

THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ON  
EDUCATIONAL POLICY FORMULATION IN ETHIOPIA

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BY

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## ***Abstract***

*Educational policy formulation process in Ethiopia is not adequately informed by and reflective of research based evidence. This is largely due to limited interface between researchers on one hand, and public policy makers in the government on the other. The aim of this study was therefore to examine some research based evidence on the influence of educational research on education policy formulation in Ethiopia since 1994. This study employs qualitative design. The participants of the study were sixteen. The participants and the study area were selected using purposive sampling. The instruments for data collection were in depth interview and document analysis. Moreover to strengthen the study, different published and unpublished related literatures reviewed. Policies are usually based on evidence. There is reciprocal relationship between policy and research. Policy formulation is not an end in the continuum process but a means to an end as researches are needed to evaluate, modify or change the policy. Findings of the study show that there is little influence of Educational Research on educational policy formulation in Ethiopia. The paper identifies several factors responsible for this ineffective use of research results in influencing policy formulation which include inadequate research funds, political interference, poor quality and irrelevance of research outputs, inefficient communication and insufficient dissemination. Therefore, there is a need to promote co-existence between Educational research and education policy making process in Ethiopia. Researchers, research institutes and policy makers have to work together for the wider vision of the country and national competitiveness- 'team work is necessary'.*

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	iii
List of Table and Figures .....	vi
List of Abbreviations .....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
1.1. Background .....	1
1.2. Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3. Research question .....	6
1.4. Objective .....	6
1.4.1. General objective .....	6
1.4.2. Specific objective.....	6
1.5. Delimitation .....	7
1.7. Significance of the Study.....	8
1.8. Organization of the study.....	8
Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework.....	9
2.1. Introduction.....	9
2.2. Research and Policy: Concepts .....	10
2.3. The Context of Education policy .....	14
2.4. Historical Background .....	16
2.4.1. Education and Educational Policy in Ethiopia.....	16
2.4.1.1. Education Policy in Imperial Period.....	17
2.4.1.2. Education Policy in Derg Period.....	20
2.4.1.3. Education Policy of EPRDF .....	22
2.5. Theoretical Perspective and Models .....	24
2.5.1. Models of Research Utilization .....	24
2.5.2. Theories of Non-Utilization of Research.....	27
2.5.3. Public Policy Theories .....	28
2.5.4. The Policy Cycle.....	31
2.5.5. Problems with the Policy Cycle Approach .....	33
2.6. Research and policy .....	34
2.6.1. Research Roles.....	34
2.6.2. Channel of Advice .....	35
2.7. Strategies of Communication and Dissemination.....	38
2.8. Use of Research in Policy Making.....	39

2.9. Policy Formulation.....	40
2.9.1. Actors in Policy Formulation.....	41
2.9.2. Reasons for Policy Formulation.....	42
2.10. Relevance of Research on Policy Formulation.....	43
2.11. Research in Policy Making: Context, Evidence and Linkages.....	45
2.11.1. Political Context: Politics and Institutions.....	48
2.11.2. Evidence: Credibility and Communication.....	49
2.11.3. Links: Influence and Legitimacy.....	50
Chapter Three: The Method.....	51
3.1 Research Design.....	51
3.3 Research Setting.....	52
3.4 Research Participant and Sampling Techniques.....	52
3.5 Data Gathering tools.....	54
3.5.1. Elite interview.....	54
3.5.2. Document analysis.....	54
3.6 Data Analysis.....	55
3.7 Role of researcher.....	56
3.8 Validity and Reliability.....	57
3.9 Ethical Consideration.....	58
Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion.....	60
4.1. Introduction.....	60
4.2. Educational Research towards Evidence Based Policy Making.....	60
4.3. Educational Research for Policy Formulation.....	62
4.4. Quality and relevance of Research Produced.....	66
4.5. Interaction between Educational Research and Policymakers.....	68
4.5.1. The Modes of Educational Research Dissemination and Communication.....	69
4.5.2. Reception of Policy-Makers to Research Results.....	70
4.6. Challenges facing Research – Policy Interface.....	74
4.6.1. Politics.....	74
4.6.2. Research Funds.....	76
4.6.3. Quality and Relevance.....	78
4.6.4. Communication.....	79
4.6.5. Dissemination Mechanism.....	80
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	83

