

A STUDY OF FEMALE EVENING LEARNERS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN ADDIS ABABA

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Abstract

This study aimed at drawing a profile of female evening learners in Addis Ababa to improve understanding and recommend relevant policy interventions. The typical female learner is more likely to be under 20 years of age, single, unemployed or if employed, poorly paid; is likely to have been in the regular program; is motivated by economic reasons. Distance and transportation, sexual harassment, lack of support or co-operation from employers and/or guardians are among their serious problems. Nevertheless, female learners are determined to continue learning. Among the recommendations were that government and society join hands to reduce the several problems of the learners.

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BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, RESEARCH SITE AND METHODOLOGY

Background

Ethiopia's primary schools have been able, at the best of their times, to enrol 30-40% girls. Over the last decade, this underdeveloped as well as unequal sector has failed to attract enough school age children. In 1996 participation dropped from 35 to 26%. Under-enrolment, failure, repetition and dropping out favour females. The government plans to improve the over all participation rate, raise that of females' to 50% at all levels of the school system, and increase adult literacy from 55% to 85% by the year 2000 (Government of Ethiopia 1993). According to a document prepared for a mid-December 1996 donor conference, the government is counting on a substantial donor assistance with a supplementary community contribution to cater for the education of school age children through the year 2001. Out-of-school youth, adolescents, and adults are not covered by this plan. Alternative and complementary approaches need to be encouraged and promoted if educational opportunities are to broaden in the short and long term. Obviously, one such alternative is adult and nonformal education that can supplement government provision efforts and at the same time serve disadvantaged segments of society. Adult and nonformal education programs should be made to reach wider populations through special day classes, evening, "Kiremt" (July and August months), correspondence programs and mass media or combinations of these as much as human, technological, organisational capacities permit. The national policy on women advocates the use of all available alternatives to educate women.

The provision of evening education, formal or nonformal, ought to be considered in this light. But quite to the contrary, evening education is rarely developed and supported by governments of many developing countries. Evening learning and learners are usually excluded from national statistics, policies and plans. When

and if any statistics appear on adult learning, they do not show male and female learners separately. The literature on the education of females in Third World Countries for example by Ballara (1992), Biddlecombe et al., (1988), Blunt (1988), Stromquist (1988), and others is also silent on part-time learners. There is lack of knowledge about programs and participants in Ethiopia and elsewhere. This study is concerned with female learners in Addis Ababa in elementary school evening classes: their socio-economic status (age, occupation, and income), their motivation for learning, what their plans are after grade six and finally, what for want of a better term is called, their non-instructional problems (i.e. those not directly or intimately related to classroom learning and teaching), for example distance and money, with a view to developing better understanding and proposing interventionary policy measures.

Rationale

Female education at the primary level is the object of this study for several reasons. Since the mid-1970s, there is a global interest in the education of females and their productive roles in national development. Lack of education is identified as one of the constraints in women's participation in national development. Their education has therefore become a towering human resource development agenda (Anand 1986; Blunt 1988). It is argued that the social returns in the education of females, especially at the primary level, is more than the education of boys (by USAID 1990). Such education leads to better family planning; results in decline of birth rates; reduces infant mortality and malnutrition; enhances women's roles as members of the family, community and the country. UNICEF (1995:25) says that "adult literacy and basic education, parenting education, and teacher education are the keys to children's education, the quality of learning and the quality of life".

In every region of the world, females' education lags behind that of boys and more women than men are illiterate. The World Conference on Education For All

1990:10), whose declaration Ethiopia also signed, which noted this inequality, declared in 1990 that "the urgent priority is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education of females and remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation." That educational inequality favours females in Ethiopia is a recognised fact. About two-thirds of the out-of-school children are females (Aberra and Zewdu 1992; Gennet 1991; Seyoum 1986). A March 1994 UNESCO mission to Ethiopia recommended an emphasis on the education and training of out-of-school females. The Education and Training Policy (1994) promises to redress the male/female educational inequality. For a long time to come primary education, evening and regular, will be the only educational experience for the large majority of Ethiopians, including girls and women. Female education at this level deserves more attention because primary education is the foundation of further education and lifelong education. Females wish to learn as much as males do.

