Some Thoughts on Bases for Development of Educational Objectives

Abebe Bekele

In the quest for betterment that is so much discussed today, attention is being focused on the objectives of education — what should be the ends of schooling in Ethiopia? If the school is to become an effective agent for change, it seems only reasonable to assume that the primary task of the nation is to determine the right kinds of aims and objectives towards which the educational program is to be directed. That is, Ethiopia as a nation which has determined to maintain balance in politico-socio-economic development and progress, ought to have some vision about the results to be produced through its educational program. To establish schools without having some conceptions of the kind of persons to be developed, the kind of society to be preserved and the kinds of knowledge and skill to be taught seems to be the most ineffective and inefficient way of spending public funds.

DEFINING EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Different individuals and different groups use different terminologies to describe the ends that are desired by any educational system. Some writers use the terms goal, purpose, aim and objective synonymous in meaning, while others prefer to use goal, purpose and aim to describe a larger system of value position and objective to indicate a more specific form of behavior. Writers such as Bloom[1], Glaser[2], Popham[3], Mager[4], Tyler,[5] and Gagne[6], use the terms interchangeably.

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[1] B.S. Bloom [ed.], *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Handbook I. Cognitive Domain* [New York: David McKay, 1956]

[2] R. Glaser, "Instructional Objectives and Programmed Instruction: A case study," in C.M. Lindvall [ed.], *Defining Educational Objectives* [Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg, 1969].

[3] J.W. Popham, "Objectives and Instruction," *AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation*, No.3, Instructional Objectives [Chicago: Rand McNally Company, 1969].

[4] R.F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives* [Belmont, Calif.: Fearson Publishers, 1962].

[5] R.W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1950].

[6] R.M. Gagné, "The Implications of Instructional Objectives for Learning," in C.M. Lindvall [ed.], *Defining Educational Objectives* [Pittsburg: University of Pittsbrug, 1969].

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On the other hand, educators such as Goodlad[7] and Amoons[8] employ the terms goal or aim to denote a "remote end for the guidance of an educational activity" and objective to indicate the kinds of behavior changes in the students to be brought about through learning experiences.

Because there is at present no unanimous agreement among educators as to the preferred usage of these terms, it is not possible for one to offer a definition that has universal acceptability regarding educational ends. In this paper, however, educational objectives can be defined as statements which indicate the kinds of behavior a society wishes its youth to acquire through schooling in order to understand and select those values which are derived from its conception of good life. In short, educational objectives denote what students are to know, believe or do.

This paper presents, very briefly, some thoughts related to the questions and issues of educational objectives. Emphasis will be placed upon such topics as importance and functions as well as sources of behavioral objectives.

Importance and Functions of Educational Objectives

There is disagreement among educators concerning the need for educational aims and objectives to guide the activities of educational enterprise.[9],[10] However, in this paper the position taken is that educational objectives are important criteria for guiding all educational activities, at least for the following five reasons.

First, an endeavour that is intended to improve the program of instruction starts with the question of determiinng what particular learnings are of great importance and in what manner these learnings should be organized. That is, any one who is engaged in an instructional improvement project, whether an individual person, or a faculty group, or a government agent is bound to give some thoughts as to what is involved in the making of decisions about educational objectives. Because through learning one hopes that certain positive changes will take place in the learner's behavior, it is important that instructional program should be carefully planned by focusing attention to the identification of the particular learn-

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[7]J.I. Goodlad, *et. al.*, *The Development of a Conceptual System For Dealing with Problems of Curriculum and Instruction* [Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles and Istitute for Development of Educational Activities, 1966].

[8]Margaret Ammons, "The Definition, Function and Use of Educational Objectives", *Elementary School Journal*, 62:432-433, May 1962.

[9]Elliot W. Eisner, "Instructional and Experessive Educational Objectives: Their Formulation and Use in Curriculum," *AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation*, No. 3: Instructional Objectives [Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1966], p.13.