5.1. Conclusion .....	83
5.2. Recommendations.....	84
References	
Appendix I	
Appendix II	

## **List of Table and Figures**

Table 1: Participants Location, Qualification and Size

Figure 1 The Research Policy Environment

Figure 2 The policy cycle

Figure 3 Researches into Policy

## **List of Abbreviations**

AAU- Addis Ababa University

CEC - Commission of the European Communities

EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERGESE- Evaluative Research of the General Education System in Ethiopia

ESR-The Education Sector Review

ETP- Education and Training Policy

IER- Institute of Educational Research

IMF- International Monetary Fund

KCTE- Kotebe College of Teacher Education

MoE- Ministry of Education

NGO- Non Governmental Organization

OECD- Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation

TGE- Transitional Government of Ethiopia

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

In principle, research and policymaking should go hand in hand. Yet, in practice, communication between researchers and policymakers does not frequently occur. On the one hand policymakers are busy with immediate problems and may not be well associated to researchers. On the other hand, some researchers are focused more on academic studies and may be removed from the policy process. Putting new and innovative research to work in the policymaking process takes tenacity and understanding on the part of both researchers and policymakers. Effective partnerships between researchers and policymakers are grounded in sustainable relationships and mutual trust (Meyer, Alteras, & Adams, 2006).

Policies do not just evolve; they should be based on available precedence and evidence. Such evidence usually emanates from various research findings which inform the policy makers about the direction of events. This signifies that part of the function of the body discipline of (social sciences) is to unfold social milieu about problems confronting the society. This will definitely influence policy formation to address societal problems (Amzat & Ogundiya, 2010).

However in Ethiopia, there was limited policy debate and dialogue between researchers and government (Amdissa, 2010). This could have happened due to the prevailing ideological perspectives and capacity constraints. The interaction was mostly within the government and was not broad-based and transparent. Party leadership always allowed

the center to push through important policy decisions, or reject others without proper research and analysis. Advice from elites was only used as a filter by the political body to reach a final decision. Thus technocratic advice and research that did not predict well with political objectives was an often time dismissed and alternatives sought that suited the party's interests.

Since the decision in the present Ethiopia came from one source, policy process was not careful. Policy process was therefore less complex and was based on very limited ideas and inputs. Policy actors and the associated institutions were therefore very limited. The process reflected the interests of the government executives who were the only major actors (UNESCO, 2011).

Policy formulation normally involves wide consultation as an aspect of democratic process; however the actual practice is not without its problems. Throughout its process there are a series of stakeholders' consultations where stakeholders are given some opportunity at different stages to provide inputs to the process. Likewise, there are also various agents of change and resistance (policy drivers) who are driven by their motives and/or interests some of them are in conflict. In addition to this, the quality of some research done is not as could be policy (Habtamu, 2002).

However, Research is a medium for transfer of knowledge and innovation and so vital to the realization of development. The dissemination and utilization of research findings are seen as an important part of and as a basic means of expanding positive impact on development activities (Derebssa, 2004). In the 21st century and in the context of globalization, a country's success depends on its ability to harness its citizens'

knowledge. Knowledge has become a key asset for both individuals and their countries (Bourgonje, 2006). It is clear that better use of research in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve quality of life.

Thus research is a pre-requisite to the policy process. Viable and appropriate policies are necessary for economic management as well as sustainable growth and poverty reduction. Systematic research should provide an important input in policy formulation. The nature and quality of the evidence does emerge as important for policy input, and the key dimensions seem to be relevance, credibility and providing solutions. One issue that comes to light in it is that research has a much greater impact when it is policy relevant (UNESCO, 2011).

The process of developing, approving, and implementing policies differs from one country to another despite some similarities. Over the years, the policymaking framework in Ethiopia has been changing depending on the nature of a policy and the specific period in history. Strategic decisions were highly political and had always been integrated in the framework of the ruling party's central committee and cabinet meetings. According to Amdissa (2010), the tradition continued to the present day and the policy formulation process has by large remained top down Thus, all major policy decisions were made centrally and largely only the government used to determine the direction and subsequently the outcomes of policy changes.