The few studies referred to and others however treat regular (full-time) learners, not females or males for that matter, who pursue part-time education as adults. Even a study with a title of "the Problem of Women's Education" (Etsegenet 1976) says nothing about evening learners. Without specifying the gender and level, a 1976 report by the then Department of Adult and Continuing Education of the Ministry of Education stated that, although participant profile studies are lacking, most of the evening learners were housewives, unemployed adults, those who were unable to secure admission into the regular program, and those who had completed initial education and were employed. The same Department in 1983 EC (add 7 or 8 years to get a Gregorian year) reported that females' participation had continued to rise between 1967 and 1978 EC, surpassing the males' by 11% in 1978 EC. A March 1996 European Commission study said that evening programs have increased the participation rate of females.

Because of the lack of information, recent conventional thinking is that primary level evening classes are the preserve of females and particularly housemaids.

But this and others are very general statements. There is a need for more specific data about learners, actual and potential. This study, it is hoped, fills a gap. The characteristics of learners are major factors in determining their most likely learning needs, desired learning sites and activities, probable limitations of the learning time and methods. It will inform decision and policy formulation by evening school personnel and other relevant and interested bodies. Such studies help teachers of female adults to become more conscious of how they treat adult learners. Those responsible for education can better understand, appreciate and take necessary decisions and actions. Finally, such studies will serve comparative purposes.

Research Sites

Although Addis Ababa does not represent the country, it was used as the research site because it offers the largest evening educational opportunity with relatively less problems for learners. The city has a population of 2,112,737 of which 1,089,285 are females (Population and Housing Census 1994). In 1989 (1996-97), 137 elementary schools offered evening classes in the six educational zones (districts) of the city. These evening classes then enrolled 32802 learners of which 17013 (or 52%) were females. This tends to reflect the population of the regular school. A school mapping study of November 1997 reported that the female student population in the regular grades of 1-8 was slightly higher than that of boys.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive survey method. According to Ato Giremew Goshu of the Addis Ababa Administrative Council Education Bureau, the city in 1989 EC, had 137 primary schools offering evening classes with the following zonal (district) distribution.

Table 1: Zonal Distribution of Evening Class Offering Schools and Samples Taken

Zone Number & Name	Evening School Program	Sample Selected
1. Teklehaimanot	25	5
2. Kirkos	31	7
3. Yeka	20	5
4. Entoto	36	8
5. Kechene	21	5
6. Wolemera	4	1
Total	137	31

As shown in the table, a sample of 31 schools (or about 20%) were randomly selected on the basis of this ratio, which is about one evening program for every five.

Zones with 5 or less evening classes = 1

Zones with 20-25 evening classes = 5

Zones with 30-35 evening classes = 7

Zones with 36-40 evening classes = 8

Grade six female learners were the target of the study because (a) it was assumed that the learners here are serious as demonstrated by their persistence to reach this level; (b) attendance is better here than in lower grades as this was the final year for certification until quite recently; and (c) the learners here can have a better understanding of the Amharic questionnaire. The questionnaire principally dealt with learners' socio-economic status, their motivation for enrolling, and future education plans. The results need to be read with caution because responding to a questionnaire is a relatively new tradition; there is a tendency to conceal one's private life; and some concepts too were probably difficult.

With the assistance of adult evening learners in Introduction to Adult Education course in the Faculty of Education, the questionnaire was distributed to and collected from 580 female learners of grade six during one of their class sessions earlier on in the second semester of 1997. Not everybody responded to each of the common items of the questionnaire, but there was a 100% return. Because of difficulties with such concepts as employment and income, there were discrepancies or contradictions in responding to kindred items.

Housewives were unable to translate their labour into money, culture and lack of computational skill barring. Supplementary discussions were also held with some of the school principals, teachers, and zone education officers.

LITERATURE REVIEW: EVENING LEARNING AND LEARNERS

Evening Learning in General

Several designations are used to refer to the education given in the evenings. The term evening class is preferred and used here. An evening class is a delivery mode whereby courses generally designed for full-time learners are also offered to part-times in the evening, generally after five or six p.m. five to six days a week. The evening hours are convenient to all parties involved. Facilities are not allowed to sit idle. These provisions rarely have their own resources; they operate on existing ones. Hence, they represent the least cost, if any, to governments. Teachers are interested in the extra income. Evening education serves learners from all walks of life, helping them to combine earning and learning. These are havens for the educationally disadvantaged.

Though not by design, evening education has come to tackle two difficulties: governments' deficient educational provision and individuals' inability to engage in full-time learning. Evening classes are a happy meeting ground for those seeking education and those willing to give it free or otherwise. Historically, they are rooted in the private initiative. Evening learners are either internally or externally motivated. Evening education helps one to remove a deficiency, to compete and improve ones knowledge, skills and attitudes. Self-improvement, self-respect and dignity deriving from it constitute the prime movers in evening learning (Harris 1980; Knowles 1962; Mee 1980).

