# The Problems beyond the Scene: Appra[i]sals on the Content Related Problems of High School Civic and Ethical Education Textbooks in Ethiopia

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**Abstract: The aim of this research was to investigate content related problems of high school civic and ethical education textbooks in Ethiopia. Though different researches were undertaken on the limitations of civic education in Ethiopia, the content related problems were overlooked. Hence, it was justifiable to conduct this study. The research employed qualitative method. The data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. These data were analyzed through discourse analysis. Accordingly, the contents of the textbooks about rights, democracy, equality, and history were found to be distorted and presented in a manner to build the image of the incumbent while these issues are antithetical with the realities. The textbooks are found to be used as vehicle of the regime's propaganda. The nature of the regime and lack of the professional knowledge and integrity in preparing the textbooks are found to be the main reasons behind the problem.**

**Keywords: Civic Education, Equality in Ethiopia, Democracy in Ethiopia, Human Rights**

## 1. Introduction

It is clear that democracy can be consolidated and well entrenched in a given society when citizens have the awareness, skill and knowledge about its qualities and strived for the practicability of such qualities (Heywood, 2004). It requires active and responsible citizens who feel that they have a concern in their own state (Fetene, 2017). For this end, it is important for citizens to have enlightened understanding about various issues related with civic concepts. That is why many countries in the world designed a course with various nomenclatures such as citizenship education, civic education, political education, civic and ethical education and the like (Endalkachew, 2016). Though there are such differences in nomenclatures, the essential and common objective of these disciplines is to create a good citizen who is equipped with the necessary civic virtues, skills and knowledge (Walsh, 2013).

In Ethiopia, subjects with an aim to improve the civic virtues of citizens have bases in the earliest religious educations (Endalkachew, 2016). Following expansion of modern education, a 'secular' subject that deals with the moral character of citizens have been designed during the reign of Emperor Haileselasie (Meron, 2006). When Dergue was coming to power, this moral education was changed and titled as political education, the major aim being increasing the awareness of Ethiopians about political issues particularly about socialism and related concepts (Meron, 2006). Then, the nomenclature has been changed in to Civic and Ethical Education under the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) regime. However, since the current[i] teaching materials are mainly focusing on the civic aspect,

(Endalkachew, 2017; Fetene, 2017; Minister of Education (MoE hereafter), 2018) the investigation of this paper will focus on civic education.

According to United Nation Development Program (UNDP) (2004), civics as a discipline is concerned with teaching citizens for effective participation in democratization and development process of a country. It focuses on inculcating theoretical knowledge and providing practical information about the socio-political and legal issues of the international and local settings (Walsh, 2013). Civic education teaches about the rights and duties of citizens and builds the required civic skills and civic knowledge that are important to enjoy the rights and discharge duties. According to Dahl (2006), enlightened understanding is one of the essential requirements in evaluating a given system as democratic or not. As a result creating active citizens is instrumental to the flourishing of democracy. Active citizenship in this sense is the ability of the people to exercise and defend their rights and to play an active involvement in the democratic process (Deth, 2013). For this end, civic education is found to be significant. The civic classroom, along with the home and family, can serve as an important socializing agent by encouraging young people to develop and practice civic skills, offering opportunities for open discussions about political and social issues, and providing training grounds for civic involvement (Walsh, 2013).

Given such significances, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) designs a curriculum and includes civic education in its program of schooling in the 1994 Education and Training policy (Fetene, 2017). However, studies are showing that the curriculum is facing limitations in meeting the objectives of the course: mainly the creation of good citizens (Endalkachew, 2016; Michael, 2017; MoE, 2018; Mohammed, 2017). The study conducted by the MoE (2008) lists various problems such as limited concern for ethics, focus on rights than responsibilities, 'limited' concern for government policies and ideologies, passive mode of delivery, and lack of professionals in the field. It also found that the negative outlook of the society, the teachers and students as if the course is an instrument of the regime's ideological indoctrination as the other challenge and the document criticizes that such outlooks are mistaken (MoE, 2018). However, the study of the MoE focuses on external problems and overlooked content related limitations of the teaching materials, which in fact should be given a due concern.

Other studies conducted by private researchers are focusing on its roles (Teferi, 2017; Mulualem, 2017; Fetene, 2017). Researchers such as Mohammed (2017) and Michael (2017) who focused on the challenges of civic education in Ethiopia are also come up with results that are similar with the findings of MoE (2018). Endalkachew (2017) who attempted to see the content related problems has highlighted the repetitiveness of contents at different grade levels and the lack of character (ethic) oriented objectives and contents as the other limitations. In spite of these studies, it is believed that there are content related limitations that ought to be investigated but which are overlooked by these studies. As a result, it was found to be justifiable to conduct this research. This study thus investigated the problems beyond the stated challenges and limitations of civic and ethical education in Ethiopia and that is why it is titled as "the problems beyond the scene". Specifically, the paper:

- Investigated content related problems of Ethiopian high school Civic and Ethical education textbooks;
- Articulate how such content related problems are inclined to political indoctrinations

- Identify the possible reasons behind the limitations.

