vocational schools, and technical colleges are some of the types of institutions where school-based TVET programs are organized. On the other hand, enterprise-based TVET programs are usually organized in a dual system apprenticeship scheme or, in company-based post-employment on-the-job or off-the-job training schemes.

In recent years, private and enterprise-based TVET provision schemes are largely encouraged by many educators including the experts of the World Bank for providing quality and efficient occupational training. They are considered to be the most effective means of providing skilled labor with the qualification needed for employment, and for increased productivity. On the contrary, public and school-based TVET provision schemes are largely discouraged for being less-effective because: (a) they are considered to be less efficient in matching their training with the jobs available in the employment market, and (b) their programs are proved to be extremely costly.

In this regard, both the reports of the World Bank (1991) and ILO (1998) in Atchoarena and Esquiu (2002:45-46) recommended that private and in-plant provisions, rather than public and school-based ones help to boost quality in any TVET system.

Their reports suggested governments to play only a regulatory role in the supply of the TVET programs; rather than investing in their provisions.

In the years prior to the late 1990s, in Ethiopia, technical and vocational education received less attention. It generally used to occupy a small, if not a marginal position in the education system of the country. As one document of the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2002a) indicated, on average it used to occupy only 2% of the total secondary school student population in the years before 2001/2002. However, in recent years, the government has made immense efforts to design and implement a new school-based technical-vocational education and training (TVET) programs in various levels of its educational system. In this regard, it drafted a new Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994 which assures the introduction of an intensive TVET strategy. In its statement, the policy paper states, "Parallel to the general education, diversified technical and vocational training will be provided for those who leave school from any level of education" (ETP, 1994:6).

The primary objective of the new TVET programs in Ethiopia is to provide various skill trainings for the present and future labor force in order to adapt to the requirements of the labor market. To realize this objective, the technical and vocational education and/or training programs are organized in three different packages. These are: (a) basic vocational training programs- intended to provide crafts level training for people who dropout from the primary school level (in fact who have attained basic literacy); (b) junior technical and vocational training programs - intended to provide junior level technical and vocational trainings for the primary school graduates or secondary school dropouts; and (c) middle level technical-vocational education and training (TVET) programs-intended to provide education and training, perhaps for the general education graduates on grade 10, for the aim of producing a middle level technical workforce. The middle level TVET programs are further subdivided in to 10+I, 10+II and 10+III programs which eventually lead to a certificate standard I, certificate standard II, and college diploma qualifications, respectively (FNG, 2003).

The middle level TVET programs are organized in the separate TVET schools to function alongside with the academic upper secondary program.

The curricula of the middle level TVET programs provide different packages of courses that can be broadly classified in to three categories: Main courses, Supportive courses and Common courses. The main course packages provide a number of independently prepared modules of employable skills that are designed to train students to perform a certain duty under the prevailing conditions and established standards. They represent different occupations which in turn are further subdivided into different job categories; then into different duties; and finally into different tasks. The supportive courses are meant for help the acquisition of the knowledge and skills which are expected to be obtained from the main courses, while the common courses are designed in order to upgrade the trainees' academic competences that may help them in their future career advancement (Mekonnen, 2004; MoE, 2003). (See Appendix 4)

The implementation strategy of the middle level TVET programs, both in the government and private TVET institutions, is expected to follow a mastery-learning training strategy with a heavy emphasis on a practice-laden instruction. Their instructions are expected to be conducted through the use of three different instructional schemes: (a) in-school training scheme, which involves a 30% theoretical and 70% practical instruction; (b) project works; and (c) 'apprenticeship programs' - an internship like program that provides practical work experiences in different actual working sites for a period of not more than two months a year. It is usually carried out during the end of every academic year (MoE, 2003).

2. Purpose of the Study

The current Ethiopian government considers TVET as one of the core development strategies through which it believes to achieve social and economic prosperities for its citizens. Currently it is carrying out an intensive expansion and restructuring works in the sector in order to boost both quality and enrollment. The restructuring envisages the expansion of the intake through addition of new courses, institutions and rehabilitation of the existing ones, and increasing the entry opportunities into the programs.

As a result, the total enrollment, both in the government and private training institutions, is continuously increasing since 1994.

For instance, according to the Ministry of Education 2002 official report, (MoE,2002a), enrollment has increased from a total of 4561 students enrolled in only 13 governmental and 10 non- governmental technical and vocational schools in 1994, to 25,000 students enrolled in 126 government and 40 non-governmental TVET training institutions at the end of the year 2002. Similarly, in the year 2004/05, according to the other report of the Ministry, (MoE, 2005), there were 108 governmental and 91 non-governmental TVET schools in the country enrolling a total of 106,336 students in different training fields.

According to the Addis Ababa City Administration's Education Bureau 2004/05 Educational Statistics Annual Abstract (AAEB, 2006), there were a total of 579,337 students (296,286 males and 283,051 females) in the city attending different kinds of education and training programs ranging from the kindergarten to the TVET diploma level in different governmental as well as non-governmental institutions in the year 2004/05. From this total number of students in the city, 46,539 (8%) were attending the kindergartens, 392,328 (67.7%) the primary schools (grades 1-8), 83,899 (14.5%) the lower secondary schools (grades 9-10), 12,583 (2.2%) the upper secondary schools (grade 11-12), and 43,988 (7.6%) the TVET schools that provide trainings in 10+I, 10+II, and 10+III levels. As far as the shares of both the governmental and private institutions is concerned, from the total enrollment in the TVET sector, the share of the government institutions was 26,028 (59.2%) while that of the private institutions was 17,960 (40.8%). In the city, there were a total of more than 10 governmental and 58 non-governmental TVET institutions officially accredited to operate in the TVET sector.

From the total number of 35,917 students who completed general secondary education at grade 10 in the year 2004/05 in Addis Ababa, according to AAEB (2006), only 6,793 (18.9%), students were allowed to attend the college preparatory programs (grades 11-12). From the remaining 29,124 (81.1%), 26,440 (73.6%) have graduated with an official license to attend different middle level TVET programs, either in the governmental or non-governmental institutions. The remaining 2,684 (7.5%) left school without any type of official license to attend either academic or the middle level TVET programs both in the governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Meanwhile, among those who have been officially licensed to attend the middle level TVET programs, only 9,730 (36.8%) got the opportunity to join the governmental TVET institutions. Among those students who were assigned to different TVET programs, 3,785(38.9 %) were assigned to the 10 + I programs, 5,195(53.4%) in to the 10 + II programs, and only 750 (7.7%) to the 10 + III programs. From the total number of students channeled in to the TVET programs, the share of the female students was 5,881(60.4%).

Though the government is boosting; both in terms of enrollment and increased quality of the training from time to time, people are usually heard complaining about the effectiveness of the programs in preparing the trainees with the right skills that the labor market requires. They are also heard of criticizing the TVET institutions, both of the government and the private, for providing poor quality instructions. In this regard, I believe enough research works have not yet been conducted in the area, and therefore, I am afraid that these criticisms may hold true. I believe that the effectiveness of any TVET program should only be judged on the basis of appropriate critical researches conducted in relation to the various factors related to the issue of its implementation. And hence, it is this great intention that initiated me to conduct a critical case study research in the area of the quality of Ethiopia's TVET programs implementation in some selected colleges in Addis Ababa. And thus, this qualitative case study research was conducted for the purpose of:

1. Understanding how the process of the middle level TVET program instruction is going on in the TVET colleges in Addis Ababa. Specifically, the purpose is in the two selected TVET colleges' class rooms, workshops or laboratories, and apprenticeship program training sites;
2. Exploring the problems and addressing the challenges of the implementation of the programs with respect to: the organization of the training facilities; the selection and placement of the students; the organization of the training curricula; the competences of the training personnel; and the application of appropriate instructional methodologies.

3. Research Methodology

For the study, I used a qualitative research methodology because I found it a more appropriate approach to understand my research problem. I believe the interactions of

different actors in the process of bringing up quality in TVET instruction could only be deeply understood by using a qualitative inquiry rather than an ordinary quantitative approach.

3.1. The Research Design

For the execution of the study, I employed a case approach because I think it is the most appropriate for creating deeper insights on the issue of the process of the implementation of the TVET programs in the two institutions which I selected to conduct my research.

Besides, case study is useful when one needs to understand some particular situations in greater depth, and wants to analyze and explain it in a holistic manner (Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1987 in Mekonnen, 2004; Stake, 1995).

Educational researches place case study designs within the holistic tradition of scientific inquiry. According to the holistic research tradition, as Sturman (1994: 640) describes, the characteristics of a part are seen to be largely determined by the whole to which it belongs. The holists argue, understanding the parts requires understanding of their interrelationships, and accounts of wholes need to capture and express this holistic quality. With this understanding, I adopted a collective instrumental case study designed for this research (Stake, 1994:237), because I believe it is very difficult to understand the issue without considering its important sub-issues such as selection and placement of trainees, designing of curricula, preparation of training personnel, and the instructional approaches teachers use in the institutions.

3.2. The Research Settings

For conducting the study, I selected two TVET program implementing institutions in Addis Ababa: St. Mary's University College (from the private institutions) and Entoto TVET College (from the governmental institutions). While selecting the colleges, I used criteria such as ownership classification, relative academic strength, and similarity of programs that the colleges are currently running.

The St. Mary's University College is a privately owned college which was founded by an Ethiopian Entrepreneur, Wondwossen Tamrat (Assistant Professor), in 1998. Currently, it is running various educational programs in different parts of the country through three varied schemes: regular, extension and distance programs.

The educational programs offered in the University College include Degree programs in three different faculties (Business, Law and Informatics) specializing in areas of Accounting, Computer Science, Law, Management, and Marketing; 10+III diploma and 10+I/10+II certificate programs in the areas of Law, Accounting, Salesmanship, Information Technology, Secretarial Science and Office Management; and 10+III Teacher Education programs in the areas of Languages, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Civic and Ethical Education.

In Addis Ababa, the St. Mary's University College has a number of campuses among which the major ones are the ones that are located near the “Mexico square”, called the “Mexico Campus” and another at “Lideta” opposite the High Court, called the “Lideta Campus”. In the Mexico Campus, where I conducted my study, currently, in addition to the degree programs, TVET programs are given in five different training areas: Law, Accounting, Information Technology, Salesmanship, and Secretarial Science and Office Management for a total of 5,034 students (2,169 males and 2,865 females), both in the certificate and diploma levels. The training programs are executed by using 138 teachers, all of whom currently own a minimum of first degree qualifications.

The Entoto TVET College is one of the governmental TVET institutions in Addis Ababa. It was founded by the former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Silassie I, by the name “Teferi Mekonnen School” in 1924. The structure of the emperor is found in one of the college's old buildings, usually people call it, 'The Church' as evidence of the school's naming after the Emperor. However, since the former “Derg” regime, the structure is hidden from the scene its face roofed using a piece of cloth, and hanged at its neck by a rope.

Currently, Entoto TVET College is providing various kinds of TVET programs in 10+ I, 10+ II and 10 + III levels for a total of 2,285 students (1,039 males and 1,246 females). The training areas on which the college currently focuses include Construction Technology, Industrial Technology, Textile Technology, Hotel Services and Beautification, Business Education and Information Technology. From the total number of the students who are attending various trainings in the College's regular program in the current academic year (2005/06), 353 (15.5%) are pursuing their education in Industrial Technology, 348 (15.2 %) Construction Technology, 146 (6.4 %) Textile and Garment

Technology, 215 (9.4 %) Hotel Service and Beautification and 1,223 (53.5 %) Business Education and Information Technology. 68.5 % 25.4 % and 6.1% of the total number of students are enrolled in to the 10 +I, 10 +II and 10 + III programs, respectively.

The College is currently conducting the trainings by using 170 teachers (121 males and 49 females) from whom 54.5%, 42.3 % and 1.9 % are college diploma, B.A/B. Sc and M.A/M. Sc. degree holders, respectively. In addition, the college has a foreigner with a master's degree who is teaching information technology.

3.3. The Data Collection Strategies

During the course of undertaking the study, pertinent data were collected from the research participants by using the three commonly used methods of data collection in qualitative inquiries—observation, in-depth interviews and document reading. In this regard, a participant-observation technique was used for collecting the visual data from the two research settings while both formal and informal in-depth interviews were used to obtain verbal data from all informants, purposefully selected in order to participate in the research activity. The purposefully selected informants who have participated in the interviews include thirteen teachers (six from the SMUC and seven from Entoto TVET College); two management members from both colleges; fourteen students (seven from each college); and two apprenticeship program supervisors (one each from two apprenticeship providing enterprises). To supplement the visual and verbal data obtained from the observation and in-depth interviews, document reading was conducted.

In the study, I basically focused on describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting the situations which existed in the settings in relation to the implementation of the TVET programs in the colleges. Moreover, I tried to expound the major challenges and prospects of the implementation of the programs by making detailed observations in the classrooms, workshops and apprenticeship providing sites.

Besides, I have also conducted in-depth interviews with my research participants in order to find out their understandings and experiences on different issues bearing “why” and “how” questions.

3.4. Standard of Quality and Verification

In order to ensure trustworthiness while conducting this research, I made unreserved efforts in conducting intensive observations and interviews, spending an extensive time in the field; honestly conducted the overall research activities; and extensively triangulated both the different data sources (students, teachers, department heads, vocational counselors, apprenticeship supervisors), and data collection methods (observations, interviews, document readings) for achieving contextual validity (Sturman, 1994).

3.5. The Data Analysis Strategies

The qualitative data obtained from the study were analyzed by using analysis strategy, which incorporated the three commonly used steps: organizing raw data, analyzing the data by creating different categories and interpreting the qualitative data. Consequently, during the process, an inter-case analysis strategy was employed where the data obtained from the study were organized into 12 categories, which later (during interpretation) were reduced into three themes that signify my overall understanding of the issues raised in the course of the research activity.