Evening classes require a supportive social, political and economic environment. They prosper where there are persons desirous of learning and able to afford the fees, if any; where there are persons to teach for little or no fee; and where government, if relevant, permits the free use of facilities. Perhaps and partly because of lack of exposure to adult learning, evening classes are often and wrongly regarded especially by academics as second rate institutions for second

rate learners. Rarely do governments of developing countries support evening education. Tradition and culture and even policy have, over years, attached the highest level of importance to full-time study. In Ethiopia for example, since the Nonformal Panel replaced the former Department of Adult and Continuing Education in 1992, the Federal Ministry of Education has no one responsible for evening education at primary and secondary levels.

As an institution, evening education has its own shortcomings and problems. Evening classes are generally urban based; they normally spring up in electrical towns. In developing countries, they often give the prescribed curricula including quizzes, term tests and examinations. These formal offerings still dominate because of the diploma disease on the part of the learners; it is easier to tread along beaten roads; the prescribed content presents no challenge to status quo and authorities tolerate it. On the whole, such education is domesticating, not liberating; and supply, not demand, driven.

At the level of learners, females face special problems. They are often considered inferior in learning. Hence, they have to do double proving (neither second rate nor inferior). Recent push for efficiency, not for equity, for example by the World Bank and the IMF will exacerbate the already low female participation in education. Similarly, cost sharing and shifting measures will either increase the volume of evening learning, or push up fees or both. Whatever happens can disfavour females. They can be barred from admission or be pushed out of the system. Finally, it is often pointed out that the economy of a country has to improve for the education of females in developing countries to improve. Even then, it may be the more or less favoured who benefit the most from such educational provisions.

Historically, evening classes have served largely but not exclusively, working adults. They also serve out-of-school youth and adolescents. More often than not all three groups are volunteers. For working persons evening education is

andfall, offering, ideally, learning opportunities either at first or repeated entries and exits with the goal of improving ones life chance.

In developing countries where profile studies on evening learners are scanty, fragmented and glossy, the adult participant is most likely to be a man than a woman, between 20 and 40 years old, illiterate, semi-literate or educated, unemployed, and is usually motivated by immediate economic returns. The premium in adult education including evening study is generally on improving life chances by securing credentials (Coles 1977; Lowe 1975; Prosser 1969). Cost, distance, and low personal priority are some of the major obstacles to learning.

Evening Learning and Evening Learners in Ethiopia

Evening learning is not new to Ethiopia. Some of the lessons in the Orthodox Church schools were conducted in the evenings. Nineteenth century missionaries had a girls' school in Blesta in addition to late afternoon and evening classes for women and girls elsewhere. Koranic schools had day classes for children and evening classes for adults (Aren 1978; MEFA 1949-50; Ruckmik 1952; Pankhurst 1955). In Asbe Teferi, Harrar, and at the request of some government employees, evening classes were instituted a little before the Italian invasion. Between 1942 and 1952 several evening learning provisions from literacy to university level were sponsored by diplomatic missions, foreign school principals, teachers, Addis Ababa University and the government. These programs in and outside of Addis Ababa served those unable to join regular classes and those leaving them.

In 1948, the first entrants of the first adult education institute were all 100 males employed in government and non-government organisations (Tilahun 1991). The 1952 year book of the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts (MEFA) however, reported 13 female and 732 male learners then. The same source reported that learners were mainly recruited from among teachers, employees of various

offices, military officers, businessmen, factory workers and foreigners learning Amharic. The 1955 government notice on fundamental education and the establishment of a Directorate of Basic Education in the MEFA in 1956 gave an impetus for the further development of evening learning at literacy and higher levels. In the late 1950's for example, the Young Men Christian Association offered free literacy classes which were open to and attended by maids and guards who had missed schooling. In 1957 the Ethiopian Women Work (initially Welfare) Association, a voluntary group of Ethiopian Women, is the first ever association in modern Ethiopia to take a gender line and establish a program of day and evening classes under a tent for the 15-45 year old females.

As early as 1948, a conference of provincial education officers identified fees, distance, lack of electricity, and shortage of teachers as some of the obstacles to evening learning in general. Despite this long history, the provision of evening learning in rural Ethiopia is still underdeveloped, the lack of electricity being one of the constraints. In 1982, EC, for example, of the 8250 primary schools, only 857 had evening programs. The following year, the primary schools increased to 237, only two of which opened evening offerings. In fact, not all of these offered primary level instruction.