## 2. Methods and Materials

In order to conduct this study, both primary and secondary data sources were utilized to collect data. Published research papers, press releases, theoretical literatures, international covenants, and other legal documents were used as cross-references to discern the content related problems of the textbooks. In terms of the teaching materials, the investigator preferably focused on high school (grade 9-12) civic and ethical education student textbooks. I select these grade levels because of my exposure to these teaching materials when I serve as a tutor for high school students. Such case selection is supported by revelatory case selection criteria (Mathews & Ross, 2010).

In addition to document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions with the course instructors were undertaken in order to address the stated objectives of the paper. The interviewees and focus group discussants were selected based on purposive sampling method. Those who have long years experience of teaching the course as well as better educational background and profiles among instructors of Gondar University and high school civic and ethical education teachers who were attending their Master of Arts in civic and ethical education at Gondar University were purposefully selected. Since, the teachers are coming from different regions; efforts have been made to include interviewees and focus group discussants from different ethnic groups. The interviews were conducted with 16 individuals (13 high school teachers and three university instructors). Moreover, two focus group discussions with six members each were held to triangulate the data.

The data collected in such a manner were analyzed through a qualitative discourse analysis. "Discourse analysis is applicable to most research topics and situations and can provide a new perspective of data analysis. It is important to reveal the hidden meanings of texts by asking different questions" (Mathews & Ross, 2010, p. 392). As this research, particularly in its identification of the content related problems and the reasons behind, was focusing to reveal the hidden meanings, discourse analysis was found to be preferable.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1 The Main Content Related Problems

### 3.1.1 Conceptual Confusions about Rights

As one of the basic aims of civic education is teaching students about their rights, (Walsh, 2013) the teaching materials of all grade levels were found to have contents about this concept. However, these teaching materials lack conceptual clarifications and are full of confusions and contradictions. Although lack of universal agreement over social science concepts is obvious, the Ethiopian civic textbooks are prepared in a manner that is contradicting with established literatures, international human right agreements and philosophical assumptions. These limitations can be seen under three lenses.

First and for most, the classification of rights as democratic and human rights is problematic. The explanation regarding these rights is given as:

> Rights and freedoms are divided in to two categories. They are human rights and democratic rights. …every person has the right to life, liberty and security. These rights are part of human rights. These rights are neither given to you, nor should you be denied them. Citizens in a *democracy (italic mine)* have many democratic rights to enjoy. These include the rights of thought, opinion and expression. (Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p. 6).

The texts nowhere attempt to define what democratic rights are rather they try to list those rights, which are supposed to be democratic rights. These 'democratic rights' include, the right to movement, assembly, demonstration, elect and be elected, the right to self-administration, the right to property, the right to development, the right to environment and child and women rights (Grade 11 Textbook, 2002, p.11). Here democratic rights are presented as equivalent or parallel classification to human rights. That means, rights listed as democratic rights are not human rights and vice versa. Regarding this issue, interviewee 02 stated that:

> One of the confusing content in civic and ethical education textbooks is the content about rights. While the textbooks present human and democratic rights as parallel classifications, you can have ample literatures that consider the democratic rights as human rights. Our problem in this regard is basically emanated from the problem in the classifications of rights under the 1995 constitution.

However, this is in contrast to the international human right regime that Ethiopia has been a signatory. Under Universal Declaration of Human Right to which Ethiopia is a declaratory, all these rights are identified as human rights (UN, 1949). The two Human right covenants, to which Ethiopia is a signatory, also recognized these rights as human rights (Charvet &Kaczynska-Nay, 2008). Regarding the status of children and women rights, the international Convention on Human Rights adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 states that the rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

Academic literatures such as Andrian (2009), Charvet and Kaczynska-Nay (2008), Clapham (2007), Cornescu (2009), Edmundson (2004), Evans (2007) and Ishay (2004) widely discuss the rights listed above as 'democratic rights' within the context of human rights. In Edmundson (2004), the rights recognized as 'democratic rights' under the high school civic and ethical education textbooks of Ethiopia are described as human rights with different substantive classification such as civil rights, political rights, socio-cultural rights and economic rights. Karel Vasak, cited in Evans (2007), who has introduced the generational classification of human rights as first, second and third generation rights, presented these rights as Human rights. Nevertheless, Ethiopian teaching materials designate many of the first generation human rights as democratic rights.

Apart from such contradictions with established literatures, the philosophical assumption about the right to movement, the right to property, the right to elect and the like have foundations on the very nature of human being (Edmundson, 2004). Of course, democratic governments are important for the promotion and protection of not only the so-called democratic rights but also human rights. However, claiming such

rights as the right to movement, the right to property, the right to elect and the like as given by democratic government differently with the right to liberty, privacy, equality and the like as these are innate human rights (Grade 10 Textbook, 2003), is found to be mistaken. In this regard, participant 05 of the FGD stated:

> Democratic rights are understood as rights that are given by democratic governments while human rights are possessions by a virtue of being human. However, you found that rights identified as democratic in our teaching materials being designated as human rights in other academic literatures.