From the above it is apparent that research has a capacity to influence policy making and vice versa. Besides credible and relevant researches have much to influence policy.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

In education, Policy decision should be made by variety of interest groups including government ministers, teachers, parents, unions' etc (Seyoum, 1996). Essentially, education is everyone's business and nearly everyone feels qualified to have an opinion about it. Therefore, educational policy making involves balancing number of contradictory demand, and soliciting support, or at least tolerance, from the many segment of society, which have an interest in education (Haddad, 1994).

Different arguments has been given for the educational research-educational policy formulation relation, those who wonder how better use can be made of research in policy-making frequently raise this question. The answers as to why sometimes policy is not research-based fall under different camps. There are those who perceive research as not being useful to the real politic of office life; policy-makers are biased against using it; research is often not of good quality or is not accessible to policy-makers; and policy makers prefer to be led by ideology and pragmatism (Seyoum, 1996; UNESCO, 2001; Amdissa, 2010). In similar argument, Educational policy formulation process in Ethiopia is not adequately informed by and reflective of research based evidence. This is largely due to limited interface between researchers on one hand, and public policy makers in the government on the other. As Amdissa (2010) argued that, there is limited or no relationship between professionals and policy makers.

Moreover, inconsistency of timing, low status of researchers compared to those they are trying to influence; and the different ways of viewing the existing problem has been claimed to be among the reasons that make it obvious that sometimes research is not

designed to be relevant to policy. Sometimes it might be so designed, but fails to have an influence because of problems associated with timeliness, presentation, or manner of communication. Quite often policymakers do not see research findings as central to their decision-making. The relationship between research and policy is therefore sometimes weak, and quite often loaded (UNESCO, 2004).

Following aforementioned reasons and detachment the educational policy formulation processes in Ethiopia have not been informed by research evidence or minimum contribution, thus affecting performance of the educational system. According to Amdissa (2010), the linkage between research and policy process in Ethiopia is limited. Yet research is supposed to be the base in policy formulation. Research should inform policy, and in turn policy can also inform research. This is however important to state that there have been shortfall in the influence of educational research on educational policy formulation in Ethiopia.

However, there is contestable influence of educational research on educational policy formulation in Ethiopia. This is as a result of some contending problems within and outside the discipline. This without doubt is not as a result of lack of expertise in the body of discipline but due to some related obstacles within and outside the discipline. This paper aims at examining relationship between educational research and educational policy formulation, relevance of educational research in policy development, and its influence in policy formulation and single out some of the problems.

Since, as far as my understanding, most research done before were focused on issues like the status of educational research, challenge on the need for a new policy, participation of

the society in policy formulation process, or on the debates on approaches that was used by policy makers in order to make a policy and most of the time the concept of research-policy making linkage used as harmonizing agent. Therefore the need to see comprehensible influence of educational research on educational policy formulation is necessary.

### **1.3. Research question**

- How was the policy formulation process conducted?
- To what extent do educational policy makers in Ethiopia make use of research findings in formulating policies?
- To what extent educational researchers produce quality research result that can influence policy?
- Is there a forum where Education policy makers interact with educational researchers?
- Is there available mechanism and support for dissemination of research work so that the findings reach policy makers?
- What are the challenges of educational research and policy formulation interface?

### **1.4. Objective**

#### **1.4.1. General objective**

The major objective of this study was to describe some research based evidence on the influence of and linkage between research and policy formulation.

#### **1.4.2. Specific objective**

Specifically, this study was intended to investigate on the following research teams:

- Examining the influence of educational research on educational policy formulation
- Examine the existing policy-research interaction in terms of the quality and relevance of research in policy formulation.
- Examine the existing communication and dissemination of research findings in terms of policy making.

### **1.5. Delimitation**

This study sets out to examine an important but limited number of interconnected themes that can be identified within educational policy formulation of the 1994 Educational and Training policy of Ethiopia in the use of educational research findings and the existing interaction between the two. Given the fact that, the major actors in educational policy formulation such as Ministry of Education, Research institutions and the Parliamentarians who are responsible for Policy Formulation in education are situated in Addis Ababa, thus this study by and large were mainly conducted in Addis Ababa.