On the individual plane, a number of pull and push factors operate in the evening education especially of females. On the positive side, classes are conducted in the evenings, after the day's routine is attended to. Evening learning may be the only alternative. Learners can learn and earn. Fees are paid on as-you-go basis, neither in advance nor at once. These fees are also relatively low compared, for example, with some of the indirect cost of full-time study. Evening classes also tend to be generally easier to get into, stay on with more repeat chances than day schools. Evening learning is a coping strategy. Older girls with unwanted pregnancy and those repeating and/or failing in the day program can join evening classes. Evening learning is also a shopping ("networking") medium whereby, for example, maids and guards exchange information on wages, benefits, and general

working conditions in private homes and organisations. These classes too offer specialising opportunities. But there are also several push factors.

Among these are lack of money, childcare services (for those with small children), transportation and outdated cultural mores, dark evenings and alleys with unpleasant encounters (especially for females). Learning, as a secondary activity to living, is also interrupted as a result of shifts in residence in search of better working conditions.

With incomplete and less informative recorded available data, it is difficult to see a pattern in the national enrolment of females. For instance, although the figures for 1934 to 1972 EC are not broken by level of education, female enrolment at the primary level was probably low (see Appendix I). For the decade 1973 to 1982 EC however, where the figures are broken by level of education, the national female enrolment at grade six level improved; females constituted a little less than 50% for 1973 through 1975 EC; more than 50% for the following three years but declined to less than 50% during the next four years leading to the fall of the Derg. Then there was an upward trend in 1983 and 1984 EC, following the establishment of a transitional government. Although evening programs have been limited, the national female participation at the primary level, on the whole, has been better than that of the day school (see for example Appendix I).

Evening Learning and Learners in Addis Ababa

Evening learning in Addis Ababa in general and profile of female learners at the primary level in particular has attracted but only some BA level studies. Demissie Tekle (1990) used 100 evening learners in three vocational and technical schools to draw a profile. His finding was that females were over-represented in his sample; two thirds of the respondents were between 18 and 28; 72% were unemployed and their reason for learning was job related. Their problems were unavailability of transportation services and, possibly, high fares, lack of

textbooks, time, and place of study. Mekuriaw Tegegne (1991) used a sample of 231 to construct a profile of evening adult learners in the Junior College of Commerce of Addis Ababa. The evening learners were 48% female. Eighty-one per cent of the learners were under 30 years of age and 80% were learning to improve their income. Transportation was the number one problem. Tirfu Sahelu (1991) was interested in establishing the profile of 320 evening female learners in secondary schools. According to him, the typical female learner was between 20 and 30 years old, single, enrolled in vocational and technical streams, had a monthly income of less than 250 Birr and had her fees paid by someone else, and was motivated to learn for economic ends. The major problems were, in the order of seriousness, fees, transportation, and lack of study time.

Wogayehu Melaku (1991) investigated the problems of 448 evening learners in the academic streams of secondary schools. Among the findings relevant to this study were: only 28% were females; 46% less than 20 years old; about 51% were jobless; the majority had their fees paid by someone else; economic reasons propelled them to learn. Textbooks, fees, study place, time, and families (meaning mostly employers, guardians and relatives) were the top five problems.

Demelash Makonnen (1993) set out to construct a profile of evening learners enrolled at Kotebe Teachers College in 1992-93. This evening program was targeted at teacher-learners with grade 12 education. Of the 1219 learners then, 387 or about one-fourth were females. Of the 150 who filled and returned this questionnaire, 50 (or 33%) were females.

Female participation in elementary school evening programs for the decade 1973 to 1982 EC. for example, has been consistently more than 50% although, here again, there are valleys and peaks. As a topic however, female participation at this level in Addis Ababa has not attracted studies. Fanta Moges (1991) was the first to study elementary level evening education with focus on the status of evening programs in public elementary schools. He used very few such schools then. He found out that of the respondents, females constituted 51%; 60% were

between 15 and 20 years of age; housemaids made up about 41% of the employed and 96% of the employed earned Birr 150.00 or less per month.

Turning attention to the current provision, one finds that Addis Ababa primary level evening programs in 1989 EC were under the aegis of primary schools of the government, the public, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the missionaries, and special boards and agencies. In 1995/96 school year, there were 222 primary schools (grade 1-6), only 61 were government. A 1991 study of evening programs in public schools reported that, unlike the day programs, these got no government attention. This is generally true of others too.

