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## Curriculum Implementation: Yesterday's Issue?

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### Introduction

This article reviews and analyzes several approaches of policy and or curriculum implementations to serve as possible theoretical and conceptual framework for studies on the area. The review and analysis include several conceptions and perspectives on curriculum, policy, and implementation experiences of different countries in general and that of African countries in particular. Studies of implementation in developed as well as developing countries, almost all, are culture and context bound and have their own limitations to serve as conceptual frameworks for studies in Ethiopia. In other words, there seems to be no universally agreed upon meaning of curriculum and its implementation strategy. There is also no 'master' theory or model of implementation. Thus, this makes it difficult to choose one specific theory or model of implementation as a theoretical framework of studies in the area especially in developing countries like Ethiopia. The article then concludes with discussion of some critical variables to be considered in implementation studies. It also indicates the need to focus on process than product.

### Some Thoughts on Curriculum Meanings

Curriculum may be viewed from many different vantage points. It is a term which is used with several meanings and viewed from many directions having several levels of generality or specificity. Curriculum is a value laden term to the extent that its definitions are closely tied to certain value systems (Abebe , 1986).The culture of defining and

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developing curriculum according to Finnan and Levin (2000:89) perpetuate a set of basic beliefs and assumption that include : what schools should teach ; how students should learn; who should learn what; who should be teaching; how schools should be run and organized , how students be sorted; and schools' role in addressing broader social issues . However, the existence of these basic beliefs and assumptions in all countries does not mean that we agree on how every minute detail should be played out in individual countries and schools.

Definitions of curriculum, as Stenhouse (1975:40) put, "It may not solve curriculum problems but they do suggest perspectives from which to view them." For instance, Bestor (1959) cited in Abebe (1986) argues strongly that the distinctive functions of the school is the promotion of intellectual training. On the other hand, people like Count (1963) strongly argue that the task of the school is preparation of children for the purpose of building a new social order. Accordingly, schools have the responsibility of meeting the urgent need of pupils for discipline, vocational training and guidance in solving problems associated with social phenomena as well as acting as an agent for social change. Educationists like Bestor (1963) define curriculum in terms of a subject matter to be studied. According to this definition, a curriculum is the sum total of all courses of study for the various subjects in the school. There are also other educators such as Hopkins (1941:12-19) and Count (1963:178-195) who define a curriculum as, "All experiences that contribute to the growth and development of the pupils." According to this definition, the essential elements of curriculum are not necessarily found in books alone but in every walks of life .On the other hand, there are a number of American Educators (Tyler, 1949; Taba, 1962, Saylor et al., 1981) who defined curriculum as set of intended learning. An intended, learning according to this definition, is what is to be learned by individuals, developed in learners, or produced in society as a consequence of education. Stenhouse (1975: 1-5), however, argues

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that: "Curriculum study is concerned with the relationship between intention and reality." Of course, educational realities seldom conform the educational intentions in most cases. Putting policies in to practise is a difficult process. There is always a real and frustrating gap between aspiration and practice. Stenhouse(1975:4) treats most end-means model conceptions of curriculum as problematic, and forwards alternative definition as follows, "Curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation in to practice"

This definition implies that curriculum is the means by which the experience of attempting to put an educational proposal in to practice is made publicly available .It involves both content and method, and its widest application takes account of the problem of implementation in the institutions of the educational system.

The major variations and some times disagreements in the meanings of curriculum emanate from the meanings and values given and attached to education in general. If education is viewed and planned as product, then curriculum is a finished document to be executed to achieve predetermined objectives. On the other hand, if education is seen as a process of understanding and there by acquiring knowledge ,then curriculum is a guideline or a proposal that facilitates the teaching and learning process according to the need and interests of the learners to be implemented flexibly under different contexts. Rogers (1969) cited in Kelly (1986:55) substantiates the meaning of education in general and that of curriculum in particular as a process as opposed to product when he says:

We are .....faced with an entirely new situation where the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a base for security. Changingness, reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes sense as a goal for education in the modern world.

Current literature and research on policy and implementation have come to use the terms; educational policy, curriculum policy or simply curriculum interchangeably. Though the explicit meanings of these terms could only be understood and determined by the educational system in general and the context of the audience under consideration in particular, they all imply to; a course of action for dealing with a particular matter or, situation, especially as chosen by a political party, government, business company, etc. Almost all the various definitions could possibly be the derivations and contextualization of this general conception. For instance, Haddad (1995) gave a functional meaning for policy as an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementations of previous decisions.