4. Results and Analysis

In the following section, I have presented the findings obtained from the study in terms of 12 major themes related to the basic issues raised during the investigation. To meet this purpose, I have presented the details of the inter-case descriptions of all the issues investigated during the study in vignettes narrative form. Side by side to presenting the views of the research participants, I have also included my own subjective interpretations and understandings of the issues. While quoting the views of my research participants, I used only pseudonyms (fictitious names) in the whole part of the report where names are required.

4.1. TVET is not the Utmost Need of the Majority of Students

In any democratic society, individuals exercise full right in determining their own destinations and life goals. I understand that exercising such right is also important during

the time of making curricular choices as well. However, the research participants revealed that many students attending the TVET programs have not been allowed to choose the curricular paths of their preferences that may help them in designing their future careers. Many argue that they were simply channeled into the TVET programs without their consent.

Consequently, many complain that they were prohibited from reaching the limits of their capabilities because they believe they were not allowed to follow the paths of their choices, mostly the college preparatory program, which most of them desire (Wenrich, 1958).

TVET is not the utmost need of many students who are currently attending different training fields in both colleges. As many teachers and students believe, many students joined these programs because they were left with no other option. They assume that they have been told by the Ministry of Education that they have already lost their chances in grade 10 when they obtained lower results that could not qualify them for the preparatory schools. Many of them also believe that they were frequently informed that they cannot re-join the preparatory program, even if, in case, they improve their results by taking re-examinations. It seems it is this situation that created a huge negative impact on their psychological makeup in order to accept TVET as equally competent and possible alternative option to the college preparatory program.

This situation was clearly reflected by Dejene while he was describing his friend's and his first week experiences in the Entoto TVET College. He reported:

During the first few weeks after we joined the TVET College, all of us were not attending classes with full interests. Most of us have been dreaming to improve our results by re-taking grade 10 national examinations on a private basis so as to qualify for the preparatory program. We have been considering our TVET classes simply as a means of passing our times. We were not bothering about our results in the college. Of course, many of our friends dropped out their training because they felt that they were killing their times. They planned to give more time for their preparation to the grade 10 re-examinations.

That time, I myself was also willing to do the same. However, I gave up this plan because I heard the government's announcement that prevented myself and many others who have already scored 2:00 and above in the national examination from taking the re-examinations.

Of course, many TVET students have passed through such an experience when they were first assigned to these programs. During that first time when they were channeled into these programs, they felt very hopeless and struggled not to accept it as their only available option. As many teachers witnessed, this was the real situation that all new enrollees experienced in many colleges, especially in the government ones.

Many students do not still consider TVET as alternative way to build their future career. They are currently regretting for failing to enroll in the college preparatory program. They assume that if they had worked harder while they were in the lower grades, they could have joined the preparatory program.

They believe that the TVET programs they are currently attending are totally inferior to that of the preparatory program. Many of them still feel that they could have been very happy had they joined the college preparatory program instead of continuing in the TVET channel. In this regard, Redeat, one of my research-participants from the third year accounting class of Entoto TVET College, reiterated,

Even currently, if I get a chance of choosing between TVET and preparatory programs, without any hesitation, I will choose the preparatory program. Leave alone getting the chance to be directly enrolled into grade 11, I would have been very happy if I could have been allowed even to start from grade 9. I always regret that I didn't work harder while I was in grades 9 and 10. At this level, I feel very sorry, not for myself 'ሰብኛዎቼ' (i.e. for the one like me who experienced an obstacle), but for those grades 9 and 10 students who are not properly handling their golden chances not realizing what is awaiting them. If I were them, I would work very hard. I don't want any one to experience what I did.

Here I feel describing Elshaday (from Entoto TVET College) and her friend's experience could strengthen the point more about the psychological position of most of TVET attendants. Elshaday has a close friend who has currently joined the medical faculty of Addis Ababa University after completing preparatory program in one of the schools out of Addis Ababa. When both of them were attending one of the Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa, they had almost equal performances.

Of course, in some subjects Elshaday was slightly superior to her friend. Evidently, both scored equal grades in the national examinations. However, Elshaday had better performance in Chemistry and scored a 'C' while her friend scored an 'F'. Nonetheless,

during the time when both of them were not allowed to follow the preparatory program in Addis Ababa, her friend was sent to one of the preparatory schools in regional states where she was allowed to join a preparatory program. On the contrary, however, Elshaday's parents didn't allow her to do so. Instead of her friend's continuous persuasion to go together to the region, Elshaday refused and finally joined this program in Entoto TVET College. While explaining her current position, she said,

Now, I am a third year accounting student in this college, while my friend is a Medical student in Addis Ababa University. I always regret that I could have gone to the region together with my friend in order to join the college preparatory program. 'ይህ ዕድሜ ልኩን የሚፀፀተኝ ነገር ነው' i.e. this is the matter on which I regret for age-long.
I never forget the mistake I committed in my whole life. 'ምን ያደርጋል የፈሰሰ ውሃ አይታፈስ' i.e. to say let bygones be bygones. Now I understand what losing such a chance means .

One of the major factors that influenced the students to prefer preparatory program to the TVET program is the image that the public has. Nowadays, the public tends to consider technical and vocational education at the secondary level as less important and usually inappropriate for students with remarkable performance (Brooking, 1971). Describing the problem of the public image in the current TVET program, Tekle, one of the teacher-participants from Entoto TVET College, said,

One major challenge of the current TVET program is the public's distorted image about its programs. The public tends to consider this program as not worthy as the college preparatory program. Both the students and the parents do not accept the new TVET program as one important category of education. It is very common to see most of the students paying only little attention, if not none, for their TVET training. I understand that most of them are currently attending classes because they hold their own justifications that they consider the training only good for passing their times. 'ትምህርቱን አንደመዋያ ነው የሚቆጥሩት::'

Here from Tekle's report, one can understand that the students are not attending their TVET training lessons with an optimal motivation. They are psychologically discouraged by the presence of a negative image that the public has about the TVET program.

Even though it is not only unique for Ethiopia (King, 1994), the problem of this distorted image of our public towards TVET, is highly aggravated by the Addis Ababa Education Bureau's practice that reflects this notion by streaming the grade 10 graduates in to two

distinct curricular paths mainly depending on their academic achievements. As far as the Bureau's experience is concerned, it usually streams students who have better performance in general secondary examination of grade 10 into the college preparatory program whereas it streams those who scored lower results in to the TVET track.

However, here it is that there is no evidence that the Bureau has prohibited those high achieving students from joining the TVET program. And hence, you can understand that it seems it is this public's distorted image that influenced the students from joining these programs.

Many teachers, however, believe that this distorted image of the public about TVET programs could have been reversed if the 'old days' experience had been allowed to continue as far as the streaming of the students into different curricular paths is concerned. Here, when I am mentioning the term 'old day practices', I am referring to the former experience of placing students into different streams, in fact after grade 10, before the realization of the new educational policy in 1994. In the 'old days practice', students had been streamed into different curricular paths, basically depending on their interests and performances. Consequently, in those days most of the outstanding students from every corner of the country were allowed to compete for few spaces available in the TVET schools. Indeed, because of such an enrollment strategy, as many teacher-participants believe, there was a huge competition between outstanding students drawn from the whole nation. Lemlem, one of the teacher-participants from Entoto TVET College, described those days' experience to be enrolled in TVET programs as the most competitiveness ones. 'በከፍተኛ ሽግግ ውስጥ ነበር።'

Actually, on the issue of enrolling only low achievers into the TVET programs, there exist two distinct paradoxical arguments. On one hand, there is an argument that in any democratic society citizens should be allowed to fully exercise their rights in making their own life choices, including making decisions about their curricular paths.

On the other hand, there is also an argument that there exists a legitimate mandate for any government to plan its human resource development strategy in line with the needs of its economy, which in turn requires the government to produce prospective workers with diversified skills to meet the demands of the labor market. In this regard, I think, the

often forgotten question is that of balancing these two arguments so that making decisions about which group of students - low achievers or high achievers - should be given priority to be enrolled into which curricular path - the college preparatory or the TVET.

The other major factor that contributed for the distorted image of the public towards TVET seems the inadequacy of vertical permeability of the program itself. The current TVET programs' tendency to lead the majority of the students (more than 90% of the graduates) into dead ends, as far as higher education is concerned, has created a huge negative image in the public. I think it might be very logical for the public to consider these programs as not equally important as the academic ones in the presence of such a situation where their programs tend to stop most of the youngsters' educational career at only 10+III level (Atchorena & Delluc, 2002). In this regard, I think, Mengistu's argument deserves attention. Mengistu, one of the participants from the SMUC College's management noted the situation as 'ማንም ልጁ ከማንም ልጅ እንዲያንስበት አይፈልግም' i.e. to say that "No one wants his child to occupy an inferior position in the society."

4.2.2. Being Looked Down upon by the Society

In any modern society, the main source of power for most people is their occupation because their occupation is usually their main source of income and status. People's vocations serve as functional factor in determining their contribution to the society and hence, in no small measure, their social position (Lipsmeir and Schroeder, 1994; Locan, 1994). In our society, especially in the urban areas, people usually position educated persons at the top of the society. In our communities as well many give higher societal ranks for persons who are better educated. Evident that, there is a proverb saying 'የተማረ ይግደላኝ', i.e. to say 'I would prefer even to be killed by the educated!' to express the utmost confidence they have on educated people.

In the current Addis Ababa Education Bureau's practice of streaming the graduates of general secondary schools into TVET and college preparatory programs, many people including teachers and students have many complaints.

According to my research participants, streaming the grade 10 graduates into TVET and college preparatory programs is not a question of assigning students into different curricular streams for the aim of shaping their future lives in an effective direction, rather it is a matter of delegating different prestigious ranks to different groups of students vis-à-vis the tendency of not accepting the inferior ones (Lazerson et al., 1985). People usually consider the streaming of a student into the TVET path as a rejection of that student from the society's higher rank, his/her belongingness to the educated community.

They show a tendency of following our community's peculiar principle of 'ከማን አንሹ' i.e. 'I should not remain inferior' when they themselves or their children are found channeled into the TVET path.

The basic problem of the current TVET program is the inferior image its programs have in the society. It is usually considered by the public as delegated to a lower ranking people (Abraham, 1995; Brooking, 1971, Wenrich, 1958).

In Addis Ababa, the present image of the program in the eyes of the public usually causes psychological troubles to those who are channeled to the TVET. Sometimes this mistreating of the TVET students may go as far as to an act of 'stigma and discrimination' in Roza's wording. Roza, one of the student-participants from SMUC claims she has been frequently facing such an act of mistreating. She reported one among many of her experiences as,

One day, I was traveling to my school by a taxi, carrying two voluminous books. Together with me were three boys in the taxi, seated one in front of my seat and two of them by my side. They have been engaged in a hot discussion, to which one of them has invited me later. I was very happy to accept his invitation and joined them eventually. Unfortunately after few minutes when we approached to Sidist Killo campus, one of them said to me, 'Now you are approaching your school where you are going to depart us, . . . ,' hoping that I was a university student. I replied, 'Oh! I am not leaving here because I am not learning at Sidist Killo campus but attending TVET program at Entoto College.

Do you imagine what happened? Roza continues:

'ወዲያው ነበር ስሜቱ የተቀየረብኝ' i.e. his feeling towards me automatically changed. 'አንደወራሪ ነበር የቆጠረኝ' , i.e. he considered me as an insane. Do you know how people feel if you carry bigger books? Definitely, for sure they become confident that you are a university student.

Here from Roza's experience one can imagine that how TVET students are treated by different people in the society. Many don't consider them as attending an important category of education that requires even reading. Just like that stranger boy in the taxi, many consider that the only person who carries voluminous books is a university student. Of course, this sort of tendency to looking down the TVET student is not unique to only Roza. It is common for the majority of the students as well. Teferi is one of the student-participants from Entoto TVET College who experienced such a disregard. He reported one of his incidents as:

One day I went to Addis Ababa City Hall Library. While studying in the library, seated by me was a grade 10 student. In an occasion, he asked me where I was learning. When I answered that I was learning at Entoto TVET College, he automatically said to me, 'ሙያ ይጠናል እንዴ?' i.e. does TVET requires studying? When I replied to him 'yes', he started to feel that I have cheated him. By carefully observing his situation, I said to him, 'ተጠንቀቅ እንዳይደርስብህ!' i.e. be careful, it might also happen to you. This is one example of my day-to-day experience with many people in our society.

The tendency of looking down the TVET students is also visible in their families. Sometimes, parents as well as relatives of these students also hurt them unintentionally. Elshaday is one among such students who experienced a more challenging mistreatment from her family members. While explaining how she was wrongly treated at home, she reported,

Sometimes, even in my own family, when I tell my brothers and sisters that I want a quiet time in order to study, they always assume that I am simply joking. 'በቃ የማሻፍ ነው የምመስላቸው::' No one wants to recognize how much I am working hard in order to copeup the demands of my subject of study. Currently, even my mother has started to respect my friend more than myself, just because she is a university student. She has started to dignify her more than she dignifies me. How can I expect the other people to respect my education where my own mum is degrading it? This society, including my own family members, is segregating us by considering that we, the TVET students, are null minds. 'ባይ ጭንቅላቶች እንመስላቸዋለን::'

This tendency of looking down upon of the TVET students is not only limited to their friends and family members. It is commonly experienced in areas where educated people are found as well. Many educated people, including teachers, usually don't consider TVET as equally important as academic education.