As the following table from the Education Bureau shows, the number of elementary schools offering evening classes has been going up and down during the decade of 1980 and 1989 EC, the years for which there is some data, not only across the years but also across the six educational zones of the city. The table shows no pattern except that (a) 1982 E.C. was a rather lean year for all zones; (b) there was some semblance of regularity in 1981, 1983, 1987, 1988 EC. Between the latter two years, the number of evening classes in Zone Three (Yeka) increased more than two fold while Zone Four (Entoto) experienced a 33% loss. In 1988 EC, primary level evening education engaged 1359 teachers, 32802 learners of which 17013 (or 52%) were females, and 2470 classrooms in 195 schools. In 1989 EC, 44 schools closed their evening programs, most probably for insufficient enrolment to offset costs.

Table 2. Evening Programs by Year (EC) and Zone.

Year/Zone.	1 Tekleha	2 Kirkos	3 Yeka	4 Entoto	5 Ketche.	6 Wolme.	Total
1989	25	32	23	35	33	3	151
1988	25	40	27	61	34	8	195
1987	28	37	12	79	33	7	196
1986	22	30	20	30	28	2	132
1985	25	31	20	36	21	4	137
1984	26	46	20	19	30	9	150
1983	24	45	21	23	36	10	159
1982	14	28	6	9	26	7	86
1981	32	23	36	22	DNA	DNA	DNA
1980	20	25	18	27	22	1	113

* Data not available

Using 1988 EC as an example, one sees no relation among the grade six female enrolment, population, and the number of evening classes in the Zones. For example, in the same year, Zone Four (Entoto), first in its population and number of evening classes, stood fourth in female enrolment. Zone One (Teklehaimanot) was fifth in its population and number of schools but was third in female enrolment. The top three in their grade six female enrolment were Kirkos, Yeka, and Teklehaimanot (see table below).

Table 3. Population, Evening Classes and Females in Grade Six in 1988 EC by Educational Zone

Zone	Population Size	Evening Classes	Grade 6 Enrolment
1. Teklehaimanot	(5) 159,087	(4) 25	(3) 3113
2. Kirkos	(3) 219,034	(1) 40	(1) 3777
3. Yeka	(4) 198,952	(3) 27	(2) 3624
4. Entoto	(1) 241,506	(2) 34	(4) 3112
5. Ketchene	(2) 222, 371	(2) 34	(5) 2812
6. Wolmera	(6) 48,335	(5) 8	(6) 532

(Numbers in parentheses show ranking for each category).

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Age

Overwhelmingly, the learners fall within the 15-17 age range. Trailing very much behind are, respectively, the 20-24 group, 11%, and those 25 and over, 7%. Those 14 years old or less make up 8%. These are those who probably were denied admission into regular school and/or those who are enrolled in the same grade in the two modes to improve performance. The 15-17 age group are, for all intents and purposes, adults. The 1988 E.C. grade six female enrolment (17,013) indicates that females constituted 52% of the learners. That the majority are within this age range and of the same sex suggests to adult educators that there are similarities in needs and interests and therefore designing a separate and relevant curriculum, and teaching approach would be relatively easier. But the problem is that they are not found in the same school or zone.

Education

The Educational background of the female evening learners is varied. Only 263 responded to the question on previous education. An unbelievably high number, 260, reported to have been in the regular program. This is indicative of the wide spread intra-delivery mode and inter-school transfers. These transfers may have been propelled by academic and/or economic difficulties, and change of residences. A group of evening program principals said that females perform less than boys both in regular and evening classes. The same group also said that many girls are less serious and less competitive than boys. Females are also encouraged by the evening program administration which tolerated several entries, exits, and repetitions, unlike in the regular programs. Some school-age children in the regular program are known to hold simultaneous registrations to improve their performance in the regular school. All these combine to inflate the

number of those with day program experience. The tenure of females in the current evening program also differs. Some have been studying continuously in the evening program of the same school. Many are recent arrivals of only one, two, or three years.

As elsewhere in the developing world, the reason for learning, for 98%, is economic related, i.e. to improve their lot, by finding or changing jobs or getting the next salary increment with a primary school certificate. Females in this study are no exception to this. But this is unrealistic. Perhaps these females are unaware of or wish to ignore the fact that in present day Addis Ababa, there are thousands of secondary school and college graduates waiting for employment. In recent years, female advocacy has been high in Ethiopia mass media. This advocacy might have raised the high hopes of employment for these learners.