One could interpret this definition as a policy, program of change, or curriculum. But what matters is the way we implement these concepts, because these interchangeable concepts could best be defined and understood retrospectively after their implementation process. This particularly holds true in the Ethiopian context where there is a gap between the policy intents and the context under which it is being implemented. A somehow narrow but more meaningful

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definition of policy is the one given by Nakamura & Smallwood (1980) that reads as policy can be thought as a set of instruction from policy makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and means for achieving those goals

What makes this definition more meaningful is that it incorporates a means for the realization of the policy which is the ultimate goal of any policy or curriculum. By extension of this definition, it can be said that curriculum or policy should incorporate a means or strategy for political mobilization of; material supply, human supply, construction, and administrative structure / re-structure.

To this end, for any body who might want to undertake study in the area of implementation in Ethiopia, it is of paramount importance to examine the meaning of education in general and curriculum in particular as stipulated on the Ethiopian New Education Policy and policy related documents. The policy reads as follows:

Education is a process by which a man transmits his experiences, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development, through generations....One of the aims of education is to strengthen the individual's and society's problem solving capacity, ability and culture starting from basic education and at all levels...

(TGE, 1994:1).

The dual meaning and purpose of education inherent in the policy document imply that curriculum is seen as both product and process. Thus, curriculum in the Ethiopian context is understood as the educational policy in operation, as there is no national curriculum as a document , and practically used to mean the sum total of all subjects taught at school (syllabi, textbooks, teachers' guides) , the pedagogy used in the instructional process at schools, and all other activities of teachers and principals as well as their role and role relationship in

the school environments which directly or indirectly facilitates students' learning to achieve predetermined purposes in general and specific behavioural objectives in particular. This way of understanding and use of curriculum might be the major source of conflicts between process and objective models of curriculum implementation in which the Ethiopian context may not be different.

There have always been disagreements about the purposes of education and these subsequently and profoundly affect the way in which the curriculum is understood, defined, and constructed. To this end, the best brief definition of curriculum which was offered by British educators as a contribution to their 1980s debate on curriculum aims reads as:

...curriculum consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within its organizational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. It includes not only the formal programme of the lessons, but also the 'informal' programme of so-called extracurricular activities as well as those features which produce the school's 'ethos', such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way the schools sets about its task and the way in which it is organised and managed. Teaching and learning styles strongly influence the curriculum and in practice they cannot be separated from it. Since pupils learn from all these things, it needs to be ensured that all are consistent in supporting the school's intentions.

(Alistair, 2000, p. 9)

This way of broad conceptualization of curriculum as consisting anything that schools do that facilitate students' learning, whether through deliberate planning and organization, unwitting

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encouragement, or hidden and unrealized assumptions is a necessary precondition for shifting from looking implementation as a mechanical product to looking it as a social and flexible process.

### **The Discovery of Implementation**

According to Craig (1990:1):

Implementation is in vogue. Students and makers of policy, until recently essentially unconcerned with the subject, now commonly assigned implementation a prominent and often dominant position in their research and planning agendas. But for all the current interest, our knowledge of the subject remains limited. This is particularly true with respect to policy implementation in the less developed countries

Little is known about the degree and processes to which educational policies are actually implemented in less developed countries, or about the factors that facilitate or impend implementation. It is now commonly and correctly assumed that implementation is problematic, and with what consequence, remains unclear. Though implementation was yesterday's issue, the problem may now be recognized, but its dimensions and the appropriate remedies remain to be established. There had been a traditional neglect of implementation issues as opposed to the current intense interest in the subject. The discovery of implementation as a subject worthy of scholarly attention has its roots in the intense and wide-ranging reform activities of the 1960s, both in the developed West and in the developing countries (Craig, 1990:3; Fullan, 1992:21). Around 1970, almost overnight, innovation got a bad name. The term implementation – what was happening (or not happening) in practice – came in to use (Fullan, 1991).

At the time, almost unanimous and top-down views among policy-makers and planners were that the public policies, once in place, were automatically implemented in full. It was not only that reform was considered as a simple or straightforward process, but also the complexities and uncertainties were all associated with policy-making. There had been assumptions, like it has been in the Ethiopian case, for curriculum to be fully implemented without identifying the problems to be solved, without research, developing and applying appropriate implementation strategies, mobilizing the support needed to adopt/adapt curriculum policies, and so on. Once these demanding chores have been completed, it is possible to relax; full implementation would follow naturally (Craig, 1990).