[10]J. Myron Atkin, "Behavioral Objectives in Curriculum Design: A Cautionary Note" *Science Teacher*, 35; 27-30, May, 1968.

ings which should and can occur through school experience, and in the process of doing so, "some conception of the kind of person (s) who is (are) to emerge must be formulated."[11]

Second, some knowledge of educational objectives is essential because it makes possible for learning to have both direction and efficiency.[12]   It can be argued that if a basis by which students and teachers could identify learning experiences is established, then learning processes can be facilitated. That is, when students understand the intent of the objectives, they can have some idea regarding what they are going to learn. When students do not figure out what is expected of them by learning a given course, many things could happen. To illustrate, Professor Ralph Tyler, one of the most distinguished scholars in the field of curriculum and instruction at the present time, interviewed a group of upper elementary and secondary school students in the United States of America to determine what they were to learn. Most of the students responded that they found out what they were to learn from the textbooks, teacher's activities in the class and suggestions of peers.[13] The implication of this investigation is that when objectives are defined in a fuzzy manner the students are likely to get the wrong image of what the teacher attempts to teach and what they are supposed to do. If, on the other hand, what is to be accomplished is clearly visualized, then it is much easier for one to identify the kinds of things he will need and use and the circumstances under which he must carry out the tasks as well as the nature and degree of social standards to apply than without it.[14] Since schools are entrusted with the responsibility of helping people to acquire some knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to effect improvements in their personal lives and society, the importance of defining what is good for students to learn as the first step in the planning of instruction cannot be overemphasized.

Third, educational institutions in the past have not been goal free[15] nor can they afford to be so now and perhaps in the future. Goals have been held, discussed

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11Louise L. Tyler, "A Case History: Formulations of Objectives from a Psychoanalytic Framework," *AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation*, No. 3, Instructional Objectives [Chicago: Rand McMNally lnd Co., 1969, p. 102.

12Hilda Taba,*The Dynamics of Education* [New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932], p. 192.

13Ralph W. Tyler, "Some persistent Questions on the Defining of Objectives," in C.M. Lindvall [ed.], *op.cit.*, p.78

14Virgil E. Herrick, *Strategies of Curriculum Development* [Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merril Books, 1965] p. 96.

15W.W. Charters, S.R. *Curriculum Construction* [New York: The MacMillan Company, 1923], pp. 5-11.

and debated ever since the dawn of man's civilization.[16] According to one authority pre-Christian educators in Rome and Athens did express their concern about the direction and trend of their schools.[17] In other words, man in his effort to perpetuate his ideas and ideals to posterity, to maintain and eventually to improve his society, has established objectives for his institutions and used different kinds of approaches to accomplish the tasks of education.[18] In the past education was primarily concerned with the training of the mind — mind being then considered as an instrument which someone could "first sharpen it and then use it."[19] As a result, the objectives formulated were consistent with the demand of the time. Today, however, the conception of education has become wider in scope than the traditional view and education is regarded as an instrument which reflects and ultimately shapes the whole society in which it exists. Consequently, the objectives to be formulated are expected to reflect the wide scope of modern education and basic concern of modern man. In both cases, the importance of defining educational objectives is clear.

Charters has pointed out the weaknesses of attempting to determine the content of curriculum before defining the aim of education which must be stated in terms of "ideals and activities."[20] Statements of aims was always to precede any selection activity. "The inheritance handed down through the schools to the young is so massive that it can never be completely assimilated. Selection is, therefore, necessary and a basis of selection must be determined. This is obtained through the statement of aim.[21] Professor Babbitt, a contemporary of Charters, also indicated that the first step in curriculum making was to decide on the educational objectives which would lead it, with "all the certainty that is possible, in the right direction."[22]

Fourth, a statement of objectives is needed to bring unity into the multifarious activities of a school system. That is, because in a school system there are many people including teachers who are involved in the operation of various kinds of school activities, organizing and structuring classes and subjects, for example, some common focus is needed in order to make these efforts converge on certain

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[16]Arden, D. Grotelueschen, et. al., "Evaluation in Curriculum Development," *Curriculum Theory Network*, 8/9-13, 1972.

[17]W. James Popham, "Objectives and Instruction," *AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation*, . . . op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[18]Donald M. Foster, *Education as an Instrument of National Policy and Economic Development in the Republic of China* [Stanford University: Comparative Education Center, 1965], p.33.

[19]Alfred N. Whithead, *The Aims of Education* [New York: The Free Press 1949], p.6.

[20]Charters, op. cit., . . . p. 11.

[21]*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[22]Franklin Bobbitt, *How to Make a Curriculum* [Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1924] p. 32.

common, consistent goals.[23] The significance of objectives in such a situation thus seems that they can define the common areas of concern as well as the contribution of each area of activity to the common purposes.

