

The Politics of Institutionalization, Professionalization and Quality Maintenance: Revisiting the Formative Years of the Academy of Pedagogy, 1972-1984

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Abstract: The Academy of Pedagogy was established in 1972 following an agreement signed between the imperial government of Ethiopia and UNDP and UNESCO. During its formative years, the Academy faced enormous challenges. The Academy's institutionalization and professionalization attempts were undermined by the early turbulent years of the Ethiopian Revolution and the subsequent political turmoil and violence. The quality of its training program was also tarnished by the shortage of highly qualified instructors. Through time, however, the Academy managed to overcome the daunting academic and administrative difficulties. This paper, therefore, attempts to outline the evolution of the Academy and investigate the major challenges it faced during the first ten years following its foundation. It also highlights the curriculum revisions undertaken by Bahir Dar Teachers' College in order to ensure quality in its training programs.

Background and Statement of the problem

Higher education institutions have significant roles in national development in any system and/or nation, be it within developed or developing world. The missions of higher education in any system or state include producing trained human resources, conducting research and rendering outreach (community) services. Higher education institutions sustain the provision of government services to public good and good governance by enhancing the roles of the expertise, technical knowledge, managerial capacity and skills that are strongly interrelated with professionalism. This was not, however, an easy task to materialize in view of the uneasy relationships between official government policies for ensuring professionalism, quality training and the state machinations of successive Ethiopian regimes. It even put the Ethiopian regimes at dilemmas between promoting professionalization, quality training and academic freedom that nurture universities as guardians in the production of knowledge.

The first Education Sector Review that was introduced on the eve of the Ethiopian Revolution clearly showed the mutual distrust between the state educational system, its professionals and the production of unemployed elite that could not be absorbed into the system's civil services. In relation to this, Seyoum (2006, p. 6) states that "the government seems to have believed that it knew what was good for the people, and therefore, chose what it thought to be the best alternative. ... The government had specially slighted the participation of teachers in policy issues". He further argues that the state's aura of secrecy

put the policy behind closed doors, by limiting its circulation-with an attached tag of “restricted”- which led to various misgivings on the part of professional teachers and the future teachers who were in their pre-service training stage (*Ibid*).

The situation was not anything different during the *Derg* regime, which sought popular support by subscribing to intellectual/student’s drive for radical change along the socialist path. The government seemed to have good initial records in terms of winning popular sentiments and fundamental issues like land tenure reforms and social equity. It also tried to open up education to the broad masses, such as its track records of disseminating basic literacy. The government appeared so vigilant in its educational reforms that it set out educational policy that stressed: “The aim of socialist education is to mould citizens who have an all-rounded personality by inculcating the entire society with socialist ideology thus aiming them with required knowledge for socialist reconstruction” (WPE, 1984, p. 10). The goal was very lofty, if not ambitious. The more disturbing situation, however, was the chaotic and intimidating context of implementing such a lofty goal and other developmental agenda within the Ethiopian nation. Education in Ethiopia, like in many developing socialist nations, was left to serve mainly political ideology. The more worrisome fact was that the new socialist ideology appeared more artificial and pervasive as it framed government-university relationship in a hostile shape. It also tended to review socio-political relations monolithically in terms of class contradictions between the state politicians and the student politicians and/or professionals. The challenges of importing ideology like a commodity placed various higher education institutions in Ethiopia in dilemmas of transitory mission, vision and action from the perspectives of ideology, professionalization and training directions.