### **1.6. Limitations**

Obviously the interview provides crucial information with substantial degree of relevance to the research, nevertheless, in this research it was not easy to obtain a sufficiently large amount of data at least for the following two reasons. First those who were involved in Education policy formulation process were left from their former places. Secondly, getting in touch with those who were actively involved in the process was also challenging given their busy work schedules.

The most notable limitation of document analysis as a data collection strategy in this study was the problem of getting access to some of the most relevant official documents in Ministry of Education and research materials related to the subject under study. And also documents may not have been written for the same purposes as the research and therefore conclusions will not usually be possible from document analysis alone.

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

The study of the influence of and linkage between research and policy formulation in Ethiopia is very important for the intimate and organic relationship between research and policy formulators.

Moreover, examining the existing policy-research capacity and the quality and relevance of research in policy formulation is fundamental because to know the nature of the existing practice that can guide to proper planning for future usage. Finally, it contributes for future researches in the area.

### **1.8. Organization of the study**

This study will be divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of background, statement of the problem, research question, objective of the study, significance of the study and scope and limitations of the study, chapter two presents the lessons from the existing literature both theoretical as well as conceptual framework while the study methodology is presented in chapter three. Chapter four presents analysis and discussion of the key findings, while chapter five draws the major conclusions and makes the recommendations of the study.

## Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Introduction

The aim of the literature review is to provide an overview of existing theory and an understanding of the type of practical studies previously undertaken in the area of educational research in terms of its influence on educational policy formulation. It involved a search of journal, books, conference proceedings, and electronic resources.

The main themes in this process are educational research, educational policy formulation and the environments or context both involved.

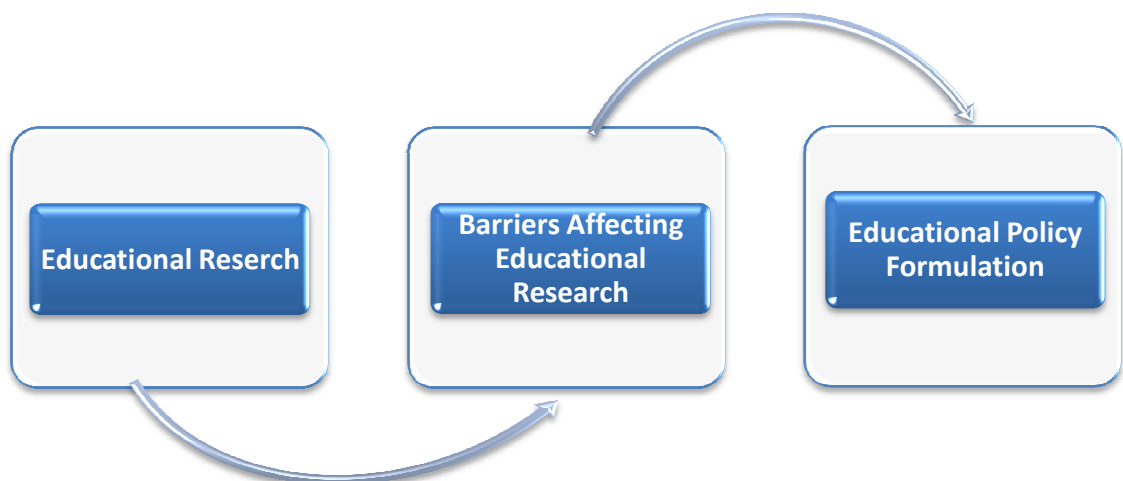


Fig 1 the research policy environment

Figure 1 shows the research and policy environment. The figure depicts that research provides of knowledge required to formulate a policy. Thus, the research environment and policy formulation are not entirely independent instead one affects the other.

## **2.2. Research and Policy: Concepts**

### ***Research***

In general sense, the history of research is as old as human being. This is because research is the way findings answers questions and throughout history human beings have sought answers to their questions (Berhanu, 2004).