Fifth, objectives are useful in that they emphasize the importance of understanding the structure of the discipline. As Goodlad has stated, objectives afford opportunities for students to explore, invent and discover as well as to acquire some of the tools of inquiry appropriate to the field.[24] Tyler, perhaps more than any other educator in the field of curriculum, has strongly emphasized the importance of defining objectives in the whole process of curriculum construction. Tyler states that

> ... if an educational program is to be planned and if efforts for continued improvement are to be made, it is very necessary to have some conception of the goals that are being aimed at. These educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed and tests and examinations are prepared. All aspects of the educational program are really means to accomplish basic educational purposes. Hence, if we are to study an educational program systematically and intelligently we must first be sure as to the educational objectives aimed at.[25]

SOURCES OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Conflict over the Sources.

One of the major difficulties facing educators today seems to be the identification of sources from which objectives are to be derived and the making of intelligent, wise and appropriate choices. The problem of deciding sources and making choices is greatly complicated by the conflicting points of view within the field of education and outside of it and by the swiftness of both social and technological changes.[26] To illustrate, in the past, educators derived their educational objectives from absolutistic and speculative philosophy recognizing the unchangeability of ideals, values and social institutions.[27] That is to say, that past educational theories by using abstract thoughts, found certain absolute ideals, and these ideals were

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[23]*Ibid.*, p. 8

[24]John Goodlad, *et. al.*, *The Changing School Curriculum* [New York: The Fund for the Advancement of Education, August, 1969], p.92.

[25]Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, ... *op.cit.*, p.3

[26]Kenneth J. Rehage, "Deciding Upon Objectives," *Guidance in the Curriculum*, Year book of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1955], pp. 30-31.

[27]Taba, *The Dynamics of Education*, ... *op. cit.*, p.190

used as aims of education. Because aims set up in this way tended to have characteristics of being simple and clear, they offered a kind of non-conflicting standard for educational efforts. But, at present there are several educational philosophies most of which, if not all, reflect contrasting views of the aims and objectives of education.[28] Difficulties are encountered when one tries to translate these viewpoints into one acceptable standard. Most of the present day educational principles, therefore, "find themselves torn by numerous conflicting trends."[29] According to the traditional thinking, educational objectives should be governed by a consistent philosophy concerning the values of life and the direction education should take. All educational activities should have one single absolute aim.[30] Those who objected to this view reacted by saying that it is difficult, if not impossible.

> ... to find an aim or idea for education which, when understood as a final end-state, or a final end achievement of educational efforts, will be perfect enough and inclusive enough to cover all our educational values and to represent all educational efforts in the form of one single unit. Whenever educational aims are conceived as contentually determined end-states of achievement, a multiplicity of disorganized objectives is unavoidable. Educational values are many; culture, social organizations and institutions change; personalities are of a very different type and so contentually there can be no ultimate ideal end-state to serve in the orientation of either the society or the individual.[31]

According to the view expressed above, no effort is to be made to suggest a final contentual end-state as a final educational aim, since they are bound to change as the educational situations change. Adherents of this notion maintain that educational objectives are not final ends but means to a continued growth of the individual and improvement of social life.[32] Dewey indicated that educational objectives were judged correct if they meet three criteria. The first of these criteria asserts that objectives must be determined in terms of the existing social conditions; that is, objectives must be derived from the actual pattern of life. They ought to be

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[28] To get the flavour of conflicting philosophies of education see, for example, Donald Arnstine, *Philosophy of Education: Learning and Schooling* [New York: Harper and Row, 1967]; Harry S. Broudy, *Building a Philosophy of Education* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1960] Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* [New Haven: Yale University, 1964]; Theodore Brameld, *Philosophies of Education in Cultural Perspective* [New York: The Dryden Press, 1955].

[29] Taba, *Dynamics of Education, ... op. cit.,* p. 191

[30] *Ibid.,*

[31] *Ibid.,*

[32] James F. Hosic, "Educational Objectives Once More", *Teachers College Record,* 29: 691, 1928.

developed from the "resources and difficulties of the situation."[33] The second criterion states that aims must always have the capability of being flexible so that they can be adapted to the changing conditions. Ends-in-view established from without the process of action are rigid in the sense that they are not at all serviceable for changing undersirable conditions.[34] The last criterion proclaims that aims must always represent "a freeing of activities." That is, aims should not suggest a notion of finality in terms of activity, but rather a temporary end which when achieved serves as means to direct the activity.