One of the victims of this state of affairs was Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy, which was in its early phase of institutionalization in the wake of regime change and the subsequent shifts of ideological and philosophical myth. This paper argues that the formative years of the institutionalization of Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy put issues of professionalization and quality assurances at stake owing to the state’s priority to power consolidation, the projection of socialist ideology, and curbing political factionalism and silencing of dissent. The situation kept the formative period of Academy of Pedagogy in state of hostage between two visible forces: elite-student dictatorship and proletarian-dictatorship. This paper aims to revisit the formative years of the Academy of Pedagogy and its tenuous relations with local government and its surrogates- a sector of the student body and campus security in the years 1972-1979. This paper will also survey the subsequent years of change and continuity into the mid-1980s.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of politics of the early revolutionary years on the overall administration of the Academy. The study has also the following specific objectives:

- To identify the conditions that made the application of academic knowledge in public Higher education institutions workable;

- To examine the challenges faced by the Academy of Pedagogy during the rise to power of the military regime;
- To study the patterns of relations between the military regime and the community of Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy;
- To find out how political interference affected professional development and institutional governance; and
- To evaluate the repercussions of the early revolutionary years in Ethiopia on enhancing quality training and quality maintenance.

Research Questions

Taking the then local political and governance context into account, this paper seeks to entertain some important questions:

- What were the conditions that made the application of academic knowledge in public Higher education institutions workable?
- What major challenges did the Academy of Pedagogy face during the rise to power of the military regime?
- What kind of relations existed between the military regime and the community of Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy?
- How did political interference affect professional development and institutional governance? and
- What were the repercussions of the early revolutionary years in Ethiopia on enhancing quality training and quality maintenance?

Research Methodology

The study involves several methods of data collection. Firstly, a limited number of secondary sources have been consulted in order to set the theoretical framework. Secondly, the archives of the then Academy of Pedagogy have been extensively used to reconstruct the early history of the college. Thirdly, key informants including a former dean and staff members were interviewed in order to substantiate archival sources. Finally, the various sources have been cross-checked, interpreted and analyzed.

Theoretical Reconsiderations: Professionalization or Politicization?

The organizational, administrative and institutional bases of professionalization in higher education institutions may attain wider context and more comprehensive meaning if contextualized within the theoretical framework from literature. Francis Appiah forwarded three approaches on the trajectories of interlink between the state, professionalization and governing ideology of the state and the resultant impacts on higher education governance. The first one is the *idealist school*, which endorses a clear and unambiguous separation between politics and administration (Appiah, 1988). This school restricted the roles of the politician to the expression of public will and as such focuses on policy preferences and

interests; while that of the bureaucrat to the execution of the expressed will through the application of neutral competence, which is viewed as the essence of professionalism. The idealist approach to professionalization presupposes formal, legal, rational and constitutional design, which prescribes separation between the roles of the academic (expert) and the politician. In the context of higher education, this approach apparently subordinated the roles of the student community undergoing professionalization training- and tends to view only in terms of the interplays between the state and the professional academics. The limitations of this school lies in its standing as formalistic design and inadvisability of detaching bureaucrats from their contextual, personal, party and institutional identity and other obligations and loyalties completely from decision making. (Crozier, 1964 cited in Appiah, 1988). That is, separation between politics and administration is not tenable, if not impossible.

The second school is known as *the content school* that examines the prerequisites to be professional, and emphasizes the intellectual, didactic and expert bases of the professional. This school limited professionalism to competence, capacity, skills, techniques, scientific know how, and technology by which a professional group gains monopoly over esoteric school. While the idealist school is more concerned about the form or structure of the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians, the content school is about the internal utilitarian role, function and attributes that define and qualify a bureaucrat's profession. On the relationship between the expert and the politician, this school assumes that power, authority and legitimacy of professionalism are self-emanating from the profession (Appiah, 1989). The problem with this school, however, is its disregard for professionalism as a social relation and publicly conferred. This fails to consider the factor how professionalism interrelates with the environment (including politicians) and vice-versa. This failure goes to the extent of overlooking the institutional context of professionalism which is always politicized both in relation to political authorities and clientele interests and expectations (*Ibid*). Both the idealism and the content schools have viewed professionalism as politically neutral process and saw politics as a disturbing factor that necessarily threatens professional authority. It is not surprising that both schools have been criticized as ideological, non-conflictual, a historical, unilineal, atheoretical, apolitical and universalistic (Johnson, cited in Appiah, 1990).