The following are factors contributing to this short-sightedness, especially, in developing countries like Ethiopia. First, the predilections of the civil servants and advisors responsible for preparing policy initiatives and development plans that they tempt to assume the world is “rational” rather than massy and accordingly that sound policies would meet no effective resistance. Second, the priorities of the politicians and pressure groups involved tend to be preoccupied with getting pet concerns on to the public policy agenda and with shaping and adopting the appropriate legislation. In other words, what happened after curriculum policies were developed or adopted is that they received little attention, either because this was considered beyond their control or, in a more cynical view, because they did not care. I think it requires some thoughts more than a common sense to get answer for question like: if the goals of a policy do not materialize, should we blame the policy or the failure of those responsible to implement the policy? Given the importance of this question, it is unwise to confound the issue by regarding the degree of attainment of policy objectives as a yardstick of implementation (Craig, 1990).



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As there can be “good” policies that fail to be implementing, there can be “bad” policies that are fully implemented. In other words, what matters is that the value and relative meaning of success and failure in the mind of people with respect to implementation. It is perhaps tempting to think of implementation in either a policy is implemented or it is not. The temptation should be resisted. It is almost impossible, even in developed countries, to find policies of more than trivial significance that are implemented precisely as intended. Thus, it is more appropriate to think of success and failure as the ends of a continuum, and to be prepared to assess policies/curriculum in terms of contexts and processes that determine the degree of implementation. Surly, it can be difficult to know, where to draw the line between “success” and “failure” of the implementation of a given educational policy and/or curriculum.

### **Insight in to Curriculum Implementation**

The concept of curriculum implementation has been expressed in different ways by different scholars but, all the attempts to define “implementation” leads to related meanings. For instance, a definition of a total implementation given by Ornstein and Hunkis (1988) indicates the acceptance, overtime, of some specific items-an idea or practice, by individuals, groups or other adopting units linked to specific channel of communication, to a social structure, and to a given system of values, or culture. Beauchamp (1968:132) and Giroux et al (1981: 45-46) also defined curriculum implementation as, “Simply putting the curriculum that was planned and developed in to practice.” Furthermore, Giroux mentioned that the entire process of curriculum implementation is highly complex, so that it requires extremely skilful orchestration of participants and components for effective results. Fullan and Alan (1977:336) see implementation as, “The actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice.” Similarly, Fullan (1991:65) describes implementation as, “A process that consists putting in to practice of an idea, program, or set

of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change.” These thoughts, in general, perceive implementation as a process of translating plans into actions, and as an execution stage of a planned curriculum. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998:292) view curriculum implementation as, “An interaction process between those who have developed the programme and those who are charged to deliver it.” Successful implementation of curriculum, therefore, results from careful planning, which in turn focuses on three factors: people, programme, and organization. If an innovation or reform is to be fully implemented, at least the conditions of these three factors should be changed. Put differently, if implementation is to occur, change would likely occur in, curriculum materials, teaching practice, organizational structure, and belief or understanding about the curriculum and learning practice.

Implementation is a change in at least four dimensions. Innovation that does not include changes on these dimensions is probably not significant change. For instance, the use of new textbook or materials without any alteration in teaching strategies is a minor change. Real change involves changes in conceptions and role behaviours. The possible use of new or revised materials such as curriculum materials, the possible use of new teaching approaches, and the possible alteration of beliefs on the part of teachers are the main components to be focused on in implementing any new curriculum or programme. The use of new material refers to the content of the curriculum that the teacher is expected to transmit to the students, to the order in which this content is to be transmitted, and especially to the various materials required as transmitting medium. The use of new teaching approach includes a concern in new teaching styles, new tasks, new role relationship between teachers and students, teachers and principals and the likes. The alteration of beliefs deals with the knowledge and understanding that the teachers have about innovations of various components such as its philosophy, value, assumptions, objectives, subject matter, implementation strategies, and commitment to implement the curriculum.

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For implementation to occur, the behaviour of all players in the curriculum game must be addressed properly. Curriculum developers, administrators, principals, teachers and supervisors must be clear about the purpose, the nature, and the real and potential benefit of the innovation. There must be a continuous two-way communication between the planners and the implementers of the curriculum. What makes curriculum implementation a complex process is that it deals with the difficulties related to planning and coordinating a multilevel social process involving thousands of people (Fullan, 1981; Fullan, 1991).

Implementation, as Everard and Morris in Dalton (1988:235) claim, is beyond simply putting a developed curriculum in to practice, but also a process of negotiation. In other words, implementing a change is not a question of defining an end and letting others get on with it. It is a process of interaction, dialogue, coping with mixed feelings and values, and micro politics. Pratt (1980:425) expressed very well the complexity of implementation process when he says:

The voyage from the first identification of students' need to eventual learner achievement is often stormy, but more good curricula sink without trace on the shoals of implementation than at any other point.