In this paper the position adopted is that statements of objectives should not imply terminal points of an activity. They are to serve as direction setters, especially at the instructional level. The notion that objectives are terminal points of an activity suggests that certain skills could be learned once and for all at a certain level. But the fact remains that even the most specific skills such as "paragraphing requires different operations as the thought which is being paragraphed increases in complexity."[35]

Dewey argued that objectives grew up within an activity and as such mean and ends were not separable. For him, an educational end suggested "marking off the future direction of the activity in which we were engaged" and means "when it marked off the present direction."[36] Thus every means cannot become an end until it is achieved and every end becomes a mens of carrying activity further until it is attained. Thus, if aims are regarded as final ends, they are going to limit activity, but if they are held as temporary ends they are going to liberate activity. As a result, it is suggested that educational objectives should be formulat, ed in terms of "values that are not finalities but which, when achieved would serv- as means for producing new values, whatever their specific nature." Education according to Dewey, was a process of living and not a preparation of future living. He thought that education was the key for social progress and reform.[37]

The implication of Dewey's view of education is that it is not necessary to hold to predetermined goals so as to achieve a consistent scheme of educational activities. If the formulation of objectives is guided by and based on definitely pre-determined ideas (which because of their contentual definiteness are, in turn, de-rived from some existing values, institutions and ideals) education becomes a

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[33]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, ... p. 121.

[34]Gale E. Jensen, *The Validation of Aims for American Democratic Education* [Minneapolis, Minn.: Burgess, 1950], pp. 15-17.

[35]Hilda Taba, *Curriculum Development* [New York: Harcourt, 1962] p.203.

[36]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, ... *op.cit.*, p. 124.

[37]George B. Leonard, *Education and Ecstasy* [New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968] p. 13.

process of transmitting survival values and not creating new ones.[38] Such a method of determining objectives is regarded as ineffective not only because it serves to transmit into the future survival values but also fails to take into account all the important factors of the educative experiences — the interaction of aims, subject matter and specific processes. Therefore,

> ... in the constantly evolving process of life it is dangerous for any system of education, in determining its direction, to take too much stock in a concrete picture of the ideal behavior of today. No matter how well a certain group of ideas or values may function today, no matter how well fitted certain outlooks may be for the present time, they can at least serve only as a basis from which the educational experience is to take its part, and in no case can they figure as the final ends to be achieved by that experience.[39]

Since it is not within the sphere of this short paper to elaborate on the philosophical arguments concerning aims of education (suffice it to say that until research provides some better procedures, if it is possible for educational research to do so) the controversy over the source of educational objectives is likely to continue as an interesting academic discourse for the years to come.

New Ideas Concerning Sources of Objectives

In spite of the divergent views about the aims and objectives of education, recent writers and curriculum theoreticians agree on the possible sources of objectives. In general, three data-sources are identified — the learner, contemporary society and the established disciplines.

The Learner as a Data-source

The fact that the learner is the chief data-source in the process of learning is something that is well documented. Goodland,[40] Bowers,[41] Rehage,[42] Brackenbury,[43] for examples, have expressed their views in support of the idea.

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[38]Dewey, *Democracy and Education* ... *op. cit.*, p.125.

[39]Taba, *Dynamics of Education*, ... *op. cit.*, p. 197

[40]Goodlad, *The Development of a Conseptual System*, ... *op. cit.*

[41]Norman D. Bowers, "Psychological Forces Influencing Curriculum Decisions," *Review of Educational Research*, 33: 266-268, June, 1963.

[42]Kenneth J. Rehage, "Deciding upon Objectives," in Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, *Guidance in the Curriculum*, Yearbook [Washinton, D.C.: The Association, 1965], pp. 29-49.

[43]Robert L. Brackenbury, "Guidelines to Help Schools Formulate and Validate Objectives," in Center for the Study of Education, NEA, *Rational Planning in Curriculum and Instruction* [Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1967], pp. 89-108.