Kasech is a student of SMUC who has experienced such a strong challenge when she was sent by her Civic Education teacher to Addis Ababa University in order to refer to a book in one of the libraries of the university. While reporting what happened to her and her friends in one of the libraries in the University, she said,

I never forget two of the incidents where we were wrongly treated in the Addis Ababa University. The first one was the case of a university student who insulted us by saying, ‘የደንቆሮ ት/ቤት ተማሪ ናችዋ!’ i.e. oh! You belonged to the school of the ignorant. The second one was the case of a librarian who told us, ‘it is forbidden to discuss in the library; if you lost the location of your school, let the gate keepers show you! This place doesn’t belong to students like you!’ Mind you, that librarian assumed that we were not students in his term. Even he believed that we didn’t know what a library means. ‘ላይብረሪ ምን እንደሆነ የማናውቅ ሁሉ መስሎታል::’

In some occasions teachers and educators also tend to look down the TVET students and their teachers. One very interesting experience that shows how TVET teachers are wrongly treated by their colleagues and institution leaders was the one I encountered in the St. Mary’s University College. In the St. Mary’s University College, TVET program and degree program teachers are categorized in to two separate and distinct groups. Having similar qualification, those who were assigned into the TVET program were required to teach 20 periods per week whereas those assigned to the degree program 15 periods per week. Even though the administration claims that the classification was done on the basis of the experiences of the teachers, many of those teachers assigned to the TVET program category do not accept this reasoning. They argue that it is totally unfair to group teachers having the same qualification, work experience and performance efficiency into different positions that have varying benefits. While explaining how teachers reacted to this, Aselefech, one of the teacher-participants from the TVET teachers category said,

All teachers didn’t understand why they did this. No one of us is convinced by their policy either. This is one of the burning issues in this college which tends to force those who are currently assigned in the TVET programs to search for their appropriate places elsewhere. It has highly affected our motivation. The policy has highly influenced all of us to feel that we are inferior in our abilities compared to our friends who are assigned to the other tracks. I think the college is unintentionally discouraging us.

We can understand from the above description that the administration tends to favor the degree program and the teachers in them.

It didn't consider TVET as equally important and demanding as it gave higher impetus to the degree programs. That was why, Nardos, one of the teacher-participants forwarded her desire "I always want to teach in the degree programs, not in the TVET. In order to be qualified for teaching in the degree program, currently I am working very hard to produce the required few years TVET experience. When you teach in the degree program only little effort is usually required from you."

One thing which all of the participants, both students and teachers, underscored was that no one takes inferiority for granted.

Hence, I consider it is very natural to these youngsters to react against accepting their inferiority, being channeled in to the TVET programs, according to their term.

4.2.3. Many Students are not Placed According to Their Interests

The planning of an effective TVET program needs to take into account and balance the legitimate interests of three groups: the state, the employers and the students. It should consider the interests of the state because the state has the right to set policy on the basis of the needs of the whole economy, both now and for the foreseeable future, and all individuals in the society should be expected in any mature democracy. It should also consider the needs of the employers because they have the right to expect competent people to enter into employment in order to meet the skills their businesses need. However, these needs of the state and the employers should consider the needs of the individuals to be trained in different vocations. Individuals have the right to equality of access to various educational programs and have the right to develop their fullest potential so that they can exercise choice (Mansfield & Mitchell, 1996). However, this right of individuals should be served in line with the government's human resource development strategy which is often designed based on the needs of a country's economy for particular skills as well as the financial capacity of the government.

The practice of placing TVET students in to different training areas in Addis Ababa, of course, according to my research participants, didn't balance the needs of these three groups. It seems it highly favored the needs of the state, and mostly ignored the needs of the most crucial groups, the individual students. As far as the placement of the TVET students into different training areas is concerned, both the private and public colleges practice different experiences.

In the public college (Entoto TVET College), many students were placed in training areas which didn't represent their interests and aptitudes, while in the private colleges (St. Mary's University College) all the students were placed into different available training fields according to their own interests. However, in this respect, both the colleges have their own shortcomings to place their students according to their interest and aptitudes. In Entoto TVET College, even though there were diversified training fields, many students were not able to get their choices.

In St. Mary's University College, on the contrary, though the students were given free choices to choose and enter different training areas, there were only few training fields available in the college to satisfy the demand of all the students with diversified interests.

The placement of students into different training fields in Entoto TVET College was undertaken by the Addis Ababa City Government Education Bureau on the basis of the choices that the students made prior to their placement. During the placement of the students, the college had no role to play. Its administration was not even allowed to re-assign a student who was wrongly placed into another field even if there was a vacant place in the area of his/her interest. Tekle reported:

I doubt that most of the students are placed according to their prime choices. It is very common, for instance, in our college to get a student who is highly interested in electricity, but placed in woodwork or cookery. In some cases, we exchange some students between different training fields. However, we don't have a mandate to totally change the assignment but it is only possible to exchange with an assigned student to another field.

From the statement above, we can understand that the administration of the public colleges do not have any need-based criteria to assign their students in the available areas according to their interests and aptitudes.

In these colleges, during placement of students priority is usually given to the bureau's needs, by de-emphasizing the needs of the students. Thus, in this college the students are usually placed in training areas which don't represent their interests. Araya, one of the teacher-participants from Entoto College reported:

Let me tell you one interesting experience in this college. One day I met our college's Textile Technology trainees outside their classrooms and asked them why they left their class.

Some of the boys from the group answered, 'አኛንም አንደሌቶቹ ሹራብን በኪሮኸ መሥራት ሊያስተምሩን ይሻሉ አንዴ?' i.e. do they expect to teach us knitting just like the girls?

They told that they have continuously begged the college's administration to allow them learn at least any one of the fields which they consider the 'boys skills'. They realized me that they have finally decided not to attend the 'Textile' classes unless the college responds to their requests.

Even though the bureau claimed that it has made unreserved efforts to assign the students into the fields of their interests, both the students and teachers did not trust it. Many believe that the bureau was not able to consider the students' choices which they made prior to their assignment.

They assume that the forms, which they filled in for competing for places in different training areas, were not properly considered during their assignments. Redeat, added, "I believe they didn't consider our papers on which we marked our choices.

I tell you, many of us were assigned to the fields which we didn't choose." In the same vein, Gezmu, a teacher-participant from Entoto College asks, "How could a student lose every one of his/her five choices he/she made while these education bureau's experts assign him/her? I don't understand why these people working in the bureau ask the students to fill in the forms if their papers are not properly considered during their assignments. I think it is a nonsense task."

In the government college, many students were observed unwillingly attending their classes. They argue that they attend these training areas in which they were not interested in because of their families' weak economic background to afford for the private colleges. Teferi, said,

I am attending this field because I cannot go to one of the private colleges as many of my friends did because my parents cannot afford it.

Sometimes I try to convince myself by saying 'what can I do? This is the only chance I have!' 'ራሴን በጣም አሳምኜው ነው 'ፐርፔኪንግ' እየተማርሁ ያለሁት' i.e. it is after convincing myself that I am currently learning 'purchasing'. I always try to give false promise for myself that I will be obtaining a competitive college diploma in the near future. I tell myself, when I have a diploma, I will have equal status with all my friends, even with those who are currently attending the private colleges.

Contrary to the Entoto TVET College students, students of the St. Mary's University College were assigned into different fields of their interests based on their own wills. In the SMUC, all the students exercise their fullest rights to pick whatever they believe it fits their interests. The college's administration doesn't suppress any student during placement. However, the only thing that limits their choices is a less diversified field in the college, because the college has only few training fields on which the students decide their choices.

4.2.4. I Am Here Due to Lack of Proper Information

Any activity requiring decision-making should be guided by accurate information. When students make curricular choices, they should be based on full and accurate information. If they were not given full detail about curricular choices, their placement may not reflect their true preferences (Rosenbaum, 2002). Many of my research participants revealed that many TVET students in Addis Ababa have made their curricular preferences without having appropriate information about most of the fields which were included in the preference lists.

What many students usually did when they made their choices was randomly selecting five alternatives, which they considered might be better for their future careers. As Dejene said, “በመላ ሞልተን በአዕ ሰጥ እናገኛለን”, i.e. we fill it in by wild guess and we take it for granted.”

The degree of being informed varies in both colleges. In government owned Entoto TVET College, students did not receive any type of proper orientation or career counseling services before or after they have been enrolled into the programs. The only sources of information for these students were their friends, families or senior students. In many of the cases, it was surprising that one can get a student who has no knowledge about his/her training field before attending classes in the college. While explaining her condition during her assignment in to TVET, Elshaday said,

When I was first assigned to this program, I didn't have any information about TVET that I considered it as a type of training given only for those who need to be physical laborers. I didn't know that it is also used to train people for jobs that require mental abilities.

Frankly speaking, I was not totally interested in joining the TVET institutions. However, gradually, after realizing that even some of the fields in TVET also exist in the universities, I started to change my mind.

In some instances, TVET students have suffered from lots of psychological stresses because they were not given any appropriate prior orientations by the responsible bodies. Solomon, one of the student-participants from SMUC said,

When we joined this college, we felt very hopeless. Before joining the programs, no one made us psychologically ready. In our first week exposure, we felt very miserable and everything was like a hell for us. The information we were given before joining the program was very upsetting. Many people continuously informed us that TVET is very much inferior to the academic program. They similarly informed us that TVET is a program for only low grade achieving students. Based on these negative opinions, we were looking at the college as a prison. ‘ሰተወሰነ ጊዜ ሁላችንም በፊታችን ላይ ሀዘን ይነበብን ነበር’ i.e. All of us experienced a sense of grief for a limited period of time for joining this program.

Due to lack of formal orientation or career counseling service organized by accountable bodies, the choices of the students were based on wrong information. Samson was one of the second year drafting field students whom I met in Entoto TVET College when I was conducting an informal discussion together with many of his friends.

While explaining his reaction after he heard his assignment from a friend, he said, “እኔ መጀመሪያ ድራፍቲንግ ተመደብክ ብሎ ንደኛዬ ሲነግረኝ ድራፍት ቀጂነትን የምሠለጥን መስሎኝ ነበር” i.e. when my friend told me that I was assigned to the drafting field, I assumed I would be learning how to serve draft beer for customers.

In some cases, students were wrongly guided to choose wrong training fields in which they were not interested to build their future careers. The other student, Teferi also reported:

Some students, for instance, chose the ‘Hair dressing’ field because they hate attending academic subject classes, especially English. But when they started classes and eventually when their English teacher made his appearance, they automatically started to regret for choosing such a field on the basis of false information that promised them they would be exempted from learning English if they chose such a field. I know many friends who appreciate if they become accountants but chose other fields because they were misinformed that ‘Accounting means Mathematics’. If you ask most students in this college, I am sure, you will get a similar answer : ‘If I could have been appropriately informed, you could have not found me here.’”

In this regard, Entoto TVET College had no experience of conducting formal career counseling for its newly allocated students. The students were not given any formal information about the nature and the future scenario of those fields into which they were admitted. According to Girma, a teacher-participant, the situation is described as follows: “Sometimes it is common to encounter some students who argue that training is not required for purchasing items. Explaining the complication of things in his college, Alemayehu, a teacher-participant from Entoto TVET College said

I haven't ever seen a vocational or career counseling as well as orientations given for any newly assigned TVET student in our college. Here things are very complicated. The situation is like ‘የትኩስ ድንች ጨዋታ ነው::’ (i.e. to say, it is like the hot potatoes game). I throw it if by chance it hits someone in the crowd. It is a matter of throwing the blame from your shoulders. The students don't know for what purpose we are preparing them. I don't either understand what purpose I am preparing them for. ‘እዚያም ያሉት ወደዚህ ይጥሉ-በሃል፣ እዚህም ያለው የተቻለውን ያደርግና ይጥላቸዋል፣ በመሀል ልጆቹ ይጎዳሉ’ i.e. the officials throw them to us; we also do the same after we tried to help them as far as we can and finally the students will be victims.

Of course, in my view, throwing the blame only to the government and the schools at different levels is wrong from different points of view. I think it is logical that the parents should also take the blame equally, because they did not fulfill their due responsibilities of guiding and showing the right directions for their children.

Similarly, students themselves should be also accountable to shoulder the blame because, I feel, it is their responsibility to inquire about different possible options on which to build their future careers.

In contrary to the Entoto TVET College, students in St. Mary's University College are usually given orientation services before they start classes.

In fact, when the students make their choices, they are mostly assisted by the information they get from their friends, senior students or their parents. After getting registered in the fields of their preferences, however, the college organizes an intensive orientation program for all the students, irrespective of their backgrounds. To this end, the college usually gives an intensive orientation for all students that it enroll into diverse fields. This orientation program, which lasts for one solid week, mainly focuses

on four issues: the explanations of each field's merits and demerits, orientation about the overall working principle of the colleges' each unit, the rights and responsibilities of the students, and guidance on the study strategies for the students. At the end of this weeklong orientation, the college gives some chances for those students who want to change their former choice of training fields.

4.2.5. Teachers Always Demand for More Talented Trainees

There is a common understanding between educators that any effective TVET training is organized on a solid foundation of general education. It is indisputable that those students who have strong background in general education compete better than those without. Actually, this argument is clearly reflected by many specialists in the area of vocational education (Atchoerena & Delluc, 2002; Lazerson et al., 1985; Rumberger, 1994). As most teacher-participants revealed, many TVET students in Addis Ababa have poor academic backgrounds. Lemlem, a teacher participant from Entoto TVET College reported;

It is unquestionable that our students' academic background is not good. As far as their achievement is concerned, many of our students are low-grade achievers in their general secondary education.

They were channeled into this program because they are unfit for the preparatory program. 'ጥሩ ውጤት የነበረው ልጅ እኔ አላውቅም!' i.e. I never and ever encountered a student with high achievement in my experience in this college.