According to Charles (1988), 'Research is a careful, systematic, patient study and investigation in some field of knowledge, under taken to discover or establish fact or principles'. The words 'careful, systematic, patient and investigation give good idea about research'. In other definition, Research is an outlet value for innovation and it is responsible for the broadening and deepening of knowledge. In the realm of education, research is the cause for the change of curriculum development, evaluation, teaching method, learning process strategies for assessment and the like ( Neary, 2002 cited in Bekalu, 2005). Testing the existing policy, theory, pedagogical practice and exploring difficulties and problematic areas, all these would be possible through research (Histchooch and Hughes, 1995 cited in Bekalu, 2005).

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. It can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on specific topic. Its purpose is to discover answers to question through the application of scientific procedure. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which hidden and which has not been discovered as yet (Kothari, 2004).

For the purpose of this study I use Osuala's (2001 cited in Amzat and Ogundiya, 2010:2) definition;

Research is the process of arriving at dependable solution to problems through a planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Research is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purpose, and to resolve his conflict.

Therefore, the research process is done systematically and follows a general research rule to solve a given problem, innovation and advancing knowledge for a society. Research is a medium for transfer of a new knowledge and innovation and so vital to the realization of national development.

### ***Educational Research***

Creswell (2002:9) defines educational research as:

Cyclical process of steps that typically begins with identifying research problem or issue of study. It then involves reviewing the literature, specifying a purpose for the study, collecting and analyzing data, and forming an interpretation of information. This process culminates in a report, disseminated to audiences that is evaluated and used in the educational community.

In less comprehensive terms, educational research is an organized approach to asking, answering, and effectively reporting a research question.

Educational Research aims at finding out solution of educational problems by using scientific philosophical method. Thus, Educational Research is used to solve educational problem in systematic and scientific manner, it is to understand, explain, predict and control human behavior.

Educational Research is therefore the scientific investigation and solution of educational problems. Its nature and ultimate purpose is the discovery of procedures, rules and principles relating to the various aspects of education.

### ***Policy***

Since the policy process is a fundamental element in educational policy formulation, it is essential to clarify the concept of policy and policy making.

No single definition may ever be developed, but we can explore different definitions of policy as well as public policy to understand the shape of the field we seek to study. The term policy refers in general to 'a purposive course of action that an individual or group consistently follows in dealing with problems' (Anderson, 2006). Whether in public sector or private sector, policies can be thought of as the instrument through which societies regulate themselves and attempt to channel human behavior in acceptable direction.

Any level of government, whether federal, state, or local, may be involved in a particular policy effort because of social problems, and the public demand for action on them, manifest themselves from the local to the national level (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010).

### ***Public policy***

The term public policy has not been amenable to any easy definition. Public policy is what public officials within the government and by extension the citizen they represent, choose to do or not to do about public problems (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010). Also Dye

(2005) defines Public policy as whatever government chooses to do or not to do, which I used for the purpose of this study.

Another definition of a public policy is a deliberate and (usually) careful decision that provides guidance for addressing selected public concerns (Torjman, 2005).

Carl Friedrich (1963 cited in Akindele and Olaopa, 2004:7) defined public policy as:

“a proposed course of action of a person, group or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose”.

Generally, public policy represents a decision, made by a publicly elected or designated body, which is deemed to be in the public interest. Policy development involves the selection of choices about the most appropriate means to a desired end. A policy decision is the result of a method, which in theory at least, considers a range of options and the potential impact of each of which the research findings bring about.

### ***Education policy***

Education policy is the principles and government policy-making in educational sphere, as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

### ***Policy Formulation***

Policy formulation is the development of proposed course of action to help resolve a public problem. Policy alternative are continually being studied and advocated as part of

the policy stream and constantly being evaluated against the prevailing standards for policy acceptance (Kraft and Furlong, 2010).

Dye (2005) also defines; policy formulation is the development of public alternatives for dealing with problems on the public agenda. Policy formulation occurs in the government bureaucracies; interest group offices; legislative committee rooms; meeting of special commissions; and policy planning organizations, otherwise known as “think tanks”.