As Professor Tyler has indicated, the importance of the study of the learners is to identify needed changes in the behavior patterns of the learners involved.[44] This need may be identified somewhat as follows. Studies of the norms of a locality in which the school is established may be conducted, and in the process the most desirable standards of behavior can be identified. Then studies may be made about the learners in relation to the standards which are deemed to be appropriate; that is, investigations of the needs of the learners can be made in relation to these desirable standards. If on the bases of these investigations, some kinds of deficiencies are observed between what are accepted as desirable norms and what are being practiced presently by the student, then needs of the learners can be said to have been identified. Thus, studies that attempt to identify gaps between the acceptable norms and the present status of students are "necessary studies to provide a basis for the selection of objectives which should be given primary emphasis in the school's program."[45] This then implies that objectives are formulated to close the gap.

Another aspect of the learner with which educators are concerned has to do with the interests of the students. It should be noted that the identification of students' interests could serve as a starting point for learning, because students tend to learn and become involved in the things which interest them. Tyler described the significance of students' interest as follows:

> Education is an active process. It involves the active efforts of the learner himself. In general, the learner learns only those things which he does. If the school situations deal with matters of interest to the learner he will actively participate in them and thus learn to deal effectively with these situations. Furthermore, it is argued that the increasing effectiveness with which he handles present situations gurantees his ability to meet new situations as they arise. Hence, it is essential to see that education provides opportunities for the student to enter actively into, and to deal whole-heartedly with, the things which interest him, and in which he is deeply involved, and to learn particularly how to carry on such activities effectively.[46]

Contemporary-life as a Data Source

Society provides the framework within which learners live and learn. As Stratemeyer pointed out, a study of society can suggest the kinds of understandings and competencies students are likely to need in a period of swift changes.[47] A

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[44] Tyler, *Basic Principles*, ... op. cit., p.6.

[45] *Ibid.*, p.8.

[46] *Ibid.*, p.11

[47] Florence B. Stratemeyer, et. al., *Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living* [New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963], p.26.

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number of significant publications stressing the importance of contemporary life have emerged recently.[48]

The argument that objectives must be derived from studies of contemporary life rests on two principal reasons. First, the rapidly increasing body of knowledge as a result of technological and scientific advancements has made life so complex, so much so that every item of knowledge is not important for today's changing life. Even if it is assumed that all sorts of knowledge are useful, it is not possible to include these abilities and skills in the school program. Therefore, it is very

> ... necessary to focus educational efforts upon the critical aspects of this complex life and upon those aspects that are of importance today so that we do not waste the time of students in learning things that were important fifty years ago but no longer have significance at the same time that we are neglecting areas of life that are now important for which the schools provide no preparation.[49]

Second, studies of transfer of learning reveal that competencies are easily translatable into action only when similarities are created between learnings that are taking place in school and situations that are encountered in actual life.[50] In other words, "if the student learns about society in school, he will then see in his life outside of school a similarity to his learnings in school".[51] Moreover, it is the obligation of the school to study society in order to determine the basic demands of contemporary life and establish the conditions under which these basic demands can be acquired.

Subject Specialists as a Data-source

It is very important to recognize the fact that not long ago in the Western World, including the United States of America, the subject matter provided the entire source for the school curriculum.[52] (In Ethiopia, it would appear that there is too much reliance on traditional subject matter as a source for our modern curriculum.) Accordingly, school and college textbooks were written by subject specialists who organized the materials around their conceptions concerning what students should learn, if they were in turn, to become specialists in the field. As a

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[48]For detailed discussion see, National Education Association, *Education in a Changing Society* [Washington, *D.C.*: The Association, 1963]; Gordon F. Vars, *et.al.*, "Societal Forces Influencing Curriculum Decisions," *Review of Educational Research*, 33: 254-267, June, 1963.

[49]Tyler, *Basic Principles . . . , op. cit.*, p. 17

[50]*Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

[51]Estele L. Shane, "Structure of Knowledge and the Development of Curriculum and Instructional Materials in the Field of English. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UCLA, 1971,] p.25.

[52]Tyler, *Basic Principles . . . , op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

consequence, the objectives proposed were too technical and inappropriate for the vast majority of the students.

The idea that the writer intends to advance regarding the established discipline is this. While it does not seem justifiable to argue that modern schools (both in the developed and developing nations) have totally abandonded their traditional reliance on the subject matter, it would appear that (in the developed nations) some endeavours have been taken by subject matter specialists to study what their subject matter can contribute to the "education of young people who are not to specialize in the field." Thus, subject matter specialists must attempt to organize knowledge around what the discipline can contribute to general education.[53]

VALIDATION OF OBJECTIVES

After the objectives are identified from the three data-sources discussed above, the next important task involves the question of screening. Curriculum experts suggest two ways by which objectives have to be screened in order to be useful.

