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Educating for Democracy and Social Justice to Further Ethiopia's 2025 Vision

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Abstract
The paper use Ethiopia's 2025 Vision to frame a transformative theoretical framework in and around which critical discourses about Educational strategy can be articulated to develop and implement Democracy, social justice, educational access and strategies that empower citizens to take charge of their individual and collective destiny to work together with industriousness in pursuit of the national vision of development with equity and prosperity.
Keywords: **Education, Democracy, Social Justice, Development, Middle Income**

1. Introduction

Ethiopia was the first country to alone defeat the Italian expansionists during the scramble for
Africa and maintained its sovereignty uncompromised. It was also the first nation that defeated
the Italian fascism. Ethiopia is a country that trained the South African freedom fighters Nelson
Mandela, Mugabe of Zimbabwe and liberation forces in Mozambique even though itself had to
suffer under successive tyrannical regimes. Ethiopia is a source of Blue Nile, a country of great runners/ athletes famous in the world stage and the owner of the Ethiopian Airlines (a member of Star Alliance, the flag carrier of Ethiopia that flies to more than 64 international and 17 domestic destinations and a training center of aviation technology for many African countries) which make it unique in Africa (as of 2011, flyethiopia.com). The country is one of the lead founders of the African Union (AU). The Head Quarter of AU and other international agencies including the United Nations and European Union systems are also located in its capital Addis Ababa (Mulugeta Debebe ,2012). Putting together a fair and true history of this paradoxical country, Ethiopia, and that of its more than 80 nations and nationalities that have lived *de facto* without centralized government systems for centuries is no easy task. In a time line, the land, having human race on it counts back to about 3.5 million years. It is found to be the origin of hominids Australopithecus afarensis fossils named Dinqinesh/Lucy and Selam the latter commonly known as Lucy's Baby. There are always comments that say it would have been better if they were named Afar/ Hadar/ Dikika- names of the places where they were discovered in North Eastern Ethiopia (ENM, 2009).

Geographically, the territory of the country had its traces, that stretch along the Red Sea

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and the Indian Ocean going deep into the West in some places (Pankhurst, 1961:104) without any definite boundary. It holds in its heart *fantastically broken triangular* saddle-like mountain plateaus that rise up to 4,620 meters above sea level, the Mountain Ras Dashen - highest peak in Africa, Guna, Amaba Alaghe, Asimaba… in the North, Garamulata…in the East, Chilalo, Tullu Dimtu, Batu… in the South and several others in the West with above 3,000 meters above sea level height. At a lower altitude, surrounded by cool, fertile and well watered midland, it goes further down to 120 meters below sea level, the Danakil Depression – the depression in the world. Enclosed by arid, wet, moderate and hot regions Ethiopia serves all kinds of temperate weather 13, I say thirteen, months of a year and almost 13 hours day light throughout the year.

The history of the country written by people around the palace and religious institutions, in past, has been extremely controversial for the fact that it always aimed at praising the rulers and for being not all inclusive. The recent ones are not also remote from this path-dependency because of several reasons.

Ethiopians are multicultural. Like the saying, "*diversity is beauty*" goes; the country is a conglomeration of multi-cultural people; religion and language being expressed under culture. Thus, the country is explained by all these diverse colors. Though there is a bigger truth in this saying, I feel it is not always true, sometimes we cannot escape from its dividing factors, particularly in developing nations such as our country, from top level officials to local ones. By the same token homogeneity is not also a guarantee for peace, development and democracy. For instance, Somalia, our neighboring country with a homogeneous people has reeled without a government for the last 20 years. Of course it is not only ethnicity that differ people. There are many other factors like, level of development, historical integration, religion, geographic factor, urban/rural setting, etc. Of course, the long time togetherness and the diffusion have brought certain norms, values and ways of life that all Ethiopians share. In the metropolitan areas, as a result of media influences, interactions with the outside world and with each other a number of shared new standards have emerged, in clothing, food preparation and as a whole in various ways of life without leaving aside the long lived societal values and norms. This is a natural order of cultural development, which one cannot prevent (Mulugeta Abebe, 2012).

Every nation or nationality in Ethiopia had its own way of living with respect to the type of food and closing used and social activities practiced. This is true in the past and as well as the present.