Here what one has to be cautions is that it is not to mean that there are not rights called as democratic rights. The problem is how democratic rights are understood and taught in the Ethiopian context. The statement, which says, "citizens in democracy have democratic rights" is understood as if the so-called democratic rights are given by democratic governments unlike human rights, to which all humans have a *possession* by a virtue of being human (Cornescu, 2009). The problem is thus, the claim that democratic rights are clearly separated from human rights in that they are *given* by democratic governments while these rights are understood as fundamental human rights according to different well established literatures stated so far.

The second problem in relation to concepts and classification of rights is the contents of the high school civic textbooks regarding child rights. Here, you can found that the text is self-contradictory. While the right to life is identified as a human right (Grade 12 Textbook, 2002, p.15), children's right to life is identified as a democratic rights (Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p.14). How dare the right to life of a children is considered as a democratic right unlike the conventional right to life? "When the right to life is identified as human right, the identification of children's right to life as democratic right is the other confusion that you found in the textbooks" (Participant 09 of the FGD). Of course, human rights might be classified as child rights, women rights, group rights, disability rights, individual rights and the like based on the holders of the right (Ishay, 2004). However, it does not mean that, some group's rights are democratic while others are human rights. Particularly, it is puzzling when a similar right is grouped under two parallel categories.

The third controversy regarding rights in Ethiopia's civic curriculum is the lack of consistency across grade levels. While widening and deepening in contents as you grownup across different grade levels is expected, it should not be done in manner of contradiction. The knowledge of students in their lower levels about rights will face a direct opposition when they join university. Those rights which have been thought as democratic right, in parallel to human right, are now tend to be thought as human rights. When student's join universities, they will learn that rights such as the right to movement, assembly, association, child right, women rights, self-determination rights and the like, which they know as democratic rights, are human rights (Alem & Ketemaw, 2017; Dessalew & Kalewongel n.d.). "The other problem is the lack of consistency. Those rights that were considered as democratic rights at high school levels are now identified as human rights at university level" (Interviewee 16).

Given the relative freedom to prepare teaching materials by their own, university teachers are found to prepare teaching materials in a manner, which is consistent with the established literatures, international human right regimes and philosophical connotations. However, it leads the students to face confusions and devalue the subject as it lacks consistent knowledge. This creates confusion among students regarding the essence of human rights. Generally, the conceptual connotations of rights illustrated under the high school teaching materials are found to be confusing, self-contradictory and lacks a foundation in well-established academic literatures, international and regional human right regimes.

### 3.1.2 'Indoctrination' as if the Current Regime is Democratic

The texts throughout different grade levels dictate that the current political system of Ethiopia is democratic. While, they present previous regimes as monarchial or dictatorial, the texts preach that the post 1991 government is democratic. "The EPRDF forces eventually defeated the Dergue and removed the military government from power in 1991; and this led to the transition to *democratic rule* in the country" (Grade 12 Textbook, 2002, p. 35, *italic mine*). "The *democratic government* that came to power in 1991 issued a constitution that changed the ways of the past" *(*Grade 9 Textbook, 2002, p. 13, *italic mine). "*Following the transition, *democratic government* was established in the country" (Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p.22, *italic mine*). Such statements of the textbooks are emphasizing on inculcating bold conclusions, which claim that Ethiopia is democratic, in the minds of students. Now the question is whether the current government of Ethiopia is 'really democratic'.

Democracy is a system of government in which political power is emanated from the people (Heywood, 2004). According to the minimalist perception, democracy is a system in which rulers are chosen by competitive elections, where such elections are held on a regular basis and under conditions of universal suffrage (Heywood, 2004). Such views prefer to ask, "Whether genuinely competitive elections produce *changes in governmental personnel and policy" (Italic mine)*. If elections remain a non-competitive, sham and an occasion for smashing governmental opponents, the system is undemocratic (Tilly, 2007, p.7).

This approach of democracy is important to evaluate the democratic nature of EPRDF given that the conduct of election and multiparty politics are lauded by the regime to defend that it is a democratic regime. Moreover, the substantive approach is also essential to measure Ethiopia's "democracy", as the teaching materials are citing substantive qualities as measure of democracy. The proponents of substantive approaches focus on "the conditions of life and politics a regime promotes: Does this regime promote human welfare, individual freedom, security, equity, social equality, public deliberation, and peaceful conflict resolution? If so, the system is democratic" (Tilly, 2007, p.7). If this is about democracy and again democracy is a system in which the people are the source of political power and decision-makings through direct and indirect political participations (Heywood, 2004), the question is what are the realities in the post 1991 Ethiopia?