The first method is to filter the objectives through a philosophical screen. The utilization of philosophy of education can considerably influence our thinking with regard to *what ought to be learned*. The question of *what ought to be loarned* is to be answered in terms of "some concepts about the worth of the individual, about the nature of good life, about the place of education in helping young people to find that good life, about the role of formal schooling in this regard, and about the role of school in society."[54] In other words, decisions about *what ought to be learned* depends on the educational philosophy upon which the society, the school and its staff wish to establish for the instructional program. (Note, the philosophy which the school uses must olways have congurency with that philosophy established at the societal level.) Thus, philosophy is helpful in order to avoid inconsistencies. That is to say, if internal consistency cannot be maintained between the philosophy the school adheres to and the statement of objectives, the objectives is not worth maintaining.

The second method is to filter objectives through the psychological screen. The psychological screen raises the question of "What can be learned?" This has to be answered in terms of "our knowledge of how learning takes place, the factors which tend to motivate and encourage learning, those which inhibit learning, how much learning may reasonably be expected and the extent to which transfer of learning can occur".[55] An adequate knowledge of psychology and theory of learn-

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[53]For Scholoarly discussions regarding organized knowledge as a data-source, see, for example, Phillip H. Phenix, "Key Concepts in the Crises of Learning," *Teachers College Record*, 58: 137-143, December, 1956; O.L. Davis, Jr., "Organized Knowledge Influencing Curriculum," *Review of Educational Research*, 35: 245-253 June, 1963.

[54]Rehage, "Deciding Upon Objectives," ... *op. cit.*, p. 41

[55]*Ibid., p. 42*

ing is essential in order to enable the teacher to distinguish between those learnings which are attainable at given age levels and those which are not; as well as those learnings which may be learned in a shorter period of time and those which may not be. In short, psychology would render an ample opportunity for the teacher to analyze and ultimately use the major findings of psychology related to the principles of learning and children's growth patterns. Hence, the psychological screen is employed to determine the feasibility, compatability and specificity of objectives.

The process of formulating educational objectives as conceptualized in this paper can be schematically shown as the following.
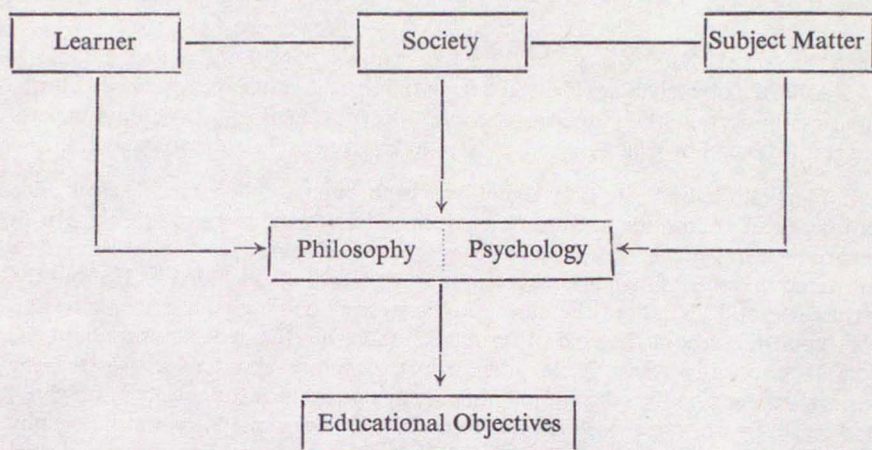
IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO
ETHIOPIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The process of planning curriculum is a complex matter. Although a great many people have the duty and responsibility to make decisions regarding what the schools are expected to accomplish, curriculum directors and coordinators (in the Ministry of Education) and specialists (in HSIU) are in positions of considerable responsibioity. Therefore the question of developing sound curriculum can be resolved only through the analysis of three kinds of data - sources of educational objectives: knowledge of the human being as a learner, societal forces causing changes, and the organized bodies of knowledge.