Thus, curriculum implementation has to be viewed as a phenomenon in its own right, rather than as a simple extension of planning and adoption processes. According to Fullan (1992) implementation focuses on what happens in practice. It is concerned with the nature and extent of actual change as well as the factors and processes that influence how and what changes are achieved. More broadly, the implementation perspective captures both the content and process of contending with new ideas, programmes, activities, structures, policies, etc new to the people involved. In particular, the implementation perspective concerns itself with whether any change has actually occurred in practice.

There are two main reasons why it is important to focus on implementation. The first is that we do not know what has changed (if anything) unless we attempt to conceptualize and assess it directly. We cannot view policies or innovations as simply entering or being generated by the system and somehow producing outcomes. Without knowing what is in the 'black box' of implementation, we do not know how to interpret the outcomes (or absence of outcomes). Without closely and deeply analyzing the dimensions of the process of implementation, we may not find clear answers for questions like: Is failure due to implementing poor ideas, or to the inability to implement good ideas? Is the success due to a well-implemented innovation, or to some extraneous factors? In short, without implementation data, we cannot link particular changes to learning outcomes. A second reason why it is important to examine implementation is to understand some of the reasons why so many educational innovations and reforms fail. By investigating the process of implementation directly, we can begin to identify the reasons why innovations fail or succeed.

As opposed to yesterday, today, there is a good tendency of understanding implementation as a change process and thereby to innovation in general and to teacher development in particular. It is essential to understand not only the relationship between implementation, innovation and teacher development but also to school development. Stated simply, implementation is learning to do and understand something new. Change in other words is a process of learning new ideas and things. The link between implementation and innovation is rather straightforward (although frequently neglected). An innovation - a new or revised curriculum, a policy, a structure, or an idea - is something that is new to the people encountering it for the first time. Dealing with an innovation effectively means alteration in behaviours and beliefs. Changes in behaviours (new skills, activities, practices) and changes in beliefs (new understandings, commitments) are the cores of implementation. Consequently, the key issue from an implementation perspective is

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how the process of change unfolds vis-à-vis what people do (behaviours) and think (beliefs) in relation to a particular innovation. Thus, it is naïve to assume implementation as a simple and straightforward matter of translating behavioural rules, drawn by policy makers or curriculum developers to those responsible for implementing the rules, generally along with certain incentives or sanctions that would induce or constrain implementers to follow the rules. However, successful implementation involves mutual adaptation.

Teacher development is another core issue for implementation. Ultimately, what is important is the capacity of teachers to manage change continuously. This means the ability to find meaning among an array of innovative possibilities, and to become adept at knowing when to seek change aggressively, and when to back off, since values and meanings are central to implementation success. To do this, teachers must understand the implementation perspective and the change process, or they will be at the mercy of external forces of change. Since implementation involves learning to do something new, it follows that schools that foster a learning orientation among their staff as well as their students are more likely to bring about improvements. If there is strong collegiality coupled with a commitment to continuous improvement, backed up by policies and structures designed to support purposeful teacher interaction, the chances of working through an implementation process are much greater. Implementations occur when teachers interact with and support each other as they try out new practices, cope with difficulties, develop new skills and so on. Finally, we have to know and accept; though early implementation (especially in developing countries) is burdened with difficulties and the schools more than any other level (if they are autonomous) can provide the kind of environment necessary to address inevitable implementation problems.

### **The Sub-field of Implementation Analysis**

There are two broad and competing models associated with perspectives of implementation analysis. The first, and probably the most influential, is referred to the Planning and Control Model (Majone and Aoron, 1978), the Research, Development and Diffusion (RDD) model (Havelock and Huberman, 1977), the Rational or Top-Down Model (Hambetone, 1983). Whatever the label, in its pure form, this model judges the success of implementation by the degree to which a policy / curriculum is actually put in to practice, or in an extended variant, by the degree to which the effects of implementation match the planned or intended effects. This model assumes that the policy embodies clear and consistent objectives, that the administration is neutral, being and well-informed, and that the implementation is an entirely separate enterprise that occurs after a policy is formulated or the curriculum is developed. From this perspective point of view, resistance from individuals or organized groups is commonly attributed to unwarranted selfishness or to irrationality. To sum up, if a policy and a target population come in to conflict, it is the target population that is expected to give way. The policy remains inviolable.