As it has been already said elsewhere in this paper, the education Bureau has mainly channeled students with low academic backgrounds to the TVET program. Even though, this practice of streaming of only low achieving students in to TVET is not unique to Ethiopia, it has created some problem in the teaching-learning process because many of these students are currently struggling to cope up the demands of the training. The teacher-participant Hassen, who teaches in the secretarial science in SMUC reported:

Our students are very poor in English and mathematics. I know most of them fail in my tests because they don't understand what I ask in my tests. Sometimes students who fail to answer some silly questions come to me and say, 'እንዲህ ማለቱን ባውቅማ ኖሮ አልሰሳትም ነበር' i.e. If I understood that your question meant like that, I could have answered it properly.

Many teachers prefer the restoration of the former TVET program and they believe that the former TVET program was more effective than the current one in its students' performances.

They argue that in the former program, where only few selected high achieving students from all over the country get enrolled into the TVET program, the performance of the students was better. On the contrary, as they stress, the students' performance in the current TVET program is relatively lower because only low-grade achieving students are channeled into the programs unwillingly without their consent.

Of course, teachers cited three reasons for the high performance of the former program students as compared to the current ones. First, in the former program, the students have been highly motivated because they were assigned to their fields of training with their own interests. Second, in the former program, because TVET was not left only for low-grade achievers, high-grade achieving students were selected to join the program carefully. Third, in the former program, TVET was not covered at the top like the current one, where the vertical permeability of the program is very limited for the majority of the students.

4.2.6. Consensus has not been Yet Reached on the Issue of Students' Maturity

Maturity of the students was one of the most dubious issues that were frequently raised by the research participants. It divides the teacher-participants into two groups: advocates of the current practices of recruiting grade 10 graduates into TVET and others advocating for more matured trainees to be enrolled in the TVET program.

The foremost arguments that the former group recurrently raised were the issues of current practices being cost effective by reducing the longer school year from 12 years to 10 years, and the example of the effectiveness of the former program that takes students for TVET right from grade 10. In support of the first argument, Tekle said,

I support the current policy of enrolling grade 10 graduates into TVET because previously after graduating from grade 12, the graduates were not given any kind of training opportunities.

They were left unfit for most of the jobs. In the current policy, however, for the students who perhaps cannot go to the colleges, this is a great opportunity. '12ኛ ድረስ አስለፍተኋቸው ከወደቁ በኋላ ወደሌላ ከማድረግ ይልቅ 10ኛ ላይ ስትረማቸውን እንዲለዩ ማድረግ ጥሩ ነው' i.e. instead of aimlessly carrying on all the students until they fail in grade 12, it is better to help them identify their

stream in grade 10. In this regard, compared to the previous one, the current TVET practice is more cost effective.

Similarly, in favor of the other argument of this group, Hirut from SMUC said,

Personally, I believe the issue is not about whether the students start TVET at grade 10 or 12. It is about their assignment unwillingly into different curricular tracks. I believe that if the students are willingly assigned to TVET even after grade 10, as it has been the same in the formal program, this program could have been also very successful. But now the practice is very unfair that only low-grade achieving students are placed in to TVET without their consent, even without giving them the proper orientation.

One can understand from these arguments that teachers who reflect this view believe it is not the age that matters but it is the students' assignment procedure that highly influences the effectiveness of TVET program. According to the supporters of this view, if students are assigned in to different curricular paths on the basis of their interests, irrespective of their academic backgrounds, they will be more motivated to learn the skills and eventually will perform better (Ammons & Ammons, 1958). Therefore, they say that if these two conditions are improved, assigning students into different fields without considering their interests and tracking of only low-grade achievers into TVET programs, the current practice of streaming grade 10 graduates into different curricular paths will be fruitful.

On the contrary to those who support the current practice of enrolling grade 10 graduate into TVET, teachers demanding more matured trainees argue that the major weakness of the current TVET program is its practice of enrolling less matured students who are highly disinterested in the training programs.

Explaining how intense the problem of immaturity in the existing TVET students of grade 10, Gezmu, one of the teacher-participants said,

‘እነዚህ እኮ ገና ክፍል ወስጥ መበጠጠጥ የሚያምራቸው ትንንሽ ልጆች ናቸው’ i.e. These are small kids who still enjoy making fun in the middle of your lessons. They are not mature enough to make wise decisions about their future career. Therefore, I personally prefer students who will be enrolled into TVET be at least grade 12 graduates. I think grade 12 graduates are mature enough to make wise decisions concerning their educational endeavors. But, in the case of grade 10 graduates, as I have observed, they are not mature enough to decide on what their future fate will be.

Strengthening the above argument, the other teacher in the field, Girma, also stresses on the issue of the immaturity of the students and explained how it influences the process of training by describing his own experience both in the first and third year classes in Entoto TVET College that have both relatively less matured and more matured students respectively. He said,

Oh! You face a great challenge when you teach the first year classes. ‘አንደኛ ዓመት መሥራት ፍዳ ነው!’ i.e. it request a hard toil to teach the 1st year classes. The greatest challenges I faced in these classes are drawing students’ attention to the subject matter and convincing them to accept the reality. ‘ልጆቼን በውትወታና በልመና ነው የምታስተምራቸው’ i.e. teaching the first year students requires patiently begging and continuously advising them. It demands a lot to make them psychologically ready.

Maturity of students streamed into this field is stressed because the choice being made is a life choice and it needs critical thinking not only once but many times. It also needs the decision and consultation of many since these people are under deciding age. It should be seriously noted that the majority of these students are at the ages of 15 or 16 when they complete grade 10. Asselefech is one of the teacher-participants who also supported the views of those who demanded more matured students into TVET. While favoring their views, she said,

I don’t think our current 10+I students are mature enough to be employed in any organization after they graduate in the next few months time. At this level, I know, their intention is not learning for employment. For them it is a mating period, which the TVET policymakers didn’t understand. The desire of the youngsters at this stage is to play, enjoy and interact with their friends, not intentionally learn to be employed. Frankly speaking, If I were an employer, I would not employ them because they are not mature enough to shoulder any responsibility.

As people grow older, they are given more responsibilities and are trusted. Many countries experience also shows that people are able bodies to be given responsibilities when they are above the age of 18.

These students, especially those who graduate at 10+1 are immature to take any relevant responsibility. Asselefech strengthened her argument by presenting her own exposure as follows:

For me maturity in age matters a lot. What I used to think when I was in grade 10 was very much different from that of grade 12. When I was in

grade 10, I didn't even have a faintest idea what I was learning for. I think I did that because I was very much interested in pleasing my parents. On the contrary, when I was in grade 12, I was doing every thing because I had already designed a concrete plan for my own future life.

Here comparison between some mature students who came from former grade 12 and those that directly joined the program is worth considering. In further justifying the importance of maturity level of the students, Asselefech continued:

Among my most outstanding students, the majority are those who have former grade 12 backgrounds. My students who have grade 10 backgrounds are usually not hard-working. They have no insights and aims for their learning 'በዙዎቹ መግባር ስላለባቸውና ቤተሰብ ስለሚጠይቁት የመጡ ናቸው' i.e. most of them are forced to attend classes because their parents demand that.

Many substantiate the idea raised above. Many TVET program teachers complain that the students in this stream are by far immature and are restless to follow such a vocational education in concentration.

Among the proponents of maturity, Hassen's experience is also similar to Asselefech's argument. He also explained the magnitude of variation in performance of students who came from grade 12 as follows:

To disprove the argument of those who support the current TVET, in my experience, most of the time the most successful students in my subject are those who are usually matured age wise. Because they are more matured, they are more conscious about their time, money and education as compared to those who are relatively less matured. I see most of the time the youngsters, especially those who came from grade 10, are very much bored and have developed negative attitudes towards their training. In most cases, because they are not matured enough, they incline towards making funs, entertain each other, and they give less attention for their training.

The question of maturity is not that of teachers only – many people in these colleges' management also tended to favor the TVET training after completing grade 12.

I think this seems a more convincing approach that needs attention. Here the argument of this group sounds very logical that I, myself even do not understand why those people who criticize the former recruitment policy do not want to realize the fact that, instead of enrolling grade 10 graduates in to TVET, what if we enroll those who graduate from grade 12. I think, if those 12 completers had been provided such a chance they could have

done ‘miracles’, in Nardos’ term, that says, ‘ይህንን ዕድል 12ኛ ለጨረሱ ሰጥተናቸው ቢሆን እኮ ተግምር ይሠሩበት ነበር።’

4.2.7. The Curricula Have Serious Problems

Obviously the development of TVET curricula, like any other curriculum, needs identification of the training needs that require job analysis. Job analysis, on the other hand, involves systematic study of what a successful worker does and needs to know in the practice of his/her occupation (Coe, 1973; Wenrich, 1958). The current TVET curricula, contrary to this principle, might not be prepared on the basis of the above principle. The contents of its courses, in many cases, are usually found inconsistent with the skills required in the actual work places. In some cases, even it is not possible to get any enterprise that is currently using those skills the curricula oblige students to master. Here it is worth wise to site an example from the third year accounting curriculum. In the third year accounting curriculum, there is a course on Agricultural Accounting which is currently not in use in any enterprise in Ethiopia. Solomon, one of the Information Technology teachers in Entoto TVET College, described the situation of irrelevance of some TVET field courses as,

Many courses in our current TVET program are not consistent with the jobs found in the workplace. ‘ሆድና ጀርባ እየሆነ ያለ ይመስለኛል’ i.e. I think, the reality is contradictory to what is on the ground. Wherever we go, the jobs available for our graduates are only payroll preparation and other routine secretarial works.

We don’t imagine our graduates to be employed in programming and other sophisticated fields because there are no enterprises that require such sophistication.

Some courses seem they are wrongly prescribed for some group of students. As many teachers and students believe, they are included into the curricula because the designers of those programs might not seriously consider their relevance, while curricula in some fields intentionally or unintentionally ignored some crucial courses for a particular group of students. Gemechu, one of the student-participants learning in the third year Law field in SMUC complains & asks,

Even though our college currently stopped teaching us a course on ‘Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management’, we have been learning this less relevant course in the past two years. As a law field student, I don’t understand why we were forced to learn such an inappropriate course for two solid years. ‘ፍርድ ቤት እንግዲህ ሱቅ አይደለም፤’

ስለ ሥራ ፈጠራ መማር ለኛ ምን ያስፈልጋል? i.e. as a court is not a shop; why is it required of us to learn about entrepreneurship?

Many similar cases can be cited in which students are enforced to learn courses less relevant to their fields of training. On the contrary, some very important and crucial courses in many fields are excluded from the curricula.

Some TVET fields are less relevant in the labor market even though the graduates are appropriately equipped with the necessary occupational skills. The demand of those skills on the market by employer organizations is very low. Alemayehu reported this situation as follows:

In my view, some of the TVET fields are irrelevant for employer organization's demand. For instance, the chance the graduates from purchasing field to be employed is less likely. If you observe our country's current situation, unless it is a relative, which private enterprise do you think is willing to employ a trained purchaser? I don't think there is any. Therefore, I don't agree even in the existence of such a training field itself, at least in such retarded economic situation.

On the other hand, some skills learned in some TVET fields are so obsolete that they are gradually vanishing from the work places. From these TVET skills currently taught in the colleges, both the students' and teachers' interests for the courses are deteriorating from time to time. On the contrary, the teachers who teach these courses are continuously obliged to emphasize on these skills. Typing skill is one of these fields. Hassen rejects such training:

In the field I am assigned, typing, the skills are getting archaic and obsolete from time to time. Many enterprises and institutions are currently conducting their secretarial duties using computers, not typewriters. I doubt the designers of the secretarial curricula did consider these issues in depth. How come a secretary- training program devotes more than 50% of its time for training in the skill of typing in the computer era when the relevance of the machine itself is under question?

Currently, we are getting up with our students' requests for reducing the time devoted to these typing courses and increase that of the computer courses.

How can one satisfy these students, being in a situation where he/she doesn't have any mandate to restructure the training curricula?

Here, one can understand that the colleges are not given the mandates to design their own curricula. Also their teachers are not allowed to restructure the courses they teach and their time allotted in a manner that suits their instructional activities.

The curriculum preparation as well as its implementations processes are so centralized that the individual colleges do not have appropriate autonomy over their training activities. I suspect that this limitation hindered the practice of the colleges' innovative potentials and they did not also encourage them to add their practices in eventually updating the curricula.

Curricula in some fields of the current TVET program are not appropriately organized. The contents of some of the courses seem they are not logically designed following the right curricular organizing principles: maintaining sequence and continuity, balancing scope and depth, and integration (Derbessa, 2004; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). In explaining the problem of organization in the current TVET curricula, Girma said,

The contents of the curricula lack coherence. It seems their concepts are taken from here and there. They lack both sequence and continuity. Here you get one concept and next another, unrelated to the previous one. It is extremely boring. It is usual to get redundant concepts here and there in the prescribed modules.

Likewise, while explaining the problem of organization in the current TVET curricula, Nardos also said,

‘አረ የጥተ ነው እርሱ!’ (i.e., to say, it is nonsense!) You cannot call it a curriculum. It is not organized by considering the coherence of its concepts. It is full of contents that appear here and there in different courses. For example, the concept of ‘telephoning’, you are expected to teach this skill for the same group of secretary students every year when you are teaching courses of Reception, Intermediate Typing, Business Communication, Business English, Communication English, Secretarial Procedures and Office Management. Don’t you think it is simply killing time?

We can also understand that when the contents of some courses were designed, they were not designed in such a way that they will be appropriate for implementation.

Some concepts in some courses are full of frequent repetition.

In fact, the designers might have thought that they have maintained the principle of continuity when they repeated similar concepts here and there. Even though I understand that continuity is one vital principle in curriculum designing that requires some concepts

to be repeated at various levels in increasing depth, this may not work for the psychomotor domain objectives, which are included in our TVET curricula.