Literatures and research papers that investigated the political events of Ethiopia starting from the period of transition to present days show that the system is characterized as a semi-authoritarian if not an authoritarian. The failure to shepherd Ethiopia into a democratic state is evident in the very process by which the institutions of the transitional government were created and the Charter was adopted. The EPRDF deliberately excluded opposition groups when developing the legal and institutional framework

for the new government. The EPRDF has further undermined the prospects for democracy by employing violent and undemocratic tactics to upset election proceedings in order to maintain power. The upshot of these policies is the illegitimate concentration of political power in the hands of the EPRDF and the absence of any demarcation between it, as the dominant party, and the state (Alemante, 1992, p.205).

Regarding political participation of citizens, studies show that how much people are forced to refrain from political involvement because of fear of political measures. In Ethiopia today, several means are used by political power holders at different levels to create an obedient and quiescent citizens. The local administrative structure of governance (*kebelle*) is perhaps the most important tool for the state to control the peasantry. Moreover, various expressions of state coercion imbue fear and apprehension among the people, which consequently create disinterest, or apathy, as a survival strategy in order not to be 'eaten by politics' (Tronvoll, 2001, p.701).

Despite the rhetoric of power devolution to different ethnic groups, power is under the firm control of centralized party organization. Hence, regional and local autonomy is undermined and opposition party activities are severely restricted. As such "Ethiopia falls under the category of semi-authoritarian states: the rulers accept liberal democracy rhetorically, but the system has apparent illiberal or authoritarian traits" (Tesfaye, 2017, p.38). The electoral processes of the past six round elections are also assertive to the semi-authoritarian nature of EPRDF. Lyons (1996), after examination of the 1995 election, wrote that the 1995 election was boycotted by many of strong opposition political parties due to the *uneven playfield* and *authoritarian* character of the regime.  In the same talk, Tronvoll (2001, p.699) states that "all the previous elections have been boycotted by the major opposition parties, due to the *authoritarian and undemocratic* (emphasis mine) practices of the EPRDF, that restricts free political activities of the opposition". The 2005 election which was partly free in the pre-election and the election phase was soon culminated by sever authoritarian response of the EPRDF regime where many have lost their life and many others were imprisoned (Wondosen, 2009).

The post 2005 election was characterized by frequent crackdowns of media, intimidation and harassments of journalists, political figures and party members (Wondosen, 2009). The political space is narrowed down by suppressive laws such as the anti-terrorism law, the revised media law, civil society and electoral laws. Such undemocratic tendencies of the regime have continued during the 2010 election (Alemayehu, 2010) and reach to the extent of 100% won in the 2015 election where the parliament is left without any opposition voices. Regarding this election, Arriola and Lyons (2016, p.76) concluded that "the results of Ethiopia's 24 May 2015 parliamentary elections confirm that authoritarian rule will persist in Africa's second most populous country for the foreseeable future".

Moreover, the people's political involvement either through people intensive channels and the media are in a critical problem. People who found to participate in demonstrations, party meetings, electoral campaigns, and door-to-door campaigns of opposition political parties have been faced intimidations, arrest, killing and any other punishments by the regime (Alemayehu, 2010; Wondosen, 2009, Tronvoll, 2006,). Private media that have been conveying dissent voices of the people have been faced forceful crackdowns, mainly in the post 2005 elections and the state owned media have been serving as the mouthpiece of the incumbent regime (Wondosen, 2009; Merara, 2007). The torture and inhuman

treatments of prisoners in different prison centers are also the other's manifestations of the regime's brutality and dictatorship (Amhara Television, July 5[ii] and July 24[iii], 2018).

Due to the lack of hope in conventional political participation along with the authoritarian decision of the regime on various sensitive issues, the people are forced to challenge this suppressive regime through unconventional forms of political participation. In the mean time, as it is expected from dictatorial regimes, "the regime was attempting to silent the people through forceful measures such as mass killing and mass detentions, particularly in Amhara and Oromia regions" (interviewee 08). Moreover, if we are looking the past eight years (starting from 2010) report of the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), the average democratic index of Ethiopia is 3.655, which is within the category of authoritarianism (EIU, 2018). If the real political experience of EPRDF for the past 27 years looks like this, then how dare teaching materials, which are assumed to be the channels for the inquiry of the truth, propagate wrong bold conclusions. As teaching materials, the high school teaching materials would have to allow the students to debate over the issue. Instead, the texts are found to be instrument of propaganda for the regime to indoctrinate the students as if the current regime is democratic while in fact it is not. In this regard, interviewee 05 has said that:

> The main problem of the teaching material is its' inconsistency with the reality. For example, issues such as the due process of law, democratic nature of the regime, issues of accountability and transparency and the like, which are taught as if they are manifestation of EPRDF's regime could not be found on the ground.