The second and competing model also appears under various labels; the Mutual Adaptation Model (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978 in Craig, 1990, p. 22), the Process Model (Fullan and Alan, 1977: 335-397 Stenhouse, 1975:84-97), and the Bottom-up Model (Hamboton, 1983:397-418). The central of this model is an emphasis on the messiness, uncertainties and unintended consequences that characterize the implementation process. From this point of view, it cannot be automatically assumed that the administration in question is disinterested or adequately informed. It is also viewed that individual and group resistance to policies as presumptively rational rather than irrational, and the focus on the interaction of competing interests-the "implementation game" of conflict, compromise, and

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negotiation—transforms policies in the course of their implementation. Adherents of this model also favour muting the distinction between policy formulation and implementation, arguing that conflict over implementation often is a continuation of other means of earlier conflict over the substance of a policy.

In sum, there are clear benefits to the bottom-up model of implementation analysis in that it recognizes how individuals, through their collective behaviours, can influence the process involved in implementing a policy or curriculum. Contrarily, there are some criticisms on this approach since a very high emphasis it puts on the “street level bureaucrat” at the expense of those who are involved in formulating policy (Powell,1999). In response to this limitation, Ham and Hill (1993) in Powell (1999, p. 10) have introduced evolutionary approach, which combines the top-down and bottom-up models for analyzing implementation. The benefit of this third view, evolutionary model, is that it recognizes implementation as a process of negotiation and interaction between the key decision-makers who formulate policies, and the “street level bureaucrats” who implement them. Moreover, in contrast to the former two models, the evolutionary model recognize that policy making and implementation are not separated, and policy making is left to those involved in the planning and in the implementation stages.

### **Major Variables Affecting Implementation**

Due to the complex nature of curriculum development, there exist numerous factors that could inhibit or facilitate its implementation. The source of most problems or factors affecting the realization or implementation is usually lack of emphasis given to implementation by policy makers. As O'Neill (1995) noted policy makers rarely develop a process for the implementation of their formulations. They expect the people on the receiving end of the policy to make it simply work in practice. It seems that usually policy makers tend to act on

the assumption that change is an event, not a process. A study made by Herman and Stringfield as cited in Fullan (1999, p.19) indicates that indifference, negative climate, neglect of implementation training and support, such as program-specified staff development and failure to build-in system and time for coordination and problem-solving could kill implementation of any curriculum.

Implementation process is a change process and in this process there are numerous interactive factors affecting implementation. Regarding this, what Craig (1990:1-58) and Fullan (1991:66-80) have indicated as major factors which influence implementation, after reviewing a number of studies that examined curriculum implementation as a change process, can be categorized into three as, “The policy message or the nature of the change, change agents' role (teachers and principals), and the organization to implement the change.”

### **The Policy Message**

There are three major components to deal with under the umbrella of the policy message: the substance of a policy, the means specified for putting a policy in to effect, and the way in which the substance and the means are communicated. The fundamental issue with respect to the substance of a policy is that of realism. That is, considering the changes proposed, could the policy actually be implemented under any foreseeable circumstances? In other words, the nature of the change will have a lot to do in the process of implementation. Fullan (1991) stresses on two variables that should be considered seriously in relation to the characteristics of the innovation: Clarity and complexity. Clarity (about goals and means) is a perennial problem in the implementation process. Even when there is an agreement that some change is needed, as when teachers want to improve some area of the curriculum or improve the school as a whole, the adopted change may not be at all clear about what teachers should do. This means, lack of clarity; diffuse goals and



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unspecified means of implementation represent a major problem at the implementation stage. Teachers and others find that the change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice. Hence, the understanding of goals and means of innovation by users is crucial for the implementation, because the greater the understanding of the goals and what is to be gained from their adoption, the greater the success of implementation. Complexity refers to the difficulty and extent of change required of the individuals responsible for implementation. The implementation of any change can be examined in terms of difficulty, skill required, and extent of alteration in beliefs, teaching strategies, and use of materials. Regarding clarity and complexity of a change, a number of studies have asserted that teachers' lack of clarity about innovation as one of the factors inhibiting curriculum implementation (Snyder and his associates, 1996, Soundress and Vulliany, 1983). To this end, in Africa, several studies argue that policies are much too ambitious and unrealistic (Craig, 1990).

For any given policy there may be numerous possible approaches to implementation. Since the goals of many policies are commonly multiple, vague, and at the limit conflicting (Majone and Wildavsky, 1978), the best approach may be far from self-evident. For this, and in view of the resistance that any innovation is likely to confront, it is important that the policy-makers, those most familiar with the policy's goals, select and institute an appropriate implementation strategy. But to judge from literature as well as experience, this is a responsibility that educational planners and policy makers in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, have frequently to meet or even to recognize.