This is because, in our TVET curricula, during the instruction of the psychomotor objectives, students are expected to attain full-mastery of particular skill before they start learning the other one. Hence, I feel, it is not logical to repeat a single skill over and over while designing the curricula in a condition where all the students have already mastered the skills that we are talking about.

The professional competences of the designers of some of the current TVET courses are debatable by many. Many teachers and students suspect that some of the experts who have participated in the designing process lack the right professional skills as well as subject matter backgrounds. They also assume that the whole process of the curriculum organization was conducted within a short period of time without gathering relevant information from pertinent bodies. In favor of this, Nardos declared,

I am highly suspicious about the abilities of the curriculum designers. Sometimes I feel as if these designers may be laymen for the field of education as well as curriculum designing. How can we accept that they have the right skills for curriculum designing while looking at their product full of redundancy and similar concepts, lack of coherence between concepts and with concepts having no continuity? It is funny that these people require us to teach the same content, for example, both in Business English and Business Communication courses. They don't even know that the nature of these courses is different.

Many teachers assume that the designers of the curricula simply adopted concepts from different books by conducting only 'copy-paste' procedure. They don't believe they have prepared them on the basis of job analysis they conducted in different employment areas. Tekle said, "In Information Technology Department, some courses are designed by people who don't know any thing about the nature of the courses. I can say the designers have only limited knowledge that they simply 'copy-paste' the curricula from some guide books they got from some else where." While explaining his suspicion about how carelessly the curricula were designed, Girma also said,

I think the designers were not focused while organizing the curricula. As every teacher comments, there is no consistency between the whole 10+I, 10+II and 10+III curricula. In my view, except for Accounting, the right professionals having better knowledge in curricular development did not

prepare the rest fields. ‘የግብር ይውጣ ሥራ ነው የሠሩት’ i.e. they prepared it on the principle of go happy go lucky. I personally do not believe people whose children are currently attending TVET schools prepared the curricula. They look like extremely careless people prepared them.

A very surprising experience in the current TVET curricular design is the time allotted to all the training fields, irrespective of their nature in which all of them are allotted equal training hours.

In my view, it is not appropriate to allot similar training hours for all of the fields without considering the nature of the individual course. In my understanding, I suspect that the designers did the training time allotment ‘by default.’

As one can deduce from the above discussions, the agency designated for curriculum designing did not follow the right procedures for designing and organizing the TVET curricula. It didn’t conduct job analysis before the designing. It didn’t appropriately make pertinent TVET program teachers participate in the designing procedures as well. I also dare say that the curricula produced seem the toil of ‘amateur professionals’ in the field of curriculum designing.

4.2.8. Apprenticeship is Less-Effective

The curriculum implementation strategy of the current TVET program requires 30% theoretical and 70% practical training. The school-based training, which is planned to be executed in full-time TVET schools, is assisted by project works and by what is referred to as ‘apprenticeship’ program in different actual offices and enterprises. The central rationale of the apprenticeship training is to reinforce the students’ skills that they acquire from the school-based training. The curricula require all regular program students to practice skills in different actual working sites for 312 hours every year (FNG, 2003; MoE, 2003). However, most of the training activities, as I have personally observed in both colleges, were not conducted according to the implementation strategy. In fact, this reality was also reflected by many teachers and students whom I interviewed during the study.

Though experiences differ in both colleges, the main bottlenecks for the realization of the strategy on the ground were the limitation of quality apprenticeship opportunities,

insufficiency of physical facilities that can be used for conducting practical trainings within the colleges' compounds and less readiness of teachers.

With regards to the limitation of the apprenticeship opportunities, many enterprises, including government-owned, were not appropriately committing themselves to provide adequate practical training chances for the apprentices. The inadequacy of apprenticeship opportunities, in fact, was very severe in the public colleges as compared to the private ones. For instance, as I have observed in St. Mary's University College, all the students participate in apprenticeship program every year after completing a year's course package. In the contrary, in Entoto TVET College, students participate in the apprenticeship program only when they reach to the level where they graduate and leave the college. Girma, said, "I never heard that any one of our college's third year student visited any enterprise on a formal apprenticeship basis in the last two years."

In explaining the difficulty of obtaining apprenticeship opportunities for all students in Entoto TVET College, the other participant, Lemlem said:

Here in our college, it is very difficult to get apprenticeship opportunities for all of our students. Currently it is impossible to send our entire first, second and third year students for apprenticeship. Leave alone accepting our requests for all of our students from every year, the enterprises are not willing to provide chances even only for our third year graduating students. 'እንዲያውም እየሠለፉን የመጡ ይመስለኛል' i.e. I think they are getting fade-up of our requests. I really tell you, those few chances which our third year students are using every year are secured by our teachers' and administrators' unreserved efforts.

In St. May's University College, both the students and the apprenticeship program coordinating office participate in searching for apprenticeship opportunities. In many cases, however, it is the students that secure the chances by themselves, either through their parents or by their own efforts. On the contrary, in Entoto TVET College, students usually do not try for apprenticeship opportunities by their own because of the public's distorted image about the government TVET colleges. While explaining how difficult for government colleges' students to get apprenticeship opportunities, Elshaday said:

Many enterprises are not willing to offer us opportunities to practice in their offices. They don't even want to recognize us as citizens. Therefore, we didn't get any chances to practice our skills every year in the same way as our friends who learn in the private colleges do.

Practically, many enterprises favor the private college students because they assume that our competences are always inferior to theirs. Sometimes, even they don't want to recognize us as college students, as they do to our friends in the private colleges. 'ደሀ ሆነህ መፈጠርህን ትጠላዋለህ' i.e. that time you abhor your being poor.

Although some enterprises offer apprenticeship opportunities for the students, in many cases, they don't assign the trainees into the right offices where they can appropriately practice what they previously learned in their colleges. In some cases, the students are usually assigned to perform trivial and routine office duties which burden the permanent employees. Tsion, one of the student-participants from accounting class of SMUC said, "አብዛኛውን ጊዜ አቧራ የለበሱ ፋይሎችን ስናመላልስ እንውላለን", i.e. most of the time, we are made to carry old files covered by dust from one office to another." In this regard, except in the case of the St. Mary's University College, where there is a better established system of following-up their trainees while they are in the apprenticeship scheme, in Entoto TVET College, there is no established mechanism for following-up their trainees while they are under apprenticeship. The apprenticeship providing enterprises are usually not even well informed on which skills the apprentices should make their practices.

Moreover, many enterprises do not assign competent supervisors for the trainees in order to guide and supervise their daily duties they perform. In many cases, they assign supervisors who are even less qualified than the trainees themselves. That is why Tewabech, one of the student-participants from SMUC said, "እነርሱን ስናስተምር ከርሙን ነው የምንመጣው" i.e. we usually kill our time training our supervisors themselves."

At present, many students consider apprenticeship programs as the best option to obtain higher marks, rather than reinforcing their skills they attain during the in-school training. Elsahday strengthened this idea:

Even if we get some apprenticeship chances by our own efforts, we may not practice the appropriate skills that we learned in theory in the college. On top of that, we may not also get the right supervisor who may assist us during the practice. The only benefit we get from the apprenticeship program is good evaluation marks. Most of the time, our supervisors give us 95 to 100%. However, this means nothing for most of us.

Of course not all enterprises can be blamed for carelessness towards providing appropriate apprenticeships. Many teachers and students believe that there are a number

of enterprises which are currently carrying on their apprenticeship program duties in a fair and responsible manner.

According to the respondents, in many cases what the enterprises of this sort usually do is assigning the apprentices within the right offices, near the right supervisors, in order that the students would benefit most from the apprenticeship program as much as possible.

4.2.9. Instructions are Theory-laden

The current TVET program implementation strategy requires teachers to deliver practice-laden instructions in the subjects they teach. Based on the principle, skill comes through practice, the strategy assumes trainees cannot be just likened as empty vessels into which the teachers pour knowledge and skills until the vessels are full. Rather it assumes that the trainees' skill comes from the interactions between the trainees and the trainer, where the trainees have something to offer given the appropriate resources and motivation can activate their own learning capabilities, thus achieving independence from the authority of the teachers (Cunningham, 1940; Mansfield & Mitchell, 1996). However, as observed in these two colleges, the TVET curricula are not implemented as they have been designed in the implementation strategy. In both colleges, teachers usually present their lessons by using an age-old strategy of lecturing method, where the students mostly became passive to their teachers' theory-laden instruction. Concerning the existence of the discrepancy between the planned strategy and the actual implementation on the ground, Araya said,

Honestly, we are not implementing the curriculum as it is indicated in the modules. Even though, the implementation strategy demands 70% practical and 30% theoretical instructions, I don't think we have reached even up to 30% to 40% practical instruction. I don't believe this could be realized in our existing situation.

As I have observed in both colleges, the degree of the extent of the practical instruction was different for diverse courses. In many of the cases, the extent of the practical instruction was relatively higher for those courses, which demand manual skill trainings. Among those courses whose instructions were relatively practice-laden were typing and computer courses in the Secretarial Science and Information Technology training fields.

Except for these courses, in many cases, only a 'chalk and talk' type of instruction was dominating. Except for only few cases, even demonstrations in the model offices and Court Rooms were also unthinkable.

Teachers believe that the 70-30% instructional strategy is totally unattainable for all courses in all situations. They say that the strategy works only for those courses, which mainly focus on technical skills. While justifying why she failed to apply the 70- 30% instructional strategy during her instructions, Nardos said,

70-30% instructional strategy cannot be equally applicable for all courses. In many cases, I didn't apply and also cannot relate this strategy to my course on 'Office Management'. For that matter, I don't even believe those people who have designed the strategy itself are also able to apply this principle in our existing situation. Mind you, these persons want me to implement this principle when I am teaching a 'Management' course. How can I show my students, for instance, a democratic and a dictator leader making decisions, seated in his or her office?

Nardos' reflection is that different courses require different instructional strategies. One instructional approach is not always appropriate for all types of contents and all types of learning goals (Lasley II & Matezynsky, 1997; Myers & Myers, 1995). Indeed, in any ideal school situation, teachers are not expected to conduct their instructional activities in one and unique way. They usually diversify their modes of delivery of their lessons depending on the instructional objectives they have at hand. Of course, this is a very common approach that many teachers are currently applying in these two TVET colleges. I understand, even though the government always stresses teachers to follow its 70-30% strategy, they are not making it practical in all of the courses they teach.

Besides, the existence of the difference in the nature of the courses, the realization of practice-laden instruction was also affected by lack of teachers' readiness to implement the strategy during the course instruction. In many cases, teachers tend to resist the practicality of the strategy in their subject areas.

This tendency of the resistance of the teachers, however, was caused by their experiences and preparations. Most of them explain why teachers tend to resist the implementation of 70% practical and 30% theoretical instruction. Hirut said,

I think it is very difficult for us to automatically switch from the traditional theory lecturing to a 70% practical instruction. Anyone who insists us to

implement this strategy should recognize two things: first, we teachers, ourselves, have not been taught through non-lecturing instructional methodology while we were students; second, most of us have long experience of lecturing as far as our teaching experience is concerned. Due to these two reasons, I don't think a sudden switch from the traditional way to the modern will work in our existing staff.

It is true that the background preparation of most of the teachers is not appropriate for the effective execution of the TVET program. Many of them lack at least two among the three important skills that are believed to be very essential for any effective TVET teacher. The three important competences that TVET teachers should own are pedagogical skills, subject-matter theoretical knowledge and actual enterprise work experience. Actually, as I have observed in both colleges, many of the teachers do not own enterprise work experiences because in most cases, they were recruited to the colleges directly from their higher education institutions where they were attending professional education, which was only theory-laden. Consequently, many of them have only little competence in the areas of exercising the practical aspects of the skills they are teaching.

Many teachers believe that their lower competence in the practical aspects of the skills they are teaching is directly inherited from their university training backgrounds. Hassen said, "We are teaching our students in the same way as we have been taught when we were at the universities." Teachers believe that when they were attending their higher education, they were not appropriately prepared in such a way that they will deliver a practice-laden instruction that is required by the current TVET programs. Girma said,

Our university training background didn't totally match with what we are now expected to teach in the TVET program. 'የሰማይና የምድር ያህል ይለያያሉ' i.e. they are diametrically different. At the university our teachers train us mainly in the theoretical aspects of a particular skill. As far as my experience is concerned, the first challenge I faced in this regard was during the time when I first saw the TVET curricula that demand 70% practical and 30% theoretical instruction. I was very much confused that I said to myself, how could I cope up this situation.? But gradually, after I realized no one in the college is actually practicing it, I started to develop my confidence.

The lack of enterprise experience of teachers is also highly influencing the TVET instruction in both colleges.

As many participants believe, it is creating a situation where students lean to develop considerable distrusts on the proficiencies of their teachers in instructing the special skills.

Yonas is one of the student-participants from Entoto TVET College who already developed such a tendency. He said, “How on earth a teacher who has no single day experience of selling any item can train us about how to purchase?”

For instance, one day I asked our entrepreneurship teacher, ‘Please show us what new business you created and ask us in relation to what you teach us.’ I said this to him because I know if he had good entrepreneurial qualities, he would not be with us today.”

The other important skill that many TVET teachers in these colleges lack is pedagogical skills. As everybody knows, in most of the fields on which these colleges provide training, many teachers do not have pedagogical training backgrounds. Except in some fields like Secretarial Science, in most fields, teachers were not appropriately trained in the skills of lesson preparation, presentation, classroom management, evaluation and others. As a result, they are facing different challenges from varying angles. This situation was clearly indicated by Gemechu, who explained the difference between his 'Law' and 'English' teachers, from whom the latter own pedagogical training backgrounds while the former do not. He described the scenario as:

There is a great difference between our 'English' and 'Law' course teachers. Our 'English' teachers usually encourage and motivate us to participate in the instruction process. On the contrary, our 'Law' teachers usually give us only long lectures and sometimes they raise issues on which we debate. Organizing a model 'Court Room' is unthinkable because, in my view, they lack confidence in their teaching abilities. When you ask them questions, they usually escape them without clearly addressing your confusions. I have no confidence on their evaluation strategies as well.