However, due to the dynamism of culture and its fast move beyond boundaries, it is making a pyramid, converging, particularly in towns, leaving old attire to the museums, as no nation can escape this phenomenon. With regard to Ethiopian food in general, there are many types of plants and animal species which have never been tried. In some parts of the country people have started eating even chicken and fish very recently. From bush animals, only a few are edible by most Ethiopians.

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Religion as a part of culture has always been a very sensitive issue in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia religion covers most, if not all, chapters in its history. From history, social psychology and other social science branches we learn both the advantages and catastrophes religion brings to a particular society and the world at large. The Ethiopian people used to believe in one of the three major groups of beliefs: Traditional beliefs, Christianity and Islam. As sects and factions of these three, there are many others that exist mainly blended with local culture. Christianity in Ethiopia dates back to the 1St century AD. The first Hijira (Muslims flight) in Islam was made to Ethiopia, through direct instruction by Prophet Mohammed in 620s. n the past, with the exception of a few minor episodes, there was generally exemplary harmony among all the religions in Ethiopia. (MFA,2011)

In this paper, we discuss ways in which educational policies and practices should be designed to promote democracy and social justice, and thus further to succeed Ethiopia's Vision to become middle income country in 2025.

2. Methodology

The research employed a qualitative study based on a careful examination of both primary and secondary sources. Relevant published and unpublished works have been consulted, cross-checked and reinterpreted. Finally, since the authors themselves are a teachers/lecturers educating Democracy, social justice ,governance, and development issues, we used our own experience and observation to analyze and uncover the underlying issues in educating Democracy and social justice to further Ethiopia's 2025 vision .

3. Education In Ethiopia

In Ethiopia education should foster collaboration between government leaders, students, educators, parents, and, and promote youth engagement and empower women's participation in conflict mitigation and reconciliation activities as a prerequisite to creating and sustaining a society vibrant by democratic principles and collective justice values. Education as instrument, should also empower marginalized people, support the freedom of speech, Religion and promote social cohesion. Drawing from our existing research and from own educational experiences in Ethiopia, we argue that the quality of instructional materials and trained man power currently used in Ethiopia's primary , secondary and college schools in many ways limit opportunities for human capacity development, particularly by failing to engage educators and students in critical conversations around democracy and social justice. We use Ethiopia's Vision of overall development as a transformative theoretical framework around which critical discourses about democracy and social justice can be articulated to develop and implement educational approaches and strategies that empower the citizens inclusively to take charge of their individual and collective destiny, and to work together as one in pursuit of the national vision of development with equity and prosperity in 2025.

4. The constraints and achievement of education in restoring social justice and development in Ethiopia

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The next summary of the findings from a research study that examined the extent to which current educational strategy, intellectual debate and textbooks foster democracy, social justice and Ethiopianism dispositions to realize vision 2025. Globally Educational attainment in all fields of study is on the rise. Globally, the proportion of adults over 15 years of age with at least some secondary education will rise from 60% in 2005 to 71% in 2025. Tertiary education attainment is projected to rise from 10% to 14%. The number of highly educated adults will rise fastest in Asia. Trends suggest the number of secondary school pupils will rise from 507 million in 2005 to 583 million in 2015. The growth will be most rapid in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, while smaller youth cohorts will lead to a decline in secondary school pupils in East Asia. The shortage of trained secondary school teachers will be even greater than for primary school teachers (GET, 2009).

The current 8-2-2 formal education structure in Ethiopia has been in place since 1994. Primary school has an official entry age of seven and a duration of eight grades. Secondary school is divided into two cycles: lower secondary consists of grades 9 and 10; upper secondary consists of grades 10 and 11. Pre-school education is intended for ages 4-6. Primary education is, by law, free and compulsory, whereas the pre-primary and secondary levels are not. Students sit for certificate examinations at the end of grades 8, 10, and 12. (Moe, 2011). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) publishes data for this country as if it has a 6-4-2 structure, with the result that UIS pupil counts and flow rates for primary and lower secondary do not reflect the nature of the official system. For this reason, care should be taken when using UIS data for Ethiopia. Therefore we argue that the educational policy should work hand in hand with stakeholders to educate the people about democracy, inclusiveness, tolerance, diversity, and impartiality of all nation nationality to achieve 2025 vision.