Although the substance of a policy, realism, is usually more important, the way in which a policy is communicated can also be equally important and has important effects on the prospects for implementation. There is a common consent among educationists that implementation is most likely if a policy is straightforward and if

its goals and mechanisms are expressed precisely and explicitly. Complexity works against clarity and openness, and incoherence or vagueness can leave administrators without needed guidance and provide openings for those bent on obstruct (Fullan and Alan, 1977; Grindle, 1981; Porter 1980). Several studies in both specific educational reforms and national development plans with educational components, in Sub-Saharan Africa, have attributed subsequent problems with implementation by and large to the ambivalence of the documents in question (Akangbou,1980; Koloko,1980; Hirschmann, 1978; Moisset, 1980 all cited in Craig ,1990, p.30). There is also a tradition and tendency, which shows problems related to accountability on policy decisions made or not made at the formulation stage in developing countries. However, this is not so with respect to responsibility or obstacles encountered during implementation.

According to Fullan and Alan (1977: 335-397), Mayntz (1983:123-143), and Migdal (1977: 241-260) "Educational policies, like all social policies, are commonly directed at changing well-established patterns of behaviours and belief. That is, at some kind of re-socialization". But in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ethiopia, they have often been designed according to this line of criticism. In polices it is observed almost complete ignorance of the behavioural presupposition and likely reactions of the target populations, and it might be added, of the teachers and others expected to bear much of the responsibility for implementation. Nevertheless, this extended discussion of issues of policy message does not mean to suggest that all implementation problems can be attributed to mistakes made at the formulation stage.

### **The Teachers**

As Fullan (1991:127) describes, "If the change works, the individual teacher gets little of the credit; if it does not the teacher gets most of the blame." From this statement, we understand how decisive and

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sensitive the role of the teacher is in the implementation process. In brief, educational change depends on what teachers do and think. At the level of teachers, the success of change is strongly related to the extent to which teachers interact with each other and others providing technical help within the school, a collegiality among teachers, mutual support, help, etc. are strong indicators of implementation success. Significant educational change consists of changes in beliefs, teaching style, and materials. Of course, it needs basically the understanding of the change itself. It is the change that happens in the individual classroom that changes the school, and so do schools, districts and state. As Hall and Carter (1995) have stated, one of the failures of understanding about implementation few years ago was that we did not accept the fact that a school does not change until each individual teacher within the school successfully implements the innovation. The only way that classroom effects can accumulate to be school effect is if there is the use of the innovation in each classroom. To look at the school as a whole, first we need to look at the use of the innovation by each teacher. Each teacher individually can have an effect.

As we look at a district or a state, the multiple school and districts effects can accumulate. In other words, the key building block for all this is what happens in each classroom. And the teachers as a change agent determine what happened in the classroom. Unless classroom and school activities change, the most sensitive tests possible will measure no positive changes in outcomes. The study of Newman and his colleagues as cited in Fullan (1998:2) indicate that more successful schools had teachers and administrators that formed a professional learning community (collaborative work culture) focused on student work (assessment), and changed their instructional practice (pedagogy) to get better results. Collaborative activity can enhance teachers' technical competence. As teachers work with students from different backgrounds, and as the curriculum demands more intellectual vigour, teachers require information,

technical expertise, and social-emotional support far beyond the resource they can get as individuals working alone. When teachers collaborate productively, they observe and react to one another's teaching, curriculum and assessment practice, and they engaged in joint planning. Clearly shared purpose and collaboration contribute to collective responsibility. One's colleagues share responsibility for the quality of all students' achievement. This norm helps to sustain each teacher's commitment. In short, professional community within the teaching staff sharpens the educational focus and enhances the technical and social support that teachers need to be successful.

It can be concluded that, the greater the sense of teacher efficacy, the greater the success of implementation. Educational change depends on what teachers do and think. Lack of teachers' knowledge and skill to conform to the new mode is one of the inhibiting factors, and lack of staff motivation is another. McLaughlin (1976) refers to the attitude of teachers as critical factor for implementation. Sounders and Vulliamy (1983:361) capitalized on the teachers as the most important link in any chain of educational innovation. To them, it is what goes on in the classroom that finally affects student learning-which is the ultimate goal of implementation. Thus, unless teachers are helped to develop new lesson, content and new teaching skills, they will revert to pre-innovation practice. This suggests the necessity of "in-service" training and resource support for teaching during implementation to enhance effective practice. It is unlikely to implement an innovation which does not receive a warm acceptance on the part of teachers. It seems because of this that Ornstein and Hunkins (1998, p. 293-294) advised school leaders to consider teachers' need, level of commitment, and skills when determining when and how to involve teachers in curriculum implementation. This is because teachers want programmes which reflect their philosophy and curriculum orientation. This is due to the fact that teachers' actions to a large extent are based on their attitudes. In addition to this, the ability of teachers to implement the curriculum has to be given equal importance like other

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factors, because, the extent to which a curriculum is implemented depends upon the extent to which teachers are clear about, and the degree to which they are competent to perform it. Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Saylor, et al (1981:260) have also affirmed that: "A teacher's instructional plan and a curriculum plan may not connect if a teacher neither understands nor accepts the basic assumptions of the curriculum." Therefore, as Snyder and his associates (1996) noted being the deliverer of the curriculum to students, the role of the teacher is recognized as being critical to the success of the curriculum implementation.