Actually, this is not only unique to the 'Law' teachers, as many of the participants revealed, but it is also common to all teachers who do not have proper pedagogical training backgrounds. In fact, it is a reality that many of the teachers themselves have admitted. Aselefech is one among these teachers who does not own an appropriate pedagogical background. While explaining how her background affected her teaching, she said, “I believe that lack of pedagogical skills has negatively influenced my teaching.

Sometimes, I face problems while evaluating my students, managing my classes and selecting the appropriate teaching strategies.”

In reality, teachers didn't only consider their background preparation and nature of the courses as the only hindering factors for the proper implementation of the strategy. They also mentioned the inappropriateness of the organization of the training facilities in their colleges for their failure to conduct a more practice-laden instruction (Min, 1994).

As many believe, the facilities, which exist in their colleges, are not appropriate for the proper execution of the strategy. Even though the degree of the problem varies, in both colleges, there was a shortage of appropriate training facilities such as adequately equipped model offices, model Court Rooms, computer facilities, library facilities and others. However, the scarcity was very chronic in Entoto TVET College as compared to the St. Mary's University College. While explaining how difficult it was to implement the curricula in Entoto TVET College, Araya said,

It is very difficult to implement the curricula as it has been designed. I think our curricula are simply adopted from other developed countries such as Germany and Japan. I suspect that its designers didn't consider our local situation when they copied it. For instance, I can say almost all the courses in the Information Technology field are beyond our scope. If you want to implement them properly, you cannot get the appropriate resources. There are no appropriate reference books in our college library. Sometimes, you wonder, for some courses, you may not get a single copy of their textbook in the library. For example, if we consider my course, 'Advanced Troubleshooting', there is no single reference book in our library.

In Entoto TVET College one could understand that teachers are facing many challenges in getting very important and adequate textbooks for preparing their lessons, let alone for students. In many occasions, the teachers are usually forced to borrow some copies of textbooks from other private colleges in order to facilitate their teaching-learning processes. Despite these chronic shortages, the authorities do not also encourage them when they prepare their own teaching materials in order that their students will benefit the most out of them. Girma described the situation as,

We always prepare our own modules but they /the authorities/ don't encourage our efforts. Let alone backing with finance for the preparation of the modules, they even don't say 'thank you!' We are still continuing to prepare our own modules because we feel it is our professional responsibility to help our students to the most of our efforts.

In some cases, the reference books of some courses are not available in the market and even the private colleges don't own them. Hassen consolidated this idea and said, "To implement the course on Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship according to the design, the only reference material you can use is a manual called CFE, which at present is found only in the hands of the Ministry of Education. However, the Ministry does not even allow you to photocopy and use it."

The practice of the students in using their libraries in both colleges is different. In the St. Mary's University College, in many cases, students prefer to study in their library because their library is relatively well equipped with adequate copies of textbooks and other reference materials.

Besides, they also get different teacher-prepared modules and reference books that domestically compiled by their own teachers. On the contrary, in Entoto TVET College, in many cases, it is very rare to see students using their college's library. Most of the time, it is common to see only two or three students studying in the library. Even if the students want to study, they may not prefer to go to the library because they do not hope that they may get appropriate textbooks or reference books in adequate number of copies. While explaining about the current status of his college's library, Teferi said,

This year, we are not using our library for two reasons: lack of reference books and the current political tension in the city. As the librarians already informed us, there are no appropriate books for the courses of 'Auditing' and 'Tax Accounting' which we are currently taking. I don't think for our next course 'Peachtree Accounting', a reference book will be available. 'ብቃ እኛ ላይ-በረሪ የሌለው 'አለ' የሚል ቃል ብቻ ሆኗል' i.e. our library has nothing except the word 'not available'. Currently, we are very frustrated that we will not cope up with our friends in the private colleges who are learning by using sufficient reference books as well as other handouts prepared by their own teachers.

4.2.10. No One Denies they Perform Better, but . . .

In the previous sections, so far we have seen how complicated the TVET curriculum implementation process was in the two colleges. As it was already indicated, the implementation of the program has been conducted in the presence of various challenging factors from various angles.

However, even if the implementation of the program is heavily trapped between problems, as the participants of the study revealed, the students have better knowledge, especially in the areas of their training fields.

As many teachers believe, they are more skilled than those people who are currently working in different enterprises.

While comparing their abilities with the current employees of different enterprises, Girma said, “My students are by far better than those traditional purchasers who are currently working in different enterprises. ከአነዚያ የልምድ አዋላጆች ጋር በፍጹም አታወዳድራቸውም”.

Many teachers also believe that the current TVET program graduates are usually better in their skill proficiencies in the areas of their trainings as compared with both the former 12+2 diploma program graduates and the current degree program students attending their education at similar field. They assume that the current program graduates own more practical skills as compared to those who attended the former 12+2 diploma programs or those who are currently attending the degree programs whose education mainly focuses only on the theoretical aspects of particular skills.

Besides, they also assert that the current program students win an advantage of participating in the apprenticeship program that may help them develop more confidence when they realize their skills in different actual work sites. Hirut has described her comparison of the former 12+2 diploma program students' proficiency with the current TVET graduates as:

The graduating students of the current diploma program own better knowledge as compared to the former 12+2 diploma program graduates. Because they were made to stay for three years in the college, unlike the former program students who stay for only two years, they have got an advantage of learning their skills intensively in their major areas. In addition, their apprenticeship experience has also given them another advantage compared to the former graduates who usually graduated without having experiences any kind of actual work site visits.

Similarly, Araya described his comparison of the current TVET students' performance with the current degree program students as:

It is obvious that our TVET students are better than the degree students at least in practical aspects. Here I teach my students for about 21 hours per week, whereas while I was learning in the university, I had only 3 hours per week to learn a similar course. There in the university, we could not dream to know about the practical aspects of the courses we were learning.

When I compare my own background to the current status of my students, they know much more things at this level than I used to know when I was at the Addis Ababa University. They have already mastered many skills, which I myself didn't master when I was attending my higher education.

I feel that they are lucky because they get frequent chances to practice what they learn in theory immediately after they leave their theory classes.

We can understand from the above explanation that the higher skill proficiency of the current TVET students has come from the intensive training they get in their colleges. In many cases, the courses they learn are usually given excess training hours so that they get extra time to treat every detail of the skills they acquire.

As teachers witness in many of the courses, TVET students are taught usually by using at least four-fold excessive training hours as compared with the former 12+2 diploma program or the current degree program students who take the same kinds of courses. In underlining this argument, Asselefech reiterated:

I believe the superior performance of the TVET students is due to the reason that they learn their main courses by using more contact hours per week.

For instance, for a course requiring three contact hours per week in the degree program, 12 contact hours per week are usually assigned in TVET. 'ትምህርቱን በጣም ስለምንደጋግምላቸው ብቻ ነው እንጂ ውጤታቸው የተሻለው፣ እንዲሁ ማመለወጥ ያለባቸውን ያህል አይደለም እየተለወጡ ያሉት' i.e. their performances became better only because we repeat the lessons, not because these students are performing as they are expected to. Honestly, since I started teaching the TVET students, I myself never left their classes unless they understand my lessons properly. Instructions in the TVET programs are by far different from those in the degree programs where you always run after time in order to cover your topics.

Actually, as it is the case in any school in TVET program, all the students do not have similar performance levels. Some are very good, some are medium and others are very poor (Myung, 1983). However, as the existing situation in these colleges indicates, a considerable number of the students perform below average. Those less performing students whom Girma refers as “እንዳይወድቁ እየተባለ ብቻ ዝም ተብለው ታዝለው የሚሄዱ” i.e. the ones who have been promised not to fail”, are totally less interested in their fields of trainings.

Despite their inferior achievements, as I noticed in the two colleges, these types of students are usually allowed to continue their training until they graduate completing the three-years prescribed courses. For such group of students, what is required is scoring 50% in the main courses they take.

If they fail in those courses, teachers are obliged to prepare a series of remedial tests (only one remedial test in case of St. Mary's University College) until they manage to get passing marks. Even though experiences differ, this is a commonly accepted practical procedure in both colleges.

In St. Mary's University College, however, there is a special practice where such kinds of students may be forced to repeat the course or are dismissed from the college if they fail to make up their results after taking only one remedial test which is usually given after such students receive continuous personal counseling from the teacher.

This practice of carrying certain non-hardworking students until the final year is an issue all teachers strongly oppose.

Many teachers do not support such a policy because they believe it de-motivates the hardworking students, and also it tends to encourage those low achievers to continue showing no efforts. In describing the discomfort he feels in such practice, Araya concluded:

I strongly object the principle which obliges us to promote low-grade achieving students by giving some bonus marks in the name of giving a series of remedial tests. Everybody in our college understands this situation. And this has created a wrong impression in the students' mind that they say, 'once I joined the 10+III program, even if I don't work harder, I am guaranteed to graduate. አንድ ለ10+III ስለገባሁ ባለጠናኝም እመረቃለሁ::' You wonder, in a third year class where I am currently teaching, I have many students who cannot even spell their own names correctly.

The performance of the students largely depends upon their teachers' efforts. Students who are being taught by competent and motivated teachers usually perform better in their trainings (Coe, 1973; Strong, 1971; Wenrich, 1958). Consequently, the TVET students' performance in the Entoto TVET College, where there is a 'self-contained' instructional strategy, is highly dependent upon the competence of a single teacher.

In such a system, if some group of students gets a well-motivated and competent teacher by chance, they are more likely to perform better than those who get the chance of being taught by an irresponsible and less motivated teacher.

Currently, even though the Education Bureau continuously insists on the TVET colleges, especially the public ones such as the Entoto TVET College, to realize the 'self-contained' strategy in all their training fields, teachers don't believe the strategy is appropriate to be implemented in their training fields under the existing circumstances. While explaining how the teachers react about the 'self-contained' strategy, Lemlem said,

We, teachers, always request our administration to allow us to get rid of this strategy and replace it with the former conventional strategy where we could teach different courses for different groups of students in a parallel way. However, they always tell us that it is very much forbidden to give up the self-contained strategy. 'እርሱ በጣም ክልክል ነው ይሉናል።' Therefore, even if we are not convinced about the strategy, we are forced to implement it. In this manner, for example, I am currently spending the whole day within a classroom, teaching different courses to the same group of students. This is every day experience of almost all the teachers in this college.

Teachers oppose the 'self-contained' strategy for two reasons. First, if a single teacher teaches all the courses for a particular group of students, he/she might be heavily burdened in preparing different lessons.

Secondly, if a single teacher teaches all the courses, it might create boredom in both the students and the teachers. While describing his grievances upon the strategy, Girma said:

Everyday it is my obligation to stay in one classroom for four solid hours. There is what they call the 'self-contained classrooms'. 'ሰልፍ ኮንተይንድ የሚለውን በሽታ ነው ያለው።' It is very difficult even for the students to see the face of a single teacher for the whole morning everyday. These administrative people don't understand how much boring this strategy is for a human being. We, the teachers as well as the students, are fade up of it. 'መቼ ይሁን አምላክ ከዚህ መዝዘ ካለ ፕሮግራም የሚገለግለን?' i.e. to say when is the time that God help us in getting rid of this monotonous program?

4.2.11. One Day I May Win a 'DV Lottery'!

As it has been clearly stipulated on the implementation strategy document (MoE, 2003), the main aim of the Ethiopian TVET system is to minimize the problem of unemployment by producing competent and skillful citizens who can easily be employed in different enterprises or self-employment schemes.

On the basis of this strategy, the government expects the TVET programs to deal with the development of the skills needed for employment in the labor market (Strong, 1971). As the current practice indicates, the TVET Colleges are continuously graduating many students in different training fields every year. However, as many participants revealed, many of the graduates of these TVET Colleges are not getting adequate employment opportunities.

In this regard, Lemlem said, “So far I do not know any of my former students employed in any enterprise. Rather, I know many TVET program graduates who are not currently employed. I don't think this situation of chronic unemployment problem of TVET program graduates is even hidden from the government officials.”

The problem of unemployment of the former graduates is one of the major bottlenecks for the usefulness of the current TVET programs. It is a highly discouraging factor for the students who are currently attending different trainings in various TVET institutions. Though the chance of being employed for the graduates mostly depends on the type of skill they have acquired, many students worry that they may not get employed after they graduate from their institutions. In explaining her frustrations, Redeat said,

My biggest worry is my next year's position. I do not totally believe that I will get any employment opportunity next year after I graduate from this field because I know many of my senior graduates are currently unemployed. It is very disturbing that I am just feeling very hopeless.
'ወንዶቹስ ቀንበሌ ይሆናሉ፣ እኛ ግን ምን ልንሆን እንችላለን?' i.e. to say, the males may become daily-laborers, but what will our future fate be? 'መቼስ ዲቪን ብቻ ተስፋ ማድረግ ነው፣ ግን እኮ እርሱም ለደሀ አይወጣም!' i.e. the only option is hoping to win a 'DV Lottery', even if it is obvious a poor will never win it.

You can understand from Redeat's statement that students rarely hope that they will get any type of employment opportunities in Addis Ababa after they graduate from their colleges. Consequently, some are planning to go to the regional states in case they could get some chances, even in any field they think they fit. Gemechu, in describing his future plan said, “I understand it is very difficult to get any employment opportunity with my diploma qualification in 'Law' in this city. For that matter, I have already convinced myself that even I should go to the regional states if I get any one who can employ me.”