The third school of professionalization, *the process school*, departs from these criticisms. It views process of professionalism and politics as bedfellows and intertwined in a process in which both politicians and professionals readjust to one another in a dynamic and interactive manner. It is hinged on the premise that the process of professionalization itself is molded by political factors. This school emphasizes professionalization as a political process whereby the state imparts some power, authority and legitimacy, which it otherwise has monopoly over, to an occupational group by giving it autonomy and the monopoly to regulate a sphere of knowledge generally an esoteric type. It is in this sense that professionalism is viewed as the conferring of trust on professions by the state.

This school better explains the volatile context that characterized Bahir Dar Academy of Pedagogy in its formative years. This can be better understood from the narratives of the evolution and development of the Academy in the section below.

Evolution and Development of the Academy of Pedagogy 1972-1979

A decade after the establishment of Haile Sellase I University, the Imperial Government of Ethiopia signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to set up another higher education institution. To that end, two experts from the University of London came to Ethiopia and conducted a feasibility study. In their report submitted to the Ethiopian government, UNDP and UNESCO, they suggested the establishment of a college known as Academy of Pedagogy in Bahir Dar. That came into effect in 1972 with the foundation of the Academy at the cost of 5.5 million Birr. At the time of its establishment, the Academy was planned to be the best model higher education institution in the field of Pedagogy for the whole African continent.¹

The study also outlined the contents and objectives of the training program. According to the study, the Academy was intended to train:

- Teacher educators for Teachers Training Institutes;
- Supervisors of teachers in primary schools;
- Organizers of in-service education for primary school teachers;
- Community development officers, and
- Organizers of adult education.²

In an attempt to offer a more practical-oriented training program, the original study recommended the establishment of a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) and a model primary school in the same campus. According to the study, students were supposed to reside in campus during their first, third and fourth years. But throughout the second year, they would be attached to TTIs and Community Development offices. During the first half of the year of attachment, students were required to teach at the TTIs. The remaining time was to be devoted to community development activities like studying the history and geography of the local area, getting acquainted with customs and traditions of the community, surveying agro-industrial activities, public health projects and conducting environmental studies. The data to be collected during the year of attachment would be used as a guide to prepare new curricula that may take into account Ethiopia's rural economy.³

The Academy was intended to pass through three stages: preliminary, initiation and Ethiopianization. The preliminary stage included the inauguration of the Academy, the appointment of a principal and a chief technical advisor and the training of Ethiopians. During the initiation phase, an external evaluation of the training program would be carried out following the development of courses and the graduation of the first batch. In the third

stage, Ethiopianization of the institution would be effected through the systematic replacement of expatriates by Ethiopian professionals.⁴

The Academy of Pedagogy was placed under the then Ministry of Education and Fine Arts. In 1972, a British Director, Mr. Kay, and an Ethiopian technical advisor, Ato Matewos Gessese, were assigned to run the Academy. The latter succeeded the former, as the first national director of the Academy of Pedagogy, with the title of 'principal.' Soon afterwards, the Academy in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts set the criteria for admission. Accordingly, trainees were expected to be primary school teachers and directors with teaching experience of three years. In addition, they had to sit for an entrance examination and show up for interviews. The entrance exam and the interview were set in order to assess their language command, evaluate their professional competence and their capacity for leadership.⁵

The Academy was empowered to recruit 100 trainees each year from Addis Ababa and all the 14 administrative regions. Among primary school teachers and directors, 98 and 100 trainees were selected through entrance exam and interviews for the first and second batches, respectively. Later on, the Academy began to admit high school graduates with a GPA of 2.00 in the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) starting from the 1976/77 academic year.⁶ Probably, this policy shift in the criterion of intakes had to do with issues of curricular requirements and standardization amended by the academic commission and policy shifts of the Ministry of Education. However, the Academy was forced to suspend its training program as a result of the National Development through Cooperation Campaign which required all grade 10 and above (of high schools) and college students as well as their teachers to go to the countryside to teach peasants about the new socialist ideology. But before the campaign (the *Zemecha*) was launched, the Academy had already screened the first two entries from Addis Ababa and the 14 administrative regions. The table below shows the first three batches of students selected from all the administrative regions between 1973/74 and 1976/77 academic years.⁷