To this end, teacher quality is a major problem in African countries in general and in Ethiopia in particular, and so are the low level of commitment and the morale that characterize the profession. Craig (1990), however, argues that it is unfair to place all the blame for these deficiencies on the teachers. He, further, argues that politicians and administrators in Africa have been largely responsible for they have typically resisted offering the incentives and the sustained support and assistance needed to upgrade teachers and their profession. Educational planners have also failed to take adequately into account the limitations of those expected to put policies into effect within the school and the classroom. Wherever the blame should go, it is, however, crystal clear that indiscriminately selected and poorly trained and unmotivated teachers are not effective agents of implementation. Although they may be competent enough if permitted to teach in the ways they know best (in the ways they have always taught or in the ways they themselves were thought), they generally lack the flexibility and self-confidence needed to master and to apply radically innovative techniques or material (Bray, 1981; Bude, 1982; Lillis, 1985).

On the other hand, even if teacher's quality were not an issue, teachers might still represent a major obstacle to the implementation of a new curriculum / policy. There are three possible reasons. In the first place, teachers may doubt putting such curriculum / policy into practise is worth the effort. Those teachers with more in their abilities and in their expertise may believe that particular reforms cannot attain the intended goals. They may also reject the pedagogical or curricular theory (if any) used to justify the reform. They may believe that the needed resource will never arrive or they may even think that the curriculum policy, however appealing in the abstract, cannot be made to work with their pupils (Adams, 1983; Lillis, 1985). Furthermore, teachers often conclude with good reason that change means additional work without additional compensation or incentives. However, if teachers are persuaded that the new curriculum represent and could bring a significant improvement over the old curriculum, they may be willing to make the demanded sacrifices of them. But they are not easily persuaded even if a serious attempt is made, and usually a serious attempt is not made (Craig, 1990).

Another reason that teachers often resist implementing a new curriculum may be related in different ways to their positions in their respective communities. In developing countries like Ethiopia, what ever the teacher's own preferences, they often find themselves caught in the middle between a ministry promoting a major reform and a community in which they live and teach, since they are more inclined than the ministry to consider local preferences, and since they may be observed more closely and critically by their communities than by school principals or district officers, teachers, often side with the local population when much conflict arise (Bude 1982; Maravanyika, 1986). Nevertheless, exceptions probably could occur when teachers see that their personal interests as furthered by the ministry's position rather than the local community's. In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, such exceptions seem infrequent.

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## The Principal

Because of the closeness to the classroom situation and opportunity to alter workplace conditions, probably the most powerful potential source of help or hindrance to the teacher in the implementation process is the school principal. A principal has a leadership role for the implementation of the curriculum. Thus, the school administrative bodies including the principal should be involved in or consulted from the very beginning about the design of curricular programme to be executed in the schools in order to play their roles actively. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) considered the school principal as a key guarantor of successful implementation. Nonetheless, as to them, successful principals are those who are knowledgeable and committed to the curriculum. Furthermore, such principals also view their role as providing encouragement on one end of the continuum and serving as a curriculum leader on the other end.

Effective principals regularly and frequently check on the teachers to solicit needs and inquire how things are going on. This action is two-fold: teachers feel valued and cared for, and a clear signal is given so that the change is of high priority and deserves attention. Effective principals visit classrooms often to lend their support, and to provide pressure as they are discovering what is happening in classrooms. Facilitating change, helping teachers work together, assessing and furnishing school improvement are some of the roles of the principals. However, how principals actually spend their time is obviously a better indicator of their impact on the school. Cuban in his study, as cited in Fullan (1991, p.151), concludes that, while styles differ, the managerial role, not instructional leadership, has dominated principal's behaviour. Usually principals have little time for change. If implementation is to occur effectively at school level, the role of the principals must be changed from managerial to instructional aspects. Principals must change their traditional role to play as change agents. Regarding this, Hall and his colleagues, as cited in Fullan (1991,

p.153), note that the degree of implementation of the innovation is varied in different schools because of the actions and concerns of the principals. The principal has to become directly involved in the change process in the school. He/she has to work with the departments in helping them plan what they are going to do with the guideline. He/she has to meet with them, sit down with them, and has got to be familiar enough with the documents that he/she can discuss. The principal has to be prepared to give some of his/her time to particular group of teachers, say science departments, and be involved not in all of their meetings. But some of them, keeping informed, being knowledgeable about what they are doing. Initiator principals work more with staff to clarify and support the use of the innovation (consultation and reinforcement). In other words, the functions to be performed by effective principals are: developing supportive organizational arrangements, consulting, reinforcing, monitoring, and so forth.