What is the implication of this problem? As it is clearly stated, the textbook is intended to create submissive citizens that would not challenge the existing regime for the reason that it is 'democratic'. On the other hand, it will leave a distorted image about the notion of democracy. If the students learn that the current regime, with all its suppressive characteristics mentioned so far, is leveled as democratic, then the students will have a distorted understanding about democracy. In short, students may have an "awareness that it is possible to be 'democratic' while there are visible authoritarian practical realities. Moreover, the incorporation of such wrong bold conclusions and ideological indoctrinations in textbooks may push the students and others to develop a negative attitude and devalue the subject. As per the study of the MoE (2018, p.24), one of the challenges of civic and ethical education in Ethiopia is "the leveling of the course as instrument through which the ideologies and propagandas of the regime are indoctrinated, which in fact is mistaken". However, while the texts are found to have such elements, blaming that the outlook as mistaken is mistaken by itself. Rather than criticizing the teachers, the students and political party leaders as if they are mistaken for considering the subject as instrument of political indoctrination, it would be important to revise the contents of the teaching material that forced these groups to develop such an outlook.

### 3.1.3 'Misunderstanding' of Realities about Equality and Justice

As I have stated earlier, the textbooks are biased when presenting the political realities of the current Ethiopia. While a lot of question of equality and justice are raised by many concerned stakeholders, the

texts boldly concludes that equality of nation, nationalities and people is ensured. When I teach such things, I myself get 'ashamed' for it does not show the reality on the ground (Interviewee 12).

The other content related problem is the intent of the texts to indoctrinate students with distorted narrations about practicability of justice and equality under the EPRDF'S regime. This narration is found in the teaching materials of each grade levels. For example, Grade 10 Textbook (2002, p. 49) states that the "inequality that was existed among nations, nationalities and people's in the previous regimes is changed in the current regime. Now the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia are enjoying equal socio-political and economic privileges". It goes further and dictates that the "nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia are enjoying equal decision-making power at the federal level through their representatives (Grade 10 textbook, 2003, p.49). Though there are improvements as it is compared to previous regimes, inequality, particularly, political and economic inequality are prevailed under the EPRDF's Ethiopia. Studies conducted in this regard are showing the continuation of the inequality among the nationalities with new dominant group.

The old perception of Amhara domination of the state has given way to a new perception of Tigrayan domination. In rhetoric of the democratic equality of ethnic groups that the Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF) once advocated, there is a noticeable ascendancy of Tigrayan domination of the chief instruments of state power, especially the army, the security, and the top echelons of the bureaucracy (Alemante, 1992, p.213). Particularly, when one looks the creation and the relationship of EPRDF's constituent and affiliated parties with TPLF, he/she can has a clear enlightenment on how political power was dominated by persons from a single ethnic group under the guise of equality of nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia. In this regard, Asnake (2009, p.70) has narrated their creation as:

> In 1989, TPLF created EPRDF with the membership of the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM). In 1990, it formed Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) from prisoners of war captured from the Ethiopian army; and in 1994, it established a new coalition for the southern region, the Southern Ethiopia People Democratic Front (SEPDF). In the same year, the EPDM changed from a multi-ethnic organization into an ethnic political movement to 'represent' Amhara with a new name, the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) under the TPLF/EPRDF.

Similarly, TPLF created several subordinate parties, which would 'represent' the other five 'peripheral' regions of the country on its behalf (Aalen, 2002; Merera, 2007). Despite such ethnic based political parties, researches show that TPLF was the dominant group (Merara, 2007) in decision making of all aspects. Particularly, regarding the affiliated parties Arriola and Lyons (2016, p. 77) precisely wrote that:

> EPRDF considers these parties to be affiliates, however, rather than constituent members of the coalition. The allied parties have no representation in the EPRDF's Executive Committee, the most important decision-making body in Ethiopia. The TPLF remains today the dominant party within the EPRDF.

The affiliated parties, which govern the five regions, have not a voice in EPRDF Central committee and Executive Committee, both of which are the main decision making organs of the country. It is with in such realities that the Afar, Somalis, Hararis, and the Amharas as well as nationalities in Benshangul-Gumuz and Gambela are said to have equal decision-making power both in the federal and regional governments, which is a puzzling.

The unequal power relation is not only in decision-making powers at the federal level. Most importantly, the regional governments are also governed by the invisible hands of TPLF. In this regard, Aalen (2002, p.86) wrote that TPLF cadres were deployed to different regions and enjoy a dominant decision-making power with in that region. As evidence, Aalen (2002) has cited the case of Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region under Bitew Belay (a TPLF leader assigned as advisor of Southern region in 1999).