Table 1: Number of Selected Trainees (1973-1977)

<i>Administrative Region</i>	<i>1966 E.C (1973/74)</i>	<i>1967 E.C (1974/75)</i>	<i>1968 E.C (1975/76)</i>	<i>1969 E.C (1976/77)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Addis Ababa	5	5	-	6	16
Arsi	1	2	-	5	8
Bale	1	4	-	5	10
Begemidir& Semen	6	8	-	8	22
Eritrea	4	6	-	5	15
Gamo Gofa	2	2	-	4	8
Gojjam	7	5	-	6	18
Hararge	3	7	-	12	22
Illubabor	-	1	-	2	3
Kafa	11	8	-	6	25
Shewa	20	17	-	12	49
Sidamo	6	4	-	6	16
Tigray	15	14	-	4	33
Wollega	8	7	-	10	25
Wollo	9	10	-	10	29
Total	98	100	-	103	301

Source: BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Academy of Pedagogy Principal to all administrative regions, 04/01/1966 E.C.

Among the 98 trainees selected for the first entry, 94 students managed to register for the first year courses. Out of these only 2 were female students. Since construction was still underway, students and instructors were temporarily housed at the Polytechnic Institute throughout the 1973/74 academic year. Then, in September 1974, they were transferred to the new campus. Classes went smoothly in the first three months. However, problems began to crop up following the declaration of the Development through Cooperation Campaign by the new military government in December 1974. Of the 100 trainees screened for the second batch only 83 showed up for registration and only five were female. In the same academic year (i.e., 1974/75), the TTI which was supposed to accommodate 550 trainees every year, admitted 177 students for the first time. Soon afterwards, however, the *Zemecha* disrupted all training programs and that lasted for two academic years.⁸

As the national campaign came to a close in the summer of 1976, the Academy began preparations to readmit those students who had already been registered before the *Zemecha*. Out of the 83 and 94 first and second year students, only 67 and 18 students came back to resume their training, respectively. Within a matter of a few days, the number of first year students declined to 58. Five students are reported to have disappeared without a trace and four others withdrew. As disappearance of students continued, the Academy reported the serious problem it faced to the Gojjam administrative region public security department. In another letter to the Ministry of Education, the Academy stressed that the training of 18 second year students was just wastage of financial and human resources.⁹

One may ask as to why students were unusually disappearing and withdrawing from campus in the beginning of the 1976/77 academic year. Several factors can be pointed out for the decline of interest among students to pursue their education. First and foremost, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP) was not only opposing the Derg's *Zemecha* program but was also agitating its members and supporters to suspend their education and join the struggle against the military government. One of its favourite slogans was "Education after Revolution!" Secondly, once the EPRP began urban terrorism against the military government, its members were afraid of the Derg's retaliatory measures. As a result, they went into hiding before the "Red Terror" engulfed the Academy. Finally, the government had

already announced scholarship opportunities offered by the Easter Bloc Communist states for high school graduates. For many students, it was much better to pursue their studies abroad and stay away from home during those violent years of the revolution. In fact, the Academy has written a letter of support for those students who withdrew officially in order to apply for scholarship in Communist countries.¹⁰

On the other hand, the 18 second year students were resolute to pursue their education at the Academy and they expressed their firm determination in a letter to the Academy's administration. Then they organized themselves as "Fighting Comrades of the Revolution" and opened their office within the Academy's premises. They almost took over the Academy's administration and began to act as full time cadres of the military government. They turned the auditorium's basement into detention room where suspected EPRP members and other opponents were kept for interrogation. They became so powerful that they forced the college community to attend a general meeting at the auditorium that lasted until midnight to expose EPRP members. On another occasion, they forced instructors of the Academy and the TTI as well as other staff members to put their bicycles at their disposal. They tried to justify that they needed as many bicycles as possible for revolutionary activities. At other times, they used their self-declared political power for arm-twisting purposes. They, for instance, forced some instructors to change all the grades to A's. As they took more academic, political and administrative affairs into their hands, the College's administration was very much confused and frustrated. Sometime later, however, the then principal of the Academy, Ato Ayele Meshesha (later Dr), put an end to the domination of the college community by student cadres. In a general meeting he convened for this purpose, he boldly told the cadres that they had no place in the Academy's administration. His speech was welcomed with a rapturous applause.¹¹