Although Ethiopia, like most countries in Africa, has continued to recorded high economic growth averaging 11.3 percent over the last decade and is ranked among the ten fastest growing economies in Africa, the citizen income disparity and erosion of national consensus frightened the nation (AEO, 2011). While government should continue to pursue prudent macroeconomic policies and educational strategies to sustain and even accelerate growth, additional efforts are needed to reorient the growth trajectory towards promoting more sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth. Whereas economic growth provides the necessary foundation for enhancing household and public spending, private and public capital formation and the overall social welfare of citizens, it does not by itself guarantee that stability, enhanced social welfare, and social peace will occur and prevail across the population.

Development and human development in particular should be pursued through rights-based approaches and as central feature of any conflict reduction strategy and over all development of the nation (UNDP,2012). The education of democratic citizen requires critical and political literacies, not just

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functional skills training that lead to technical literacy. Ethiopian schools must be centrally concerned with literacies of active local and global citizenship, including a critical view of world of work .learning to read and write should be based on understanding that literacy is a social practice and that making meaning requires reading the world ,country and the word . this will make difference in citizens to stand together to create one socio-economic and political community, and to achieve the vision of 2025 to become middle income country (Stephen J Ball,2013)

The purpose of education in a democratic society is to inculcate the values of cooperation, fairness and justice into the hearts of our students. We would argue that these values are essential to maintaining and improving a functioning democracy in any country. In Ethiopia, our young democracy is in serious need of a shake up. We have rising inequality due to an economic system based on competition and profit, which neglects the poor. Ethiopian teachers at all field of study should 't run our schools and classrooms like a dictatorship and then pretend to think that our students will be prepared to be active citizens participating in our democratic system. We also have to ensure that we present democracy as a system and process that is always happening by being involved in our communities and institutions. Indeed Voting every election is only one aspect of being an active democratic citizen. Part of our responsibilities as citizens is to work with others collaboratively to accomplish shared goals and dreams. Any rights or freedoms that have been granted by politicians have rarely come independent of citizens demanding them as part of a larger social movement.

According to Dan Scratch (2014), Democracy is not for the faint of heart and it is something that must be protected by citizens of any country. Our schools must be places where students have a voice that is heard and they must be able to take action on issues that they care about. If we adults seek to limit or silence student voice in our schools and education system then we are condemning our democracy to further degradation. It's time we make the shift towards a democratic approach to education in our classrooms and schools. If we don't, our democracy and all of us will suffer for it.

To envision democracy in a broad context requires a populace that envision democracy in thicker form .we believe that the best way to broadly embed a normative shift in a population is through education. We interested to do in perspectives of democracy and justice by education specifically to aware the students and scholars to work to change the existing bad attitude of injustices and undemocratization happening at all levels. We interrogate how the future educators embrace thick perspective that would envision meaning full linkages with the environment and with social justice,and that would have an appreciation of international or global context. Further dimension of the findings also have been described that education must begin by envisioning democracy beyond the mainstream normative forms that

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are framed uncritically within a liberal political economy (Paul R.et.al, 2014).

For Ethiopia's 2025 vision to develop a more just society in which its built environment is constructed in away that more deeply considers all citizens ,the role of education for democratization and social justice becomes essential part of the task to be done . To this end Ethiopian government has been implementing Growth and transformational plan (I,II) to emphasize critical engagement ,social justice,development,investment and development of human resource. Therefore Ethiopian educational system should focus on critical engagement of all citizens in socio-economic and political activities of the country as fundamental driving feature. Though as Ethiopian and researcher ,we believe that the formal and informal education and curriculum also need to be aligned with the issues of democracy ,justice, Human right ,raising questions ,creating space for reconciliation, peace building ,maintaining common sense wisdom ,acknowledging the fore fathers deed and how society preserve the nation for centuries .

5. **Framing Transformative Education System For Realization of Ethiopia's Development and Enriching to Middle Income Countries**

In 2011 Ethiopia announced a strategy to become a middle-income country with a climate-resilient green economy by 2025. But to mobilize and manage the vision the new strategy demands money and skilled man power that will change and transform the country and by changing its habit from the way it has funded development in the past.