Evening learning however was the first preference of only 127 (or about 22%) of the 580. The rest were forced into it by their circumstances. Lack of space, the age factor, work, admission fees singly or simultaneously have prevented full-time study, which is their preference. Two hundred five responded to the question of why they chose the evening program. More than half (57%) of these said that evening learning was convenient to combine work and study.

There was a question on whether or not the learners had a conducive study environment, understood to mean time and place, at home. Of the 477 responding to this item, only 52% expressed dissatisfaction about the environment. The unemployed will have time; the housemaids may have neither the time nor the place.

One of the open-ended questions required learners to list, in the order of seriousness, major non-instructional problems meaning those they encounter outside of class learning. Five traditional problems with universal character got the highest frequency. These have special import for the education of young

females. The first was the twin problem of distance and transportation. Distance is not popularly recognised as an urban problem.

It can be a problem partly because not all schools are established in large population areas; partly because demand overflows from the nearest school to a distant one; partly because learners may not change schools when they change residences; and partly because not all communities are accessible by vehicle. The complaint about transportation was not clear whether it meant lack of service or money or both. Given the limited bus services after 8:00 p.m., given that taxi fares go up during these hours, and given that many cannot afford even the normal taxi fares, the problem is a double-edged one. But a group of school principals have challenged this, no matter how it is defined. According to them, the vast majority of the elementary schools are within short walking distances in the city. However, the problem can be real in the outlying Zones of Kaliti and Wolemra.

The second was sexual harassment between school and home. During the dark hours, this is aggravated by lack of transport services and distance. The unruly persons who harass the learners are described neutrally as "goremisoch" and "wendoch", or pejoratively as "duryewoch" and "wemenewoch". These however are not always to blame for it is also reported and admitted by some females themselves that there are some among the learners who flirt with such men. Some housemaids are known to use evening education as an excuse to take time off from the employer. School principals have also suggested that there are housemaids who use evening learning as an excuse to get out of their 24-hour kitchen confinement. Two teachers from one school had also comments along this same vein. But one school director said that the public exaggerates these and says that the females are not honest learning-seeking persons but ones pursuing socially unacceptable goals.

The third major problem identified both by learners and school principals was lack of support by or co-operation from employers and/or guardians or families.

Employers delay the payment of wages which in turn delays payment of tuition fees. Employers are also reluctant to see the maid leave early enough to be in class and to see her return a little late. It must also be recognised that some of these learners over extend their leave of absence with undesirable outcomes. Guardians or relatives-cum-families may be concerned about the learner's welfare. Both these provide ground for employers frowning at early departures and late arrivals. There may also be occasional reluctance to continue to invest in the education of the learner because evening learning is generally viewed as inferior.

Money was a fourth concern. Understandably, this can be a serious concern for the unemployed. Although the monthly tuition fee is relatively low, those in the low wage bracket however can find it hard to cover costs associated with their education especially if they, in addition, have to support others near and far. Some housemaids do send some money to relatives outside of Addis Ababa either out of a genuine concern or to prove they are, after all, doing fine. There is need for some training on prioritising and budgeting.

Fear of the darkness and lack of time for studying ranked fifth. The former is a common problem while the latter can be serious for those working as maids partly because the domestic chore appears endless and partly because time allocation and utilisation are known neither to the employer nor to the employee.

Despite these and other problems however, learners (87%) wish to continue learning after grade six either because they perceive formal education to be the most desirable key to the modern employment sector and at the same time they recognise the insufficiency of primary education or because of the fact that education simply creates its own demand. Evening learning can be joy or can be used for other ends. Opportunities for repetition seem unlimited. Of course, a lot depends on what happens in the meantime. Some might get married, have children, etc., which can be discouraging.

Employment, Occupation and Income

Traditionally, evening classes have been frequented by working adults. According to the 562 responses, there are, at the primary level now, two large groups of learners: the unemployed (52%) and the employed (48%) in low-wage jobs in private homes, organisations and government offices. School principals however put the unemployed at less than 10%. It may be that the learners understood employment to mean working for an organisation. At any rate, the non-government sector is the major employer. The monthly salary is dismally low, Birr 150.00 or less; many reported wages much less than 120, the lowest starting government salary. In the case of some maids and guards however, full board, at least worth 100 Birr, is also provided. Domestic service appears to be the job available for females of this age because housemaids constitute the largest single group (54%) of the employed, with housewives and daily labourers trailing way behind. Many among the employed did not wish to specify their occupation and simply marked the dummy box "other". As a group, they constituted 21%. Included here were tailors, bar girls, customs and security women. That housemaids are the single largest group employed has also been reported in earlier surveys by students in adult education classes. These groups put together however account for less than 50% of the female learners at this level. Clearly, the female learners at this level are either unemployed or low paid ones.