Generally, these realities show that, single ethnic group domination has been prevailed where TPLF members from Tigray ethnic group, have the high influence in the leadership of the EPRDF. In the economy, as well the Tigrians have a dominant role. The roles played by Tigray Development Agency (TDA) and Endowment Fund for Rehabilitation of Tigray (EFFORT) and others business closely linked to the TPLF government are favoring development in Tigray region and gives Tigrayans disproportionately much power in the Ethiopia's economy (Aalen, 2002). A research conducted by Amare and Suryanaraya (2015) on the distribution of industries, show that the distribution of heavy industries such as chemicals, fabricated metals and basic iron and steel are distributed disproportionately. "The number of chemical manufacturing firms in Oromia (40) and Tigray (6) has been twenty and three times that of Amhara's (2) respectively" (Amare & Suryanaraya, 2012, p. 64). In case of fabricated metals, Amhara region (the second populous) has only 14 while while Tigray (fifth populous), Oromia (first populous) and SNNPR (third Populus) has 20, 80 and 19 respectively (Amare and Suryanaraya, 2015). As such, "it is not demand, resource base, and infrastructure or agglomeration economies, which have been the base for the location decision of these industries. Rather, it is political decision and that is why the huge gap between Tigray and Amhara is this much visible" (Amare & Suryanaraya, 2015, p.48). That is why some writers wrote it as " Tigranization " where by "people with a Tigrayan background are consistently employed in important positions in the state machinery, in the economy and in public services (Abbink 1995, p.156 cited in Aalen, 2002, p. 93).

The inequality of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples is also visible in terms of social infrastructures such as roads, schools, electric power, health centers and the like where Tigreans are disproportionately benefited while others such as Amhara are disproportionately harmed. According to the study conducted by World Bank, Amharas road density is lesser in showing improvement while the road density of Tigray, Addis Ababa and Oromia show are the areas where the increase of road density has been concentrated. The government of Amhara national regional state is also repeatedly calling for a just and equitable distribution of electric power by claiming that Amhara is a victim of unjust distribution of electric power ( Amhara Radio News, 03/03/2011 EC).

Apart from such practical inequalities, the EPRDF system is an apartheid system that disproportionately discriminated and excluded the Amharas in its politics of recognition. The differentiated citizenship

perspective of EPRDF has denied recognition for the considerable size of ethnic Amharas in different parts of the country. Amharas who cover 7% of the total population in Oromia region (Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (ECSA), 2009) are deprived recognition by the constitution of the region (the 2002 Oromiya Revised Constitution, Article 8). In the contrary, the Oromos who cover only 2.2 % of the total population in Amhara region (ECSA, 2009) are recognized and given a self-governing status including the right to use and promote their own language and culture. To the worst scenario, a considerable number of Amharas (13%) in Oromia special zone of Amhara region (ECSA, 2009) are forced to use Oromifa language and face discrimination because of such language proficiency even within "their" own region (Amhara Television News, 26/02/2011 EC).

While the Harari who cover 7% of the region's total population (ECSA, 2009) are designated as the owner of the highest political power in Harari regional government (the 2002 Harari Revised constitution, Article 8), Amharas who cover 24% of the total population of the region (ECSA, 2009) are left without recognition. To its worst case, the regional government recognizes Harari and Oromifa as official language (the 2002 Hrari Revised constitution, Article 6) and is jointly administered by Hrarar League and OPDO while Amharas are excluded from the political and economic structures through such exclusionary policy.

In Benshangul-Gumuz, while the nationalities who have small numerical size are recognized as the highest owner of political power in the region (the 2002 Revised Constitution of Benshangul-Gumuz, Article 8), Amharas who have the second largest population size (23% of the region) (ECSA, 2009) are remained unrecognized. Hence, they have been facing political and economic exclusions and marginalization along with repeated mass killing and evictions (Muluken, 2017). These all are an assertive how the TPLF/EPRDF is establishing a well-founded apartheid system, particularly an exclusionary politics of recognition to a considerable size of Amhara. In this regard, Alemante (1992) clearly exposed that "while TPLF has done all the possible efforts to ensure the benefit of Tigreans including territorial annexation of lands from Amhara provinces, the Amharas were the clear losers in the ethnic redistricting process" (Alemante, 1992, p. 214).

While these all are the experience of the state for the past 27 years and are supported with the necessary academic literatures and empirical studies, preparing a teaching material that propagate as if the current regime of Ethiopia ensures the equality of nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia is a puzzling. If equality is treating all in the same manner without discrimination, how one could defend for the apartheid political realities presented so far. Despite the repeated rhetoric of equality of nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia, single ethnic group domination is visible, mainly in political power of the state. Hence, rather than the dictating bold conclusions as if the current system ensures equality, it would be good if the teaching materials were prepared in a way that invite students to debate and argue over the practical realities, which is the best teaching method in civics ( Walsh, 2013).

### 3.1.4 Distorted Narrations on History

As stated so far, many of the contents in the teaching materials are written in a way that they can build the good image of the current regime. The other limitation that I want to cite is the manipulation of historical realities of the country. Though many of the historical instances of the country are bone of

contentions, there are clear historical distortion in the texts. For example, while separation of state and religion has been first introduced by the Dergue regime, the texts presented it as if it is the innovation of EPRDF (Interviewee 11).