Examination of the present Ethiopian school curriculum (at least that of the elementary school) seems to reveal that there is no way to judge to what extent an analysis of these three sources has gone into the making of our educational objectives. Moreover, one could not tell how the values that are being sought through the educational system are selected.

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While many Ethiopian and foreign writers seem to have recognized the im portance of objectives for developing sound educational program, while they are increasingly aware of the inadequacy of our current educational objectives, their analysis of the sources from which the ends of schooling should be derived leaves much to be desired.[56] Even, Germa and associates who, in their very recent work, have identified values, official and non-official records and "efforts of other countries" as sources of educational objectives, have not adequately described and explained how these sources can be utilized as bases to gather the necessary data to make decisions in the process of formulating educational objectives.[57]

The other implication of the theoretical framework is that an objective is a point (or an end) to be reached and as such, implies direction in behavior. This means that educational objectives should be stated in such a way as to clarify the changes in behavior. To put it differently, the statement of objectives should indicate directions to changes in behavior. Therefore writing objective (instructional objectives) requires, among other thigs, identifying clearly the behaviorial aspects and the substantive elements. In Ethiopia, stating objectives in this manner is not yet practiced. Educational objectives are stated either in the form of content elements that are to be dealt with in the course, or in the form of generalized patterns of behavior. Objectives stated as topics or generalizations, while indicating the area of content to be dealt with by the students, fail to specify what the students are expected to do with these generalizations. Likewise, objectives stated as generalized behavior, while identifying the kind of behavior to be developed in the student, fail to specify the content or area of life to which the behavior applies. Study, for example, the following statements which are the main objectives for the elementary school social studies in Ethiopia.

1. An adequate knowledge of geography, history, and social civic affairs which can be used for a better understanding of the present day.

2. An appreciation of democratic values and competence in the skills and attitudes required for effective citizenship.

3. An understanding of the contributions of the many groups of workers who produce goods and services.

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[56]See, for example, Taddesse Terefe, "Progress, Problems and Prospects in Ethiopian Education," *Ethiopia Observer*, 8, No. 1:6-18, 1964; W. A. Shack "Organizations and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *Journal of Negro Education* 28: 405-420, Fall, 1959. Jene S. Jacobson, "The Organization and Administration of Public School sin Ethiopia." *The Ethiopian Journal of Education*, 1: 12-17, June, 1967 and Haile Gabriel Dagne, "Ethiopian Educational Philosophy", *Dialogue*, [No. 2]: 57-66, December, 1968 [In Amharic Language

[57]Germa Amare, *et.al.* "Aims and Objectives of Education in Ethiopia, *The Ethiopian Journal of Education* 6:1-26, April, 1974

4. The ability to think critically about problems in the community and a willingness to assume responsibility for contributing to their solutions[58].

Note, that statement one indicates the content, "knowledge of geography, history and social civic affairs," but makes no clear statement regarding what students are going to do with this content. Hence, it is not a useful educational objective. Statements two and three indicate the general patterns of behavior, "an appreciation of democratic values and a competence in the skills . . ." and "an understanding of the contributions of the many groups of workers . . ." but they have not included the content which this behavior needs in order to be operative. Statement four attempts to include both the kind of behavior to be developed in the students; "the ability to think critically" and the content to which the behavior applies "problem in the community . . ."). But it is stated in such a vague manner that it is difficult to distinguish the behavior from the content. Thereofre, all the four social studies objectives are not clear enough to guide the selection of learning experiences.

Conclusion

The determination of educational objective is not a simple task. Educators are not unanimous in the definition of objectives nor in the sources and ways of stating them. Nonetheless, in an era of rapid change when educators and educational institutions are being held accountable for the kinds of educational experiences they provide for children and youth, the use of a curricular rationale for understanding, analyzing and interpreting problems and issues related to the formulation and statement of educational objectives is very valuable.

The determination of educational objectives involves broad questions of social, political and educational policy. It requires cooperative efforts of interested professional and non-professional groups. The cooperation of the classroom teacher is of particulars importance, for it is in the classroom that the instructional program intended to accomplish the objectives takes its final form.

The concept advanced in this paper, while there is no claim that it is complete or exhaustive, provides one way for viewing the process of determining the ends that are desired by the educational system of a nation.

[58]Division of Curriculum and Teaching Materials, Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, *Elementary School Curriculum, Years I - VI* [Addis Ababa: The Ministry, 1960 E.C. p. 61.