To summarise, this study set out to answer the following questions about grade six female learners in evening programs. First, who, in terms of age, employment, occupation, and income are these learners? Female learners in primary school evening programs are more likely to be within the 15-19 age bracket, single and unemployed (52%). Those employed earn less than Birr 150.00 a month, two-thirds getting less than 120. Housemaids constitute the single largest group, housewives, day labourers and others trailing very far behind and together make up 48%. Evidently, the socio-economic status of evening

learners in Ethiopia has changed. For long, there was not even a passing reference to housemaids as evening learners, much less of their constituting a good segment to reckon with. This is perhaps, in part, the result of the induced literacy campaign, availability of learning provisions, and females' taking their own initiatives.

Second, why are they in the evening program? Many, in some cases as high as 50% had been in the regular program and now, because of their circumstances, have joined evening learning. Adults learn for a variety of reasons. For these females as well as for others at other levels too, the motivation for learning is economic related. In other words, money holds both the promise and the problem for evening learning. These females learn to get money; they also discontinue if they have no money to pay. Transfer from day to evening programs is not particular to this level. Secondary school records also betray learners who once were in the regular program but were found attending evening classes (Tiruneh, 1991).

Third, what major non-instructional problems are obstacles to their learning? The non-instructional problems identified, in the order of seriousness, are: distance and transportation, sexual harassment, lack of support by or co-operation from employers and/or guardians, and dark roads and lack of time to study. These appear to be common to and more serious for females than for boys at all levels of day and evening learning. Despite these problems however, females are determined to advance their education.

By way of a profile then, the typical female learner is more likely to be under 20 years of age, single, unemployed or if employed, very poorly paid; is likely to have been in the regular program; is motivated by economic reasons and despite formidable obstacles of non-instructional nature, is determined to continue her education. This study corroborates earlier studies that evening learning at all levels is for the relatively young, under 30.

Recommendations

1. What positive interventionary policy measures can be taken to help these females? In the context of the current drive for the education of females, attracting, retaining and helping female learners entails various inter-related activities such as reducing financial and other barriers. Not all of the problems are however amenable to policy intervention; but some are. First, society and the government can join hands to ensure the safety and security of evening learners. To make the trip to and from school much less threatening and discouraging, communities, in co-operation with the police, can organise seriously programmed special patrol or escort units for the hours of say 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. Communities like those around Berhane Ethiopia and Kechene Debre Berhan Schools are known to have instituted such arrangements. Training females for self-defence can also help. Special bus lines can operate about 7:30 and 9:00 p.m., presumably, the very difficult hours. This will be a partial response, and what the government can do, to the lack of transportation services. Government cannot be expected to give free services. It is also worthwhile exploring if schools can open satellite centres closer to learners using available public buildings. It is worth considering for some classes to meet say between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. of the day.
2. Considering the maturity and experience of the learners, education authorities can design a separate and an abbreviated curriculum to shorten the duration of evening learning and thereby minimise the hardships. School principals and teachers also need to be fair and firm with these learners. Promising learners of school age, if any, should be allowed to transfer to day programs if they so wish.
3. Society and the government can join hands to remove or reduce the economic problem. These adult learners have volunteered to learn. Society spends a lot of money on non-voluntary learners. Why can't we

capitalise on the voluntary nature of adult learning? The ablest and the needy can be assisted through a scholarship scheme for the duration of their primary school by the local schools themselves, the Kebeles, other organisations, especially business and industry, and individuals. Some of these can and should be considered for tax exemptions for their benevolence.

4. The national education policy states that the necessary conditions shall be facilitated whereby women can obtain training and education. Further, the policy states that the government will give financial support to raise the participation of women in education. Hence, the MOE, the Regional, Zonal and Wereda education bureaux can and should each offer a certain number of scholarships. The mode of delivery should not at least for females impose expenses. Both Peru and Sweden have fee-free evening classes for adults at the basic education level. In Sweden, basic education is nine years long for youth.
5. The lack of co-operation and support from employers and guardians cannot be solved through policy or legislation but through long and sustained educational programs, using all available means, about the value of education, significance of the education of females, and on encouraging and promoting females' education. Such programs should be targeted at adults including the politico-administrative leadership, the public, the police, women themselves, employers, educators, and other influential persons at the grass-roots level such as Kebeles. Since husbands exercise some power over wives, they should also be part of this target.
6. Evening schools operate largely in Addis Ababa and other major towns. Many rural schools have no evening programs for lack of electricity. Electrification of such schools using small generators will not only improve girls' access to schools but will also reduce female migration to major towns and cities under the pretext of evening learning. Where

electrification is impossible, classes may have to meet earlier than usual say between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m., once the employers are persuaded.