The country planed this in recent years because of the finance available for development that has increased and the available cheap and skilled human power graduating every year but not enough to transform the nation towards over all development .Education also goes side by side with gradual increment of institution in regional states. Among the states that support the development at large is China in particular become a major source of finance for infrastructure projects. Indeed Tax revenues have risen, thanks to the government's reforms. And Ethiopia has received an increase in both development assistance in the form of grants and concessional loans, and in commercial loans from local sources and bilateral and multilateral institutions .however the infrastructural development and expansion of primary and secondary education are not enough to meet the citizens and government's growing ambition to achieve 2025 vision to middle income country. Meanwhile to achieve its climate resilient green economy strategy, Ethiopia needs investments more money to conserve and protect the environment until 2025.

The citizens' voice has been engaged in a discourse of democratization and that doesn't complete yet because these voices were oppressed for years in Ethiopian history. The main remedies towards sustainable development is Educating democracy and social justice in all spheres. Further what is needed is accommodation,

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listening, being responsible, tolerant and transparent, respecting rule of law, justice, and choices by all sides.

Relatively speaking, Ethiopia has come a long way in the democratization process compared to what it was before. In spite of the very few power-mongering individuals and diminishing partisan elements with the obsolete monarchist mentality in the past, many Ethiopians today care more for economic prosperity, democratic rights and inclusiveness within the existing diversity. The country plans for ending poverty through education is a prime strategy of modern thinking through which the Ethiopian nation can strive and prevail against all challenges.

In other side still in some democratic and social justice issues the country divided by deep rooted cumulative grievances of nation, nationalities of Ethiopia. Their voices are now loud and widespread because of the relatively expanding democratic freedom, changing economic status and global openness; every raised voice is becoming stronger and louder producing waves for the highly needed change. The existing socio-political confusion happening here and there might seems destructive in a short and long term view. Therefore we argue that, the vision to become middle income country by educating democracy and social justice is vital for achieving 2025 country's vision. Nevertheless, if minimum and basic standards of Human right, social justice, democratic rights of societies and individuals are observed, today's voices will transform the old mentality of governance and consolidate Ethiopia socio-economic and political development further. To this end, the federal government needs to be wise on resolving the current socio-economic and political failures.

The above discourses call on the government and citizens to respect the rule of law. We also argued that the stakeholders must be recognized the voices of justice and democracy always come in one package that always needs to realized and respected regardless of the difference in sex religion ethnicity…etc. Educating Human right democracy, women empowerment, tolerance should be agendas of all times at all regional and federal levels to scale up the existing unbalanced conception .Furthermore In all regional states the government should expand Investment to engulf the existing unemployment rate .Thus social ,economic ,cultural and economic development will prevail to all nation and nationalities of all Ethiopian . We cannot be concluded that today's Ethiopian problems are solely related one issue but multiplicities of challenges retard the vision of 2025. However, the article provides an open environment of manipulation of issues with democracy, human right and social justice in Ethiopia. Unless the issues solved properly in its current context, some opportunists can use it as a means of power struggle or for dividing the country into smaller states and the vision may not be realized.

6. Recommendations to succeed Ethiopia's 2025 vision

We conclude with the following possible recommendations to transform education in

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order to further the Vision to be branded in middle income country in 2025. Furthermore Ethiopia should articulate and implement an educational philosophy grounded in a vision of peaceful coexistence, community development, women empowerment, and democratic citizenship, as outlined in the Vision.

We contend that teachers have an enormous impact on the shaping of societal perspectives of social construction, such as democracy, social justice, human right and nation nationality right .Educational policy should be built on a foundation of social justice to engage in the socio-structural implications of urban planning, public health and the connection between the environment, political and the democratization process. The access and quality to socially relevant educational materials should be improved and expanded in each regional states to to reinforce context and history of Ethiopia. The existing curriculum should also be reformed to address socio-cultural issues across each region and foster peace-building dispositions in all subjects. Therefore it will motivate the nation towards development in 2025. The education curriculum in the regions and at federal level needed reform to build educators' capacity to teach for peace and development across all subject areas. Moreover, Citizens professional development should be provided in critical thinking skills, instructional materials evaluation, adaptation, and development, student-centered instruction as well as peace-building and conflict resolution that will transform the country to middle income country .Each Regions in the country should mold the pedagogy grounded in critical intercultural/multicultural education. Educating for democracy and social justice not just only curriculum reform, but most importantly, as an intentional process of transforming the Citizens dispositions, relationships, and behaviors of all Ethiopians across ethnic groups, regional origins, and socioeconomic positions and fostering individual and collective commitment to the common good. Such education will pave the way for realization of Ethiopia's vision to become middle income country even before 2025.

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