Although the Academy managed to overcome political problems, it still faced grave concerns of the politics of institutionalization, quality appraisal and staff professionalization. One of the main problems was the fact that the qualification of the academic staff was not up to the required standard. In other words, the great majority of the Academy's instructors were BA or BSc holders. Mainly because of the critical shortage of MA/MSc and PhD holders, the first degree holders were assigned to teach courses from second to fourth year. Still worse, the expatriates who came from Communist states like Cuba and the German Democratic Republic had no experience of teaching at the university level and had serious language problems. For instance, of the nine Cuban instructors, only three could teach in English. The other six instructors were teaching in Spanish and the whole lecture had to be translated into English. To the Academy's dismay, all the Cuban instructors had been high school teachers.¹²

In addition, the Academy had no charter or legislation of its own for several years. As a result, it lost its sense of direction. As early as 1974/75, students were able to appreciate this serious problem and lamented in their resolution: "... ከመጣን በኋላ ግን የአካዳሚው አቋም ለአታወቀ የራሱ የሆነ የግል መተዳደሪያ የሌለውና የሚሄድበትንም አቅጣጫ የማያውቅ መሆኑን በተመለከትን ጊዜ የደረሰብን የህሊና ፀፀት ወሰን የለውም።"¹³

The existence of three separate institutions in a single campus was another source of administrative problem. In addition to the Academy and the TTI, a junior science college was also established in the same campus in 1978 with its own dean. However, in January 1979, the three institutions were brought under the administration of the then Dean of the Academy, Ato Abraham Hussen (later Dr). Even then, the three institutions continued to run

training programs without legislation or a charter.¹⁴ One rationale for the merger was the drive for an effective utilization of academic staff, infrastructure and budget harmonization for the three programs. Other informants, including a former dean of the college, Dr Ayele, however, argue that the Academy had in fact a legislation adapted from Addis Ababa University. He added that the issue of legislation never posed serious hindrances to institutionalization. For him, the serious challenge was rather the apprehension of students of pedagogy who expressed their concern about their future employability and career. The advent of the junior science diploma programme induced the pedagogy students to demand training in science as their minor fields in order to enhance their chances of employability, just in case the demand for pure pedagogy saturated in the nearer future.¹⁵

Another major problem had to do with the “superiority complex” in the attitude of the junior science teachers against the “inferiority complex” of TTI instructors-some of whom were diploma holders. Some of the Science diploma instructors were transferred from the reputable Alemaya college of Agriculture along with their programmes (such as Biology department), felt an elitist feeling. Though they run diploma programmes, they felt that they should be more than equally treated with the pedagogy instructors. They expressed their sentiment by proposing to change the name of the academy of pedagogy into Academy of Sciences and Pedagogy. To make matters worse, they demanded for a separate football, basket and tennis courts to assert their unique status. This was a strange question simply because these courts were fairly open for individuals and institutions outside the campus as well as for those working in the campus. In reality, Dr Ayele argues, their request was more of a demonstration of power, autonomy and special importance. Moreover, the assistant dean for science requested for a separate vehicle, which was met by the academy’s administration. Nevertheless, though he had a driver’s license from Debre Markos, it was found out that he could not actually operate the vehicle. Thus, the land rover was reclaimed by the administration in the interest of safety both for the individual and the community at large. Despite this, it appeared that the science diploma programme had resentment of being undermined and mistreated to the extent that the assistant dean was reluctant or unable to assume the post due assigned to him.¹⁶