Of course, this seems the plan of not only Gemechu, but also many of the TVET students, especially those who attend the public colleges like the Entoto TVET College. One among these students was Dejene who reiterated:

I always worry about my future. I don't think I can get any job opportunity in Addis Ababa with what I graduate in. I am personally planning to go to the regions as soon as I graduate from this college for any kind of employment opportunity. Having an Information Technology skill background, I don't imagine I can create my own job. 'መቼስ አይ ቲ ተምረን ደረቅ እንጂራ እንሸጣለን? እንዴት ይሆናል?' i.e. how can I imagine to do such a silly job as selling 'Injera' with my IT training? I do not think anybody can do that.

Though the government hopes that the TVET program graduates would create their own self-employment schemes in case if they don't get adequate employment opportunities, many teachers and students do not believe this strategy will be working. The reasons that these students and the teachers forward for justifying their arguments are, first, all fields are not appropriate for job creation due to their own nature; second, shortage of financial capacity of the graduates, their parents and the government itself; third, shortage of experiences in facilitating the process of job creation in different responsible governmental and non-governmental organizations; and fourth, lack of experience in managing small businesses from the side of the graduates themselves. In describing her reservations on the issue of the successfulness of the government's 'self-employment' strategy, Lemlem said,

Concerning job creation, sometimes I am afraid of what I teach to my students when I teach the entrepreneurship course. In the current Ethiopian situation of finance inadequacy, I cannot understand how our government becomes overambitious in the program of 'self-employment', which, I think, could not be possible. 'አንዳንድ እንቁሳልሽ ነው የሚሆንብኝ' i.e. some of the ideas puzzle me. I think this program might work with children of the well-to-do families, but how on earth it could work for students who come from the poor family backgrounds? I don't think all families can afford for the job creation projects.

Similarly, explaining how difficult it is for a fresh graduate accountant to create his own job, Yonas, said,

I don't think this could be possible. Even if we own adequate skills in our training fields, how can we, fresh diploma graduates in accounting, create our own jobs?

I cannot imagine that I will open a small shop with my accounting background. This may be possible for the salesman but for an accountant it may not work. Is it possible for me to open a Bank or an Auditing Firm?

I never imagine this. ‘ራሴን ማሞኘት ያለብኝ አይመስለኝም’ i.e. I don't think I should fool myself to do so.

In many cases, teachers believe the current strategy of homogenous grouping of the TVET program graduates into different business entrepreneur groups cannot be effective. According those teachers, the strategy cannot be effective because it is usually executed in a fallacious manner by violating the principle of the division of labor according to diversity of specializations, a core principle in any business, either big or small. In this regard, they suggest that these groupings should be in such a way that their members be represented from different specialization areas.

For instance, a business entrepreneurs group of welders should be organized by grouping different skilled people selected from the welders, accountants, secretaries, salesmen, purchasers and others having other relevant skills rather than by organizing a group composed of only welders.

4.2.12. It Serves as an Alternative Route to Higher Education

As it is implied in the previous section, TVET program graduates employment history on status is one major factor for hindering the successfulness of the current TVET programs. Another equally influencing factor of the current TVET programs is the absence of a clear policy that indicates the vertical permeability of its various fields up to a degree level higher education (Atcoarena & Delluc, 2002). As many of the participants believe, the present TVET students are highly discouraged by this situation where the government did not clearly indicate them what their future fates will look like. Consequently, many teachers and students do not vividly understand what the future holds for the TVET students. In this regard, Araya said,

I know there are many people who don't understand the essence of the current TVET program. I myself have many queries in my mind concerning the future directions of the program. I don't understand what the future destinations of this program graduates will be. I cannot describe this either. I don't also think that the majority of the students as well as the teachers are able to describe it either.

Despite this fact, many students hope that they may be allowed to continue their educational careers up to the degree program like their friends who attend college preparatory programs in different senior secondary schools.

To this end, many students from the St. Mary's University College and the Entoto TVET College want to attend higher education, not immediate employment after they graduate from their colleges. They consider their current TVET program as an alternative route to higher education. While describing the intentions of the TVET students in her college, Hirut said,

In my college, many of the regular program students consider TVET as an alternative route to higher education. In my department (accounting), for instance, this year's graduating class have already started insisting on us to make their transcripts ready in time in order that they will be able to register for their degree program at Addis Ababa University in the coming September. Especially those who joined from grade 10 usually consider this program as the only means through which they will cope up their friends who have joined the preparatory schools.

As it could be understood, many students consider the TVET training as a bridge by which they can join their friends at the universities. They take it as the best possible means through which they can regain the 'prestige' they lost when they were channeled into the TVET track. In this regard, Solomon said,

I think I will use my diploma in 'Information Technology' as a bridge for my universality education because I badly want to obtain my degrees by which I will cope up with my friends who have joined the preparatory program.

I have to show all people, including my own parents, that I am not inferior to my friends. I will use this TVET diploma only for this purpose, not for employment. 'መቼም ድግሪዬን ሳልይዘማ አልሞትም!' i.e. to say, I will exert my utmost effort to obtain my degree.

Even though, many students want to continue their higher education after they graduate from their TVET colleges, some students prefer immediate employments because of some financial problems related to their families.

Many of these students, however, want to continue their degree programs through the extension programs during the evening sessions, while working during the day in order to earn their living. Being one among these students, Gemechu said,

I am planning to seek an employment opportunity after graduating from this college. By now, my family badly needs my assistance. However, I always want to continue my education till the degree program. I think I have already convinced myself that after I get an opportunity of employment, I will continue my higher education in the evening.

Although many students want to continue their education up to a degree level, there are many challenges that hinder the attainment of this goal. As I have already indicated earlier, the two most challenging factors are the financial position of the students and absence of clear policy on vertical permeability of the TVET program. As practice indicates, there are no clear guidelines for the students as well as the TVET colleges by which the students may be admitted into higher educational institutions. In this regard, the existing guidelines are not clear and stable, and most of the time college authorities face difficulties in applying them according to their existing situations. For instance, concerning the instability of the guidelines, Mengistu said, “No one exactly knows what criteria are used for admitting a particular TVET graduate from one level to another. Sometimes they tell you it is only 10% of the total number of students in each training field, and other times they tell you it is only for students who score 75% and above in their year averages. The strategy has positioned us in a very complicated situation.”

Actually, as compared with the St. Mary's University College students, the students of Entoto TVET College have lower chances of being enrolled in the higher educational institutions. The basic reason for this difference is the relative financial weakness of the majority of Entoto TVET College students as compared to those of the St. Mary's University College, and the better ability of the proper excision of the quota system by the St. Mary's University Colleges' authorities.

In explaining why many students in Entoto TVET College cannot get the chance of being enrolled into the higher education, Teferi said,

Even though many of us want to join the higher education, we cannot because first, the government's enrollment capacity into the degree program is only limited to 10%. Secondly, most of us are from lower income family backgrounds so that our parents cannot afford at least 200 birr a month for a private college. ‘ስለዚህ ብር ያለው ይማራል፣ ብር የሌለው ያካል ማለት ነው’ i.e. to say, he/she who has financial capability can learn while others have no opportunity.

This is what we can observe from the former 10+I and 10+II graduates. Those who came from the well-to-do families continued their 10+III programs in various private colleges but those who came from the poor families didn't. ‘እነርሱ እንደማይጠቅም ዕቃ የተጣሉ ናቸው’ i.e. to say the latter are simply thrown as a useless materials.

At present most of the students of St. Mary's University College believe that they are going to join the higher education institutions immediately after they graduate from their 10+III programs. In the contrary, their Entoto TVET College friends are not dreaming such a 'Luxury', in their own term.

5. Conclusion and Implications

In this last section, I have tried to wrap up my research findings and draw some implications from the whole activity of my research which raised many issues in the area of the implementation of the program.

5.1. Conclusion

In this sub-section, I present my interpretation of the data into three themes. The section first presents my overall understanding of the issues raised in the areas of the practices of the selection and placement of the students into different training fields vis-à-vis their overall implications to the students and their teachers. Then the practices of the designing and implementation of the training curricula in different fields vis-à-vis the government's TVET policy goals. Finally, it presents the major challenges faced in the implementation of the program in the city, both in the governmental and non-governmental institutions.

These three themes include: the diluted vocational quality of the program; the presence of a better implementation atmosphere of the program in the private college and lack of awareness - the root cause of most of the problems.

5.1.1. The Diluted Vocational Quality of the Program

The common understanding on the eventual aim of any TVET program is to prepare individuals for occupations or jobs. TVET programs are proposed to prepare varied skills needed for employments in the labor market (Larson, 1973, Wanna, 1998).

They aid in imparting skills that are exactly identical with those skills which diverse jobs require in the employment areas. Incidentally, training institutions are expected to equip their trainees with skills owned by the trained workers in different enterprises.

To this end, our TVET Colleges are also expected to create citizens with diverse employability skills which can help them occupy different vacancies, either by being employed or by creating their own self-employment schemes. In this regard, they target the achievement of the government's TVET policy goals which states:

የመካከለኛ ደረጃ ሙያና ቴክኒክ ሥልጠና ፕሮግራም ዓላማ በተለያዩ የሙያ መስኮች በመካከለኛ ደረጃ የሚፈለገውን የሠለጠነ የሠው ኃይል ለማፍራትና ለመክፈት፣ በሠለጠኑበት የሙያ ዘርፍ በግልና በማህበር የሥራ ድርጅቶችን ለመሥራት ብቃት ያላቸው ዜጎችን ለማፍራት ነው። i.e. The objective of the middle-level TVET programs is to produce middle-level skilled people who are capable of being employed in different enterprises or could create their own self-employment opportunities in a very successful way (MoE, 2002b).

However, as it is clearly indicated by the data in this research, TVET program in Addis Ababa, both private and public, currently being run are losing a vocational taste in their programs and, therefore, they are less likely to achieve the goals of the policy because of many reasons related to curricular design and implementation, and the future employment goals of their trainees.

From the very beginning, the curriculum designing and preparation procedure seems that it did not follow the commonly accepted principle of deriving the curricula from job analysis, which obliges the curriculum designers to identify the objectives and the contents of their curricula from the analysis of the tasks that are to be carried out on the job (Middelton, Ziderman & Adams, 1993 cited in Wanna, 1998; Wenrich, 1958). In many of the cases, while designing the curricula, the skills that the future employees are expected to possess are not fittingly identified and made ready for instruction. In this respect, varied skills that are included in the curricula do not seem to take into account the utmost needs of the prevailing employment environment. Moreover, the contents of the curricula in many of the jobs seem to be not sensitive to the new technological, social and economic changes (Kelley, 1994; Larson, 1973; Wanna, 1998).

On the other hand, the contents of the curricula in many fields look like very dilute with respect to practical skills needed in the job market. They seem to be highly burdened by theoretical aspects of skills rather than their practical features.

Consequently, they look like curricula for academic education not for technical and vocational education and training and, thus, they are less likely expected to produce the right skilled people with relevant job-related skills (Coe, 1973; Wenrich, 1958).

It is also seen that the instructional activities are highly dominated by theoretical lessons and the practical aspects of the skills were not sufficiently emphasized during the instructional process. The actual practice in the colleges has also indicated that the teachers are not training their students to put into effect the practical aspects of their vocations. They only focus on the teaching of the theoretical aspects of different vocational skills by using the traditional 'chalk and talk' method of instruction.

The major reasons for such lack of practice-burdened instructions are the absence of adequately initiated and appropriately trained teachers and inadequacy and inappropriateness of training facilities in the colleges. In this respect, most of the teachers lack the required readiness and competence for properly preparing the students to go into relevant occupations because they mainly lack appropriate occupational experiences in the fields they are teaching (Coe, 1973).

In addition to these facts, the colleges also lack the appropriate instructional resources, which serve as the minimum requirements in any quality TVET programs.

Though it has been clearly indicated in the government's policy that the main aim of the TVET programs is making trainees ready for employment opportunities, in many cases, the current TVET trainees consider the program as an alternative route to higher education. Of course, this goal of the students contradicts with the main aim of any type of TVET programs. In this regard, I dread that our current TVET programs mainly lack the desired strength of any vocational education: their dedication to their employment objectives and close working relationships with employers and labor (Coe, 1973:78).

5.1.2. Better Implementation Atmosphere of the program in the Private College

The effectiveness of any TVET program can be viewed from different perspectives. As Herschback (1994: 4858-4865) indicates, it can be seen from the perspectives of: (a) the trainees job achievement or output approach, (b) the organization of the training programs

or input approach, and (c) the trainees achievement in the practice of their skills in the job areas. In this research, where I used the more recent trends, i.e., the organization of the training programs or inputs approach to investigate the status of the implementation of the school-based TVET programs in the two selected TVET Colleges in Addis Ababa, I obtained results that indicated that the TVET provisions in the private sector are more effective than the governmental counterparts. The findings showed that many students in the private college have the chance of joining the available training fields without any interference of the authorities of the college while many of the students in the public college are not placed into the various training fields based on their interests and aptitudes. Concerning orientations, the students in the private college have received at least a week-long formal orientation and more frequent guidance and counseling services after they joined the college whereas many of the students in the public college under discussion did not receive any kind of formal orientation and career counseling or guidance services before or after joining the training fields.

The management of the private college is more efficient and highly sensitive to its students' requests and for the fulfillment of different requests whereas the management of the public college is relatively less efficient in fulfilling its administrative duties and less sensitive in responding to the requests of its students' needs and for the fulfillment issues raised by the students due to the presence of a red tape of bureaucracy in the management system. Similarly, the motivation and the readiness of the teachers in shouldering any kind of instructional responsibility in the private college is relatively satisfactory; and on the contrary, many of the teachers in the public college lack adequate motivation and readiness to shoulder any kind of instructional duties unrelated to their daily routine because of lack of conducive administrative atmosphere that encourages them to do so, besides the lack of their own readiness.