The texts distorted the past historical phenomena for the sake of glorifying the current regime as if it is the owner of every good attempt. Particularly, the constitutional and *de jure* realities of the Dergue regime have faced such biased narrations. "In the past, the rights and equality of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia were not recognized" (Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p. 63). Despite the issue of institutionalization of such rights is contested, the claim that Dergue did not give recognition to the equality of nations, nationalities is a 'white lie'. "The establishment of the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN), and the ethnic mapping of Ethiopia, an enterprise that had not previously been attempted are attempts of Dergue" (Clapham, 2009, p.17).

Apart from this, the 1987 People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) constitution gave unequivocal recognition to the equality of nationalities. "Ethiopia's long history of independence has been the history of the united existence and common struggle of her nationalities" (Preamble of the Constitution). Particularly, the 1987 constitution addresses this issue under Article 2 as, "the PDRE is a unitary state in which all nationalities live in equality (Sub-article 1); the PDRE shall ensure equality of nationalities, combat chauvinism and narrow nationalism… (Sub-article 2); the PDRE shall ensure the common advancement of all nationalities, by progressively eliminating the disparity in their economic development… (Sub-article 3); and the PDRE shall ensure equality, development, respectability of the languages of nationalities" (Sub-article 5).

Likewise, the implication as if the 1931 constitution does not have contents related to human right is mistaken. "Unlike the 1931 Constitution, the 1955 Constitution gave at least a textual recognition to rights and liberties of citizens (Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p. 34). However, the 1931 constitution explicitly gave recognition to fundamental rights such as the right to movement (Article 22), the freedom from arbitrary arrest, sentence, or imprisonment (Article 23); the right to fair trial (Article 24); the right to privacy (Article 25); the right to property (Article 27); and the right to petition (Article 28).
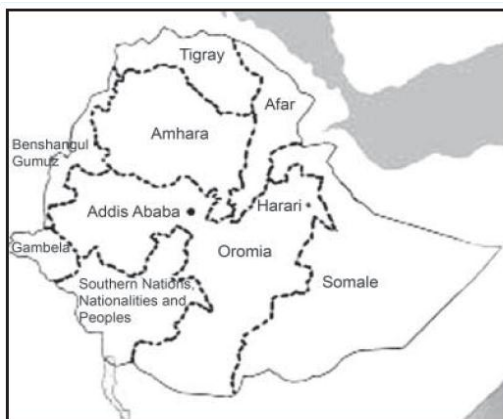
Moreover, narrations about women rights are denying the efforts made by Dergue for gender equality. "In the past, the rights of women did not have constitutional protection" (Grade 9 Textbook, 2002, p.9). However, this claim is wrong for the reason that such rights were recognized and protected by the PDRE constitution under article 36. Additionally, indoctrinations as if the idea of secularism is introduced by the FDRE constitution(Grade 11 Textbook, 2002, p.4) is denial of historical facts for the reason that separation of state and religion is first introduced during the Dergue regime, mainly by its PDRE constitution. State and religion are separated (PDRE constitution, Article 46(3)).

These and other presentations of the high school civic and ethical education are assertive for the idea that, the textbooks are presenting historical realities with distortion. Such narrations are basically assumed to be part of the propaganda that aims to glorify the current regime with "bad" images of the past. This can be easily asserted as one has a thorough internalization of the texts and analyze how the historical narrations are written in relation to current 'achievements'. The other limitation of this text,

particularly under grade 10, is its presentation about the political map that shows the territorial division of the nine regions in Ethiopia. This map, as you see below (the one on the left), incorporated parts of three Woredas of Amhara region (Metema, Quara and Tach Armachiho) under Benshangul-Gumuz region. The text, through this political map, has been inculcating a 'lie' in the minds of the students. Of course, this seems to be done intentionally to support a future debate regarding internal territorial demarcations. Particularly, the then power holders who were viewing Amharas as 'oppressors' (Merara, 2007) undertaken the restructuring process. The territorial demarcation was made in a manner where Amharas were not represented (Alemante,1992) and teaching materials of such like would be used as evidence for future debate over internal territorial demarcation.

Though the government officially admits that the map was wrongly presented, following the 2017/18 Amharan resistance, the text is neither edited nor is that page removed. Regarding this, interviewee 09 stated that, "Like everybody else, I have watched the statement from the minister of education that the political map is incorrect. However, the text is not revised. We as a teacher are not even given a direction".

Hence, this political map along with a distorted narration of historical facts are the other main content related problems that one may encounter as he/ she goes through the details of the high school civic and ethical education textbooks of Ethiopia.