A related problem confronting institutionalization had to do with problems of governance. There was growing staff and student grievance against the administration, aggravated by political rivalries among various clandestine forces. The then internal political rivalries within the campus and the urge for the interventions of local government political authorities and their internal surrogates made such interventions on campus governance a *fait accompli*. In connection to this, an informant and keen observer of the contemporary campus politics relates “the image of the academy as center of elite intellectuals was so prominent that it could easily attract the attention of the local authorities and the people at large.”¹⁷ Furthermore, politicization of socialist ideology within the higher education system and recurrent military interventions into the Academy have been considered the main structural causes for this heteronomy and, thus, the main obstacles for 'scientific' achievements. The tenuous political hold of the government within the campus created some kind of tension between the expert and the state. In relation to this, Huntington explains, “the problem in the modern state is not armed revolt, as such, but the relation of the expert and the politician” (Huntington, cited in Appiah, 1990). At times, the relations between the Academy and the local authorities had strained to the extent that the Academy’s administration was placed in dilemmas between promoting the interests of the diverse campus community and yielding into the immediate demands of the local government authorities.

Local Bahir Dar district governors, such as Dr. Mulugeta Semru, though a civilian and member of the academic community, proved less confident than his successor, Major Haile Melesse, who was a *Derg* member and could execute better in terms of governance. Mulugeta could hardly pass crucial political decisions to curb the growing powers of some reckless “proletariat cadres” from Bahir Dar textile factory and/or contingents of the militia forces. Indeed, Dr. Ayele recalls Mulugeta openly uttering: *zemeni yewezadrochu eko new*, literally, “the era is that of the proletariats!” That implies that he could not assert and exercise effective power compared to the proletariats whom he saw with difference as the actual “movers of the revolution”, hence a power to reckon. Tsegaye Asgele adds his memories of those critical days that some of the then seasoned proletariat cadres used to air such emotive and intimidating slogans against the educated elite as: “*yetemare yewdem!*”, Literally, “down with the intellectuals!”. No wonder opportunism had silenced the intellectuals of the period serving the regime, like Mulugeta Semru; this, in turn, had its own negative impacts on professionalization and the bid for quality trainings within the Academy of Pedagogy.¹⁸

Growing polarization among the Academy’s community placed *Ato* (now Dr.) Abreham’s administration under fire from diverse pressure groups. Partly to neutralize the growing tension and deteriorating state of governance in the face of defiant groups, the Commission for Higher Education appointed what it considered a new and a neutral dean *Ato* (now Dr.) Ayele Meshehsa, with an immediate mission to restore order, and effectively reorganize and harmonize the three academic programmes. The Science Diploma programme particularly flourished within a short time both in terms of student intakes and staff profile more than the Academy of Pedagogy did. The first intake of the students reached 200. Moreover, the Academy of Pedagogy was extremely endowed with huge UNESCO resources: both financial and material. This was a blessing in disguise that helped the Academy to mobilize as more resources as possible, which partly salvaged it from the brink of collapse due to the challenges of governance. Meanwhile, the Commission for Higher Education also introduced a new structural change to promote the Academy into a college while at the same time putting it under the umbrella of the Addis Ababa University. Both the Academy and the Addis Ababa University seem to need each other. The question is whether this move can be considered a change in name or an essence of institutionalization.¹⁹

Table 2: Academic Staff Profile

Academic Year	Diploma	BA/BSc	MA/MSc	PhD	Total	Expatriates	G.Total
1966 (1973/74)	4	10	7	-	21	11	32
1967 (1974/75)	4	10	7	-	21	13	34
1968 (1975/76)	4	10	9	-	23	-	23
1969 (1976/77)	4	7	11	-	22	4	26
1970 (1977/78)	2	13	11	-	26	-	26
1971 (1978/79)	3	25	10	1	39	-	39
1972 (1979/80)	3	25	11	1	40	16	56
1973 (1980/81)	2	31	9	1	43	10	53
1974 (1981/82)	1	25	6	1	33	1	34
1975 (1982/83)	2	24	5	1	32	7	39
1976 (1983/84)	2	38	8	1	49	11	60
1977 (1984/85)	10	43	9	1	63	8	71

Source: Ye Bahir Dar Mamhran College Tarikawi Edget, p.16; BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Ye Bahir Dar Mamhran College Ametawi Zegeba 1972-1978 E.C.