7. Evening programs are of particular service to women and girls of developing countries like Ethiopia whose services are very much needed at home. Evening learning is a realistic alternative for many such females. A government that is aware of the dilemma of females and which is serious about the education of females would realistically establish, encourage, and protect and promote such alternative programs.
8. Individuals sponsor, as some teachers are currently sponsoring some full-time pupils in their schools, deserving and able female learners.
9. Within the framework of both Education For All and the Education and Training Policy, the MOE and REBs can influence both existing and new schools, in consultation with learners where appropriate, to:
 - reorient their evening education towards the primary level.
 - make basic education free regardless of time of offering or learning.
 - give priority, in regular admissions, to female evening learners within the school age who wish to transfer to full-time study.
 - include in school statistics females of school-age learning in the evening.

In conclusion, the education and training of females is of the utmost concern in the development agenda. Many obstacles to their education as identified here are ones that can be reduced through understanding and concerted community and government effort. Beginnings in the direction of implementing these

recommendations are important and useful steps towards discharging our public and civic responsibilities.

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Appendix I
የጥያቄ ትምህርት በዘመን

ደረጃ	ጾታ	ዓመት																			
		1934	1935	1936	1937	1938-55	1938-55	1938-55	1938-55	1938-55	1938-55										
1-12	ወንድ	786	732	1061	268	DNA															
	ሴት	DNA	13	31	27	DNA															
	ጽሑፍ	5786*	745	1092	795	DNA															
II																					
ደረጃ	ጾታ	ዓመት																			
		1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972			
1-12	ወንድ	5207	5911	7476	8924	12620	14087	19087	23591	29017	35691	42734	37348	40159	44621	49579	54687	66713			
	ሴት	1504	1798	2225	3106	3879	5044	8153	11821	17140	24853	33157	24910	67774	74750	33056	37130	63797			
	ጽሑፍ	6711	7709	9692	12030	16499	19111	27240	35412	46157	60544	57891	62248	66933	74571	82633	91817	150510			
III																					
ደረጃ	ጾታ	ዓመት																			
		1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982											
1-6	ወንድ	69327	88150	84567	75362	65586	60187	71151	71196	54064	42428										
	ሴት	67910	83391	81821	79357	73876	61063	61602	53678	48071	40983										
	ጽሑፍ	132237	171541	166208	152719	139462	121250	132253	124874	102075	83411										
7-8	ወንድ	13962	18661	21779	21964	20598	20180	21947	22999	18879	16346										
	ሴት	8786	11963	14819	15902	16017	17197	18701	18382	16773	13890										
	ጽሑፍ	22748	30642	36598	37866	36635	37377	40648	40781	33632	30236										
9-12	ወንድ	29996	36121	41220	41704	45329	42774	44145	41305	41305											
	ሴት	17108	21793	27014	30588	34402	39797	39007	37934	37591											
	ጽሑፍ	46204	57914	68234	74125	77176	83126	90926	82079	78896											
1-12	ወንድ	112385	142932	147586	138603	127888	123141	138427	145514	117028	100079										
	ሴት	93804	117147	123454	120034	112662	120100	111067	102778	92464											
	ጽሑፍ	206189	260079	271040	247922	235803	258527	256581	219806	192543											
ጠቅላይ ጽሑፍ	66335	85533	98222	106081	116646	113904	123864	125999	111110	85111											
ጠቅላይ ጽሑፍ	216	548	940	769	796	820	982	1184	1072	857											

* As in the records

Appendix II

Percentage of Regular and Evening Education Female Participants in Grads 1-6

School Year		Regular Schools (National)	Evening Schools	
Ge.	Eth.		National	A.A
1982-83	1974	DNA	48.6	53.5
1983 -84	1975	32a	49.1	56.1
1984-85	1976	38b	51.9	58.3
1985-86	1977	39b	52.9	60.6
1986-87	1978	39b	50.3	59.4
1987-88	1979	39b	46.4	60.0
1988-89	1980	39b	42.9	56.0
1989-90	1981	39b	47.0	57.0
1990-91	1982	22c	49.1	56.0
1991-92	1983	19c	55.0	58.0
1992-93	1984	16c	52.9	57.1
1993-94	1985	DNA	55.3	70.8 incomplete

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