Map of Ethiopia showing the Regional States

The wrong political Map                                   The 'right' political map[iv]
Presented by Grade 10 Textbook, 2002, p.24

### 3.2 Possible Reasons behind the Limitations

Now the question is why such content related problems are created. The first reason, in this regard, is the intent of the regime to use the material for its propaganda consumption. In this regard, interviewee 14 states that, "for me the main reason for the existence of such content related problems is the intention of the regime to indoctrinate its propaganda through teaching materials and create submissive citizens". In spite of the fact that the current regime criticizes former political and moral educations as they were mere instruments of the then regimes to create submissive citizens through propaganda (MoE, 2018), the narrations and content related problems found in the text are assertive for the continuation of using civic

textbook for such purposes by the current regime too. Hence, the regime's aspiration to indoctrinate its political orientations and interests is assumed to be one of the reason for such content related problems.

The other main reason for such problems is the dependent of the textbooks on the constitution alone as the main source of knowledge. As a teaching material, the producers of the textbooks have to explore different sources of knowledge. However, their exclusive dependent on the constitution, particularly in its contents related with rights, leads the texts to have confusing contents. In this regard, interviewee 10 states:

> The heaviest dependent of the writers of the texts on the constitution and other political documents has also contributed for having such content related problems. For example, if academic studies were consulted, the text will not have such confused and biased contents on issues such as human right, democracy, equality and the like.

While it is logical to teach about one's own local context, limiting the student's knowledge with a distorted political document is problematic as it will undermine the intellectual horizons of the students'. If other literatures were reviewed, the texts will, at least include the other dimension of the issues investigated so far and may present a balanced outlook. This in turn enable students to have a broaden understanding and debate over the issue. However, the texts are produced in a way that can induce the ideological indoctrination of the regime.

The third problem is associated with the writers themselves. On one hand, unlike other teaching materials, teaching materials for high school civic and ethical education textbooks were not prepared by professionals. In this regard, Interviewee 15 states that:

> These problems are created mainly, as I think, because the teaching materials are not produced by the professionals in the area. If you take subjects such as Geography, Chemistry, Physics and the like, you could not confront with such contradictions with the well-established realities, facts and concepts mainly because the respective professionals produce the materials.

Apart from problem of functional specialization, there were limitations of time and materials required to produce the teaching materials. Regarding the team who prepared the teaching material and the curriculum for Civics, Smith (2007) wrote that:

> The teams were composed of young bureaucrats from different government ministries (mainly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education) and the Ethiopian Civil Service College. They were brought under short-term contracts by the Ministry of Education and given working space and limited resources by the Ministry in Addis Ababa (p. 17).

Generally, though it is difficult to have universally accepted common understandings for the concepts and realities in social science, as it is a teaching material, it has to be prepared in a manner that has taken in to consideration of different issues. The teaching materials have to be prepared by professionals in the

area who can illustrate the basic concepts in relation to well established academic literatures and scientific investigations of the Ethiopian context. This enables the students to look out of the box and; they will have the potential to forward their views and critics about their contexts in relation to the established scientific knowledge.

## 4. Conclusion

The main objective of this paper was to investigate the content related problems of civic and ethical education textbooks in Ethiopia. For the reason that the content related problems are overlooked by the study of Minister of education and by other academicians, this research was found to be significant. Accordingly, the paper found limitations on the contents such as democracy, human right, history, articulation of justice and equality. Concepts such as justice, equality and democracy are presented in a way that they can build the good images of the current regime, while such presentation are ill founded claims that does not show the real political experience of the country. Based on the idea of the interviewees and the findings of different researches, this paper found that the presentation of high school textbooks as if the current regime is democratic and ensures equality and justice is a mere propaganda undertaken under the guise of scientific knowledge.

Moreover, the classification of rights is found to be problematic as it is antithetical to a well-established academic literatures and different international and regional human right regimes. It is also self-contradictory and confusing. In terms of narrations of history, the textbooks are found to present historical facts of Ethiopia in a distorted manner to build the 'good' image of the current regime based on the 'bad' image of the past regimes.

These problems are basically resulted from very aspiration of the regime to indoctrinate its philosophy and propaganda through the teaching materials and for that purpose civic and ethical education textbooks are found to be convenient. Moreover, the use of the constitution as a main source of knowledge and 'lack' of well trained professionals in the area who produce the teaching materials are found to be the main reasons for the existence of content related problems of civic and ethical education textbooks in Ethiopia.

Generally, despite the current regime criticizes the moral education of the imperial regime and political education of the Dergue regime as they were instruments of propaganda and ideological indoctrination, the civic textbooks produced under its auspices are not found to be immune from such problems. They are presented and discussed in a manner to maintain legitimacy of the regime. As a result, it is recommended for the concerned body to revise the contents of these textbooks with a due consideration to the content related problems illustrated so far. Moreover, in the revision, concerned professionals who are loyal to the science and who has the expertise in the area have to be involved.

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End Notes[i]

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[i] The word 'current', throughout this paper, is used to refer the past 27 years of EPRDF's administration

[ii] retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBB_L9jdmyg

[iii] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxVSaB5CEEw

[iv] Retrieved at http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/menu4596.htm