Table 3: Student Enrollment (Excluding the TTI)

Academic Year	Diploma			Degree					G. Total
	1 st Year	2 nd Year	Total	1 st Year	2 nd year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	Total	
1966 (1973/74)	-	-	-	94	-	-	-	94	94
1967 (1974/75)	-	-	-	83	94	-	-	177	177
1968 (1975/76)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1969 (1976/77)	-	-	-	58	18	-	-	76	-
1970 (1977/78)	120	-	120	94	47	-	18	159	279
1971 (1978/79)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	301	301
1972 (1979/80)	67	252	319	91	130	89	47	357	676
1973 (1980/81)	72	58	130	44	80	125	NA	249	379
1974 (1981/82)	87	55	142	40	40	70	124	274	416
1975 (1982/83)	93	76	169	70	35	31	71	207	376
1976 (1983/84)	131	83	214	32	62	33	33	160	374
1977 (1984/85)	319	234	753	82	33	56	34	205	958

Source: BDU Archives, File No. Ye Bahir Dar Mamhran College Ametami Zegeba 1972-1977 E.C.

From Academy of Pedagogy to Bahir Dar Teachers' College (1980-1984): A Change in Name or in Essence of Institutionalization?

In January 1980, the Academy was brought under Addis Ababa University together with the TTI and the Junior Science College. The Academy was subsequently renamed "Bahir Dar Teachers' College" in November 1980.²⁰

Despite this restructuring, the College came under stronger and persistent pressures from its graduates to revise its curriculum that would reconsider the issue of introducing minor fields. The first curriculum revision was made in 1984. Accordingly, trainees were to take pedagogy as their major and choose one of the four fields of study (i.e., Amharic, English, Geography and Mathematics) as their minor. But that did not solve the problem in the job market. Only a small number of graduates could work in their major area of specialization and be absorbed by the TTIs. A great majority of the graduates were forced to teach in their minor areas. They complained that they lacked self-confidence to teach in secondary schools in their minor areas. For instance, of the 347 graduates, only 51 of them were working in their major areas of training.²¹ The problem was solved by revising the minor area courses to be taken as composite major. In other words, graduates would be able to specialize in two major areas and may teach in one of the two major areas. This was made possible through the relentless efforts of Dr. Demisse Manahlot, the then Dean of Bahir Dar Teachers' College.²²

Dr. Demisse also wrote several letters to Dr. Duri Mohammed, the then President of Addis Ababa University to solve another serious problem. According to the original training objectives set by the Ministry of Education, the TTI in Bahir Dar had to admit 550 students every year. By 1980, the maximum accommodation capacity of Bahir Dar Teachers College was 950 students. If the TTI was to admit 550 students each year, they would claim more than 50 percent of all the dormitories and other facilities. In that case the College could not admit more than 400 students for other diploma and degree programs. Dr. Demisse suggested three options to solve the problem: to transfer the TTI trainees to Gondar; to reduce their number to 200; or to admit high school graduates from Bahir Dar, train them for a year in the evening

program and employ them as primary school teachers. To the satisfaction of Dr. Demisse, the TTI at Bahir Dar Teachers' College was transferred largely to Nazareth but some of its staff and few students (about 50) moved to the newly launched Gondar TTI in 1984.²³ This shift of programmes was not, however, inconsequential in terms of resources. Among other things, Bahir Dar Teachers' College lost considerable resources and materials, such as the indispensable bus (called *Temtim*, after its driver's name) that served as reliable means of transportation (service) for the staff for years. Moreover, the College also lost huge annual budget earmarked for the TTI. The College also faced shortage of funds to purchase necessary textbooks and references to efficiently run its academic and professional tasks.