The private college owns relatively more adequate and relevant instructional resources; on the opposite, the public college has chronic shortage of instructional resources including the most decisive resources such as textbooks and reference materials.

Consequently, all students in the private college are provided with adequate apprenticeship opportunities followed by necessary follow-up mechanisms, while students in the public college are not given ample apprenticeship opportunities with the necessary follow-up mechanisms due to lack of sufficient chances because of the existing distorted image in many of the enterprises about the students of the public colleges.

Many students in the private colleges are better motivated due to the presence of better chances of future employment or further education whereas the students in the public colleges are less motivated because they believe their chances of getting employment opportunity as well as chances of continuing their higher education is very confined.

Moreover, the management of the private college is very sensitive to the labor market signals; in contrast, the management of the public college is less sensitive to the changing needs of the labor market because its administrative structure is highly centralized at all levels so that delivering the right decision at the right time is so difficult for it.

From the above and other related dissimilarities, which I observed during my research activity, the favorability of the program's implementation atmosphere in the private college is relatively superior to that of the public college in many aspects.

Actually, the findings are also found to be consistent with the 1991 recommendations of the World Bank that capitalizes the transfer of the training responsibility from the public to the private sector within the economic limits. According to the Bank's suggestion, the public sector should play only a regulatory role in the quality assurance and in some cases provides some training opportunities where the private sector participation is minimal (Atchoerna & Delluc, 2002; Kelly, 1994; Ziderman, 1994).

In point of fact, these recommendations of the Bank are based on the arguments of many experts in the field, including its experts who contend that in the contrary to the privately owned TVET systems, publicly operated TVET systems tend to be characterized by bureaucratic turgidity, in absence of market signals to guide decision-making and inability to accommodate the adjustment required by external shocks or disequilibria.

They are largely driven by such supply-side considerations as standard curricula, available budget, selection criteria, or the availability of equipment and materials in contrast to market requirements for competitiveness. Kelly (1994:6649) described, in country after country, they are judged to be subjecting the wrong students to irrelevant curricula taught in deteriorating facilities by under qualified and underpaid instructors. Moreover, in many developing countries, they rank low in terms of cost-effectiveness, relative to feasible alternative used for investment funds.

5.1.3. Lack of Awareness-the Root Cause of Most of the Problems

Though adequate and accurate information is a pre-requisite in any decision-making, many of the responsible stakeholders in our TVET system are not appropriately made to be aware of the nature of the TVET programs so far before launching of the program. Many stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, employers, policy-makers and curriculum designers seem not sufficiently informed about the nature of this program as well as the destinations of its attendants before executing it. The major beneficiaries of the program – students and their parents—were not appropriately consulted for making wise decisions about the fates of the participants of the program.

In this regard, many students were blindly made join the program without proper awareness, which in turn might created vast negative impacts on their psychological make-ups and motivations (Ammons & Ammons, 1958). Lack of appropriate information about TVET program has also created very-distorted image in the eyes of students. As it has been indicated by the data, the students have already developed a negative image about TVET and its training fields. They usually consider the programs comparably as inferior to the college preparatory programs and their attendants (Lokan, 1994); Sadker & Sadker, 1997).

Certainly, this image is highly provoked by the current practice of the Education Bureau that tends to stream only low-grade achieving students into TVET programs. By the way, though I understand that this practice is not unique only for our educational system, I believe this could have been changed if intensive awareness raising, as well as prior career

counseling activities could have been appropriately conducted by the responsible bodies (King, 1994; Rosenbaum., 2002).

Students seem to be the most victimized sections of the society due to lack of proper information concerning the diverse available curricular tracks. They are not appropriately guided starting from the lower grades in order that they make wise curricular choices.

As this study indicated, many students, especially those who are attending the public colleges, are not appropriately informed about the merits and demerits of every training field before or after they make their curricular choices.

I understood that lack of appropriate information about their career development is currently influencing them to lose interests and gradually diminishing their motivation to learn the skills (Ammons & Ammons, 1958; Lokan, 1994; Rosenbaum, 2002).

Not only students, but also teachers, the most decisive stakeholders in the training system also lack sufficient awareness about the current TVET programs and their attendants' fates. As I have learned in both colleges, many teachers do not even understand the why of vocational education and its distinction from the academic education. Teachers' being less informed, in turn, is generating a negative impact on their instructional activities and many of them are usually using the outmoded lecturing method during their skill instructions, which in most cases is considered to be inappropriate for instructing in TVET programs (Cunningham, 1940). Moreover, low awareness level of the teachers is also influencing them not to give adequate and proper guidance and counseling services that their students badly needed in their career developments.

Another group of important section of the society who might also lack proper awareness is the curriculum designers. As it has been indicated in the previous part of analysis, many of the TVET programs curricula designers may not have the necessary proficiency background for designing TVET curricula.

Evidently, during the process of their designing, it looks like they did not derive the contents of the curricula based on the proper job analysis, which is a very crucial step in every TVET curricula-designing process.

Furthermore, they might not be aware of the fact that the procedures of prioritization of the training tasks and the principle of organization of the contents in a coherent manner in order to facilitate the teacher practice-laden instruction (Herschback, 1994; Wenrich, 1958).

The other most crucial stakeholders who seems not having proper awareness about TVET programs are potential employers and their enterprise managers. As it has been indicated by various research participants, many of our enterprises do not provide enough apprenticeship opportunities for the apprentices in various fields probably due to lack of awareness about their logical responsibilities for participating in the process of training their would-be employees. Besides, their participation in the policy designing and curriculum organization activities looks very low (Kelly, 1994; Wanna, 1998).

Policy-makers are other stakeholders who in most of the cases lack proper awareness about the nature of TVET and the future destinations of their programs. As I have learnt in the course of this study, some of the policies in the area of TVET system are not based on strong theoretical foundations. I understand that some of these policy decisions are based on inadequate know-how about their essence. Among these policy decisions, which are less realistic are those that are related to the extremely ambitious role given for TVET programs in curving the problem of youth unemployment and channeling of only low-grade achieving students into these programs.

Both assumptions, however, are fallacious from several points of view. Firstly, employment, whether it is self or institutional employment, is a function of the state of a nation's economy. Skills and products of skill cannot be sold in a situation where very few people can afford to buy them. Secondly, the issue of channeling the less gifted students to TVET programs presupposes that intellect has a very insignificant role to play in the acquisition of vocational skills. This leads to a situation in which only the socially, economically and intellectually disadvantaged get into TVET courses being forced to take it (Abanya, 1999).

To sum up what has been already described in this research, I came to understand that the current TVET program is operating in the presence of myriads of problems that could have been solved if appropriate information could have been disseminated among the stakeholders in order to raise their awareness.

5.1. Implications

The findings of this study have indicated that many the stakeholders-students, teachers, parents, curriculum designers, employers and the policy makers—are less appropriately shouldering their due responsibilities for promoting the effectiveness of the TVET program.

The study has clearly implicated that these responsible bodies are not working in harmony with each other in addressing the existing deficiencies of the program in order to foster the quality of the programs' implementation. In this regard, I believe that it is up to all the implicated parties that they properly address the challenges that reside in their due restrictions.

Consequently, I feel that it is the responsibility of the students and their parents to take the blame for the process of making wise decisions about the future careers, in fact, in line with the government's TVET policy. I believe that the schools at all levels should also take the responsibilities of cultivating their students in order to make the right curricular choices for their future careers. In this regard, they should be well organized in the areas of establishing career counseling services for their students starting right from the lower grades.

Teachers and curriculum designers should appropriately shoulder the responsibility of designing and implementing the TVET curricula in an effective way. They should give the necessary attention for following the right principles and procedures while they design and implement the curricula of the programs. To this end, I believe that the

existing curricula for different occupations need a timely revision by participating different experts and accountable bodies in the sector.

Moreover, hand-in-hand to revising the curricula, appropriate measures should be taken to upgrade the competences of teachers, especially in the areas of equipping them with the practical aspects of the skills in which they are expected to train their students.

I feel the government and its policy-making elites should take the responsibility of re-designing the overall policies and strategies in such a way that they will balance the needs of the students as well as the needs of the enterprises residing in the economy.

I also feel that they should pay serious attentions in the areas of preparing the prospective teachers with the necessary proficiencies; recruiting trainees into different training fields based on their interests, aptitudes and capabilities; creating a system by which the awareness of the pertinent bodies will be enhanced; establishing efficient management systems in all levels of its bureaucracy; and encouraging the private TVET institutions for sharing the responsibility of providing training opportunities in line with the skilled manpower needed in various sector of the economy.

Finally, I suggest all of their policy decisions should be entirely based on strong theoretical foundations derived from the results of appropriate research findings in the sub-sector.

REFERENCES

- AAEB. (2006). Addis Ababa City Government Education Bureau 2004/05 Statistical Abstract.
- Abanya, P. (1999). *The Dilemma of Education in Africa*. Dakar: UNESCO-BREDA
- Abraham, J. (1995). *Divide and School: Gender and Class Dynamics in Comprehensive Education*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Ammons, R.B. and Ammons, C.H. (1958). Skills. In Monroe, W. S. (ed.), *1960 Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 3rd edition. New York: The Macmillan Company.

- Atchoarena, D. and Delluc, A. (2002). *Revising Technical and Vocational Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Update on Trends, Innovations and Challenges*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Atchoarena, D. and Esquieu, P. (2002). *Private Technical and Vocational Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Provision Patterns and Policy Issues*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Bent, R.K. and Kronenberg, H.H. (1966). *Principles of Secondary Education*, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Brooking, W.J. (1971). Technical Education. In Deighton, L.C. (ed.), *1971 Encyclopedia of Education*. New York: The McMillan Company and the Free Press.
- Coe, B. (1973). What is Quality Vocational Education? In H.C. Kazanas, J.N. Harris, C.D. Lemons et al. (eds.), *The Philosophy and Foundations of Vocational Education (PP. 77–80)*. New York: Mss Information Corporation.
- Cunningham, W.F. (1940). *The Pivotal Problems of Education*. New York: The McMillan Company.
- Derbessa, D. (2004). *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- ETP (1994). Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Education and Training Policy. Addis Ababa: MoE.
- FNG (2004). Technical and Vocational Education and Training Proclamation No 391/2004. Addis Ababa: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.
- Herschback, D. (1994). Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd Edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Kelly, T.F. (1994). Vocational Education and Training: Improving Cost Effectiveness in Developing Nations. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- King, K. (1994). Technical and Vocational Education and Training. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

- Larsen, M. (1973). The Philosophy Education Forgot. In H.C. Kazanas, J.N. Harris, C.D. Lemons et al. (eds.), *The Philosophy and Foundations of Vocational education*. New York: Mss Information Corporation. PP. 73–76
- Lasley II, T.J. and Matezynski, T.J. (1997). *Strategies for Teaching in a Diverse Society*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Lazerson, M., McLaughlin, J., Pherson, B. and Bailey, S. (1985). *An Education of Value: The Purposes and Practices of Schools*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lipsmeir, A. and Schroeder, H. (1994). Vocational Training, History of. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Locan, J. (1994). Vocational Interests and Aptitude, Measure of. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T. N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Mansfield, B. and Mitchell, L. (1996). *Towards a Competent Work Force*. London: Grower Publishing Ltd.
- McNeil, J.D. (1996). *Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 5th edition. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Mekonnen, L. (2004). The Implementation of 10+I Drafting Curriculum in Addis Ababa TVET Schools, M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa University (Unpublished).
- Merriam, S.B. (1988). *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mesay, G. (2004). Factors that Affect Students Learning in Middle Level Technical and Vocational Schools of East Shoa Zone, Senior Essay. Addis Ababa University (Unpublished).
- Min, W. (1994). Vocational Education and Productivity. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Myers, C. and Myers, L. (1995). *The Professional Educator: A New Introduction to Teaching and Schools*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- MoE (2002a). Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-II): Program Action Plan. Addis Ababa: MoE.
- _____ (2002b). የትምህርትና ሥልጠና ፖሊሲና አተገባበሩ. Addis Ababa. MoE.

- _____ (2003). Middle Level TVET Program – Year III Curriculum Guide. Addis Ababa: MoE.
- _____ (2005). MoE 1997 E.C /2004-05/ Statistical Abstract.
- Myung, H.S. (1983). The Republic of Korea (South Korea). In Thomas, R.M. and Postlethwaite, T.N. (eds.), *Schooling in East Asia*. New York: Pergamon Press. PP.204-235
- Ornstein, A.C. and Hunkins, F. (1988). *Curriculum Foundation, Principles and Issues*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Rosenbaum, J.E. (2002). Vocational Education. In Livingston, D.L., Cookson, P.W. and Sadovnik, A.R. (eds.), *Education and Sociology*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Rumberger, R. (1994). Technical Change and the Demand for Educated Labor. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Sadker, M.P. and Sadker, D.M. (1997). *Teachers, Schools and Society*, 4th edition. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Smith, T.E. (1990). *Introduction to Education*, 2nd edition. St. Paul: West Publishing Company.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Strong, M.E. (1971). Vocational Education: Training of Teachers. In Deighton, L.C. (ed.), *1971 Encyclopedia of Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press.
- Sturman, A. (1994). Case Study Methods. In Husên, T. and Postlethwaité T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Wanna, L. (1998). The Current Status of Vocational/Technical Education in Ethiopia: Problems and Prospects. In Amare et al. (eds.), *Quality Education in Ethiopia: Vision for the 21st Century*. IER, Addis Ababa University. PP. 55-64.
- Wenrich, R.C. (1958). Vocational Education. In Monroe, W.S. (ed.) *1960 Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 3rd edition. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Ziderman, A. (1994). Training, Government Role in. In Husên, T. And Postlethwaité, T.N. (eds.), *1994 International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.