However, as Hall, in Fullan (1991, p.155-156), notes, principals do not lead change effort single-handedly. There are other change facilitators such as vice-principals, unit leaders and head teachers, who in most cases make a large number of interventions in the change process. The important thing is not merely having other change facilitators active at the school site; but it is how well the principal and these other change facilitators work together as a change facilitating team. It is this team of facilitators, under the lead of the principal that makes successful change happen in schools. Hence, as principals have a major impact on the success of implementation, we have to assume their roles in terms of the facts and theories suggested by the educators aforementioned. The larger role of a principal has to be transforming the culture of the school. That is, a culture of "new way of doing things" and "collaborative working" environment for the students' effective learning.



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## **The Organization to Implement the Change**

Implementation of a curriculum demands an organization or a setting in which people work. The aspects of organization are numerous. However, those aspects related to the school organizations are crucial for the implementation of curriculum. The quality and quantity of staff development, the channel of communication that allow continuous flow of information between the curriculum developers and implementers, the availability and adequacy of instructional materials are some of the variables to be considered in relation to the organization of an individual school. In addition to this, the relationship of a school with parents and the openness of the school for outside relationship are important organizational aspects for effective implementation of a curriculum.

A real administrative support increases the success of implementation at school level. That is, the administrative support has positive effect on the implementation; whereas the incompatibilities of the organizational arrangement are inhibiting factors for implementation. Moreover, the greater the quality and quantity of sustained interaction and staff development, the greater the success of implementation. Concerning this, McNeil (1990:227-228) describes that, "A key to educational change must include staff development." To him, staff development is a central focus in successful curriculum implementation. Intensive staff development, rather than single one-day workshop is an important strategy. In addition to this, McNeil also suggested that active involvement of the teachers in the developmental process (in developing guides and materials) is more important in persuading teachers to implement plans than their participation on the curriculum committees that decide on the plan. On the other hand, whenever a new plan or programme is being designed, a communication channel must be kept open so that the programme does not come as a surprise to the implementers. Frequent discussion about a new programme among teachers,

principals, and curriculum workers is a key to successful implementation. There must be a comprehensive network of communication that can provide reliable information at all levels of the system.

Educational organization and management need to sort out the tasks at each level beginning from the centre to school level and formulating structure, tasks and responsibilities of different sections, determining role and role relationship. It also includes arrangement of the necessary manpower, finance and material for the implementation of curriculum. The nature of organization at the school level can serve as a mirror to show the strength or weakness of a given system of organization. Put differently, what is exactly going on or how a particular school is organized in terms of facilities necessary for the implementation of a curriculum can be an index of the strength or weakness of a particular organization. With this regard, the inadequacies of instructional facilities in the school inhibit implementation very much.

Instructional facilities encompass materials through which teaching and learning processes are carried out. It also includes the physical environment of the classroom. The success of curriculum implementation is often restricted by lack of facilities, equipment and teaching resources in a school. As Pratt (1994:258) describes it, "One of the major factors in successful implementation of innovation is whether or not the curriculum is accompanied by useful, high-quality instructional materials." This scholar further argues that teachers should not be expected to prepare by themselves new materials for teaching; rather, they should be provided with materials that help them teach effectively and arouse students' interest and greatly increase the probability of successful implementation of the new curriculum. Concerning this, ICDR (1995) describes instructional materials as integral components of curriculum development that help students to be mentally alert, supplement and broaden their

experiences. Instructional materials also enhance clarity of message, simplify concepts, and principles. Instructional media not only help to make learning concrete, but they also help students learn how to learn. Amare (1999:64) also argues that: "The problem-solving or student-centred approach which is strongly stipulated in the NETP cannot be realized with out making optimal use of instructional materials." In connection with this, Verspoor (1989:1) generalized, "The unfavourable economic environment and the resulting scarcity of resources jeopardize the ability of developing countries to provide quality education." Surveys conducted in different developing countries show that teachers do not have the necessary instructional materials at their disposal. Most of the students in primary schools of developing countries have to sit on the floor. There are classrooms without a blackboard, and most classrooms do not have sufficient sitting places for students (Caillods & Postlethwaite, 1989; Ross & Postlethwaite, 1992).

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