Dr. Demisse was also instrumental in solving the chronic shortage of textbooks and reference materials. Thanks to his persistent efforts, the library secured 2,160 books worth \$75,000 USD from UNDP. In addition, the library received many books from various embassies and private agencies.²⁴

Conclusions and Recommendations

The then Academy of Pedagogy that came into existence in 1972 had passed through various stages of development. The outbreak of the Ethiopian Revolution during the Academy's fledgling stage brought about serious challenges. The administration of the Academy was almost taken over by student cadres who wielded much power and terrorized the Academy's community. The "reign of terror" they launched was so dreadful that some instructors were forced to change grades of students. That greatly affected the academic and administrative affairs of the Academy. Although student dominance was brought to an end, interference from political authorities continued to undermine academic freedom and good governance. To make matters worse, the critical shortage of highly qualified professionals had affected the Academy's training programmes. Last but not least was the problem of employment on the part of graduates. As a result, curriculum revision had to be undertaken in order to improve the chances of employability of the graduates.

Finally, the study recommends that higher education institutions should always be granted full autonomy to administer their own affairs and be free from any form of political interference. Especially, the formative years of institutionalization requires colleges to be left alone to materialize their objectives. That would help them to come of age.

End Notes

¹ Ye Bahir Dar Memhran College Tarikawi Edget (Historical Development of Bahir Dar Teachers College) 1963-1979 E.C. Memio. pp. 1-2; Informant: Tadesse Mengistu.

² BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Dr. Demisse Manahlot to Dr. Taye Gulelat, 08.03/1976 E.C.

³ "Academy of Pedagogy, Bahir Dar," a paper prepared for the African Teachers Education Association Conference, Addis Ababa, March 25-April 1, 1972, pp.17-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22; BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Matewos Gessese to Ministry of Education and Fine Arts (MOEFA), 29/11/72.

⁶ BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Academy of Pedagogy to Higher Education Commission, 20/08/69 E.C.

⁷ BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Academy of Pedagogy Principal to all administrative regions, 04/01/1966 E.C.

⁸ BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Report by the Dean of Students, 05/04/1967 E.C.

⁹ BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, Academy of Pedagogy to Gojjam Public Security, 22/08/69 E.C.; Academy of Pedagogy to the Ministry of Education, 29/01/69 E.C.

¹⁰ Informants: Belete Tekle and Menan Kemal, 03/04/2013; BDU Archives, File No. 1/4/1, To Whom it May Concern, 08/06/1969 E.C.

¹¹ Informants: Belete Tekele and Menan Kemal.

¹² BDU Archives, File No. 1/26/1, Ye Memhran Temhert Academy Ametawi Zegeba (Annual Report of the Academy of Pedagogy), 1972 E.C., pp. 4-7.

¹³ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Academy of Pedagogy to Ministry of Education, 05/11/1967 E.C.

¹⁴ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Abraham Hussen to Higher Education Commission, 28/04/1971 E.C.

¹⁵ Informant: Ayele Meshesha.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Informant: Tsegay Asgele and Abebe Tsige.

¹⁸ Informant: Ayele Meshesha and Abebe Tsige.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Dr. Demisse Manahlot to Dr. Duri Mohammed, 18/03/1973 E.C.

²¹ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Dr. Demisse Manahlot to Dr. Taye Gulelat, 08/03/1976 E.C.

²² BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Bilelegn Mandefro to Higher Education Commission, 19/09/1978 E.C.

²³ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Dr. Demisse Manahlot to Dr. Duri Mohammed, 24/03/1974 E.C.

²⁴ BDU Archives, File No. 1/7/2, Ye Bahir Dar Mamhran College Ametawi Zegeba 1974 E.C, p.7.

Informants

Abebe Tsige, (Ato), a former staff member of the Academy interviewed in Addis Ababa.

Ayele Meshesha (Dr), a former dean of the Academy, interviewed in Addis Ababa.

Belete Tekle (Ato), a former academic staff member, interviewed in Bahir Dar on March 3, 2013.

Menan Kemal (Ato), one of the earliest employees of the Academy, interviewed in Bahir Dar on March 2, 2013.

Tadesse Mengistu (Ato), one of the earliest instructors of the Academy interviewed in Bahir Dar on May 16, 2013.

Tsegay Asgele (Ato), a former staff member of the Academy interviewed in Addis Ababa.