From both definitions we can distinguish key attributes of policy formulation;

- It is a development of public alternatives.
- It passes through range of action.
- It also considers actors within the formulation.

Therefore policy formulation requires a joint effort in order to tackle the problems that the society encounters even if policy making process is a deliberate action to be done by governments. And also the intention of government is to make possible the societal need, government has to consult and consider the stakeholders necessity and use resources of that are necessary to policy making process. Here the uses of research findings become very essential to frame worthwhile policy.

### **2.3. The Context of Education policy**

*Context* – refers to the antecedents and pressures leading to the development of a specific policy. This requires an analysis of the economic, social and political factors that give rise to an issue emerging on the policy agenda (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

Educational policy is not made in a vacuum. It is affected by social and economic conditions, prevailing political values and the public mood at any given time, the

structure of government, and national and local cultural norms, among other variables. Taken together, this environment determines which problems raise to prominence, which policy alternative receives serious consideration, and which actions are viewed as economically and politically feasible (Kraft and Furlong, 2010). To underscore how these variables shape the policy making process, a brief description of the social, economic, political, and structural context of public policy is seen below:

### ***Economic***

The state of the economy has major impact on the education policies that government adopts and implement. Economic policy deals with inflation and unemployment, but the economy itself affects the development of many other programs including the education sector.

### ***Political***

It is impossible to understand educational policy without considering politics, which affects educational policy choices at every shape from the selection of policy makers in election to shaping how different groups involved in a formulation.

### ***Structural***

The basic structural feature of a government, it include the separation of power in to three branches of government- legislative, executive and judiciary - and the form of state and such as unitary or federal. Beyond the basic constitutional framework like traditional and legal structures that establish rules of policy making (Birkland, 2010).

### ***Social***

The social aspect of the policy environment involves the nature and composition of the population and its social structure. Demographers study the composition of the

population by looking at the distribution of age, race, religion, gender and other attributes (ibid.).

Generally these environmental factors affect the educational policy making process. These has to be considered when one doing researches but the main consideration on research findings should not escape the reality on the ground because of one of the main factor politics. Sometimes the nature of the politics totally or partially affects the truth fullness of research findings; this has happen in totalitarian and dictator governments even sometimes in other forms of governments.

## **2.4. Historical Background**

### **2.4.1. Education and Educational Policy in Ethiopia**

In traditional Ethiopia, the Orthodox Church and the Mosque were the two major institutions that were responsible for the dissemination religious education (Seyoum, 1996). Modern education was introduced to Ethiopia nearly a century ago. However, the education and training offered during these long years had limited positive impact on the lives of the people and national development (MoE, 2002).

The change in socio-economic and political conditions initiates changes in education. Education should also adoptable to the changing condition and social forces in order to produce people who can serve the needs of the newly introduced socio-economic and political system. In addition to this, education has to cop up with the technological advancement and the growing needs of the society (ICDR, 2004).

Through different regimes of Ethiopia education policy has predominated by top down approach for instance Tekeste (2006) argued that, educational change in Ethiopia has top down history. Since the 1940s Ethiopia has experienced three political systems, each distinguished by its own education policy. The first was the Imperial system that started after 1941 and lasted until 1974; the second was the military/socialist system that lasted until 1991. The third and current federal system of governance became fully operational after 1994. This section briefly describes these educational policies.

#### **2.4.1.1. Education Policy in Imperial Period**

During both the initial phase and it's the more planned and coordinated expansion of modern education after 1941, the primary objective of education in our country had been to produce trained manpower that could run the emergent government bureaucracy. Particularly after 1941, the government's main concern was to replace expatriates that worked at various levels in public offices by Ethiopian nationals. Hence, the narrow and limited scale of formal education that existed, beyond incubating bureaucratic clerks, had hardly any substantial merit. After a certain grade level, the ambition of the student population was largely to secure government employment. Limited vocational education was introduced both at high school and college levels during the 1950s and 1960s. The education of the time nonetheless did little to change trainees' outlook or help them break the cycle of dependency on the government for employment and develop a capacity to create their own jobs in the private sector (MoE, 2002).

## **The Education Sector Review (ESR)**

The period 1964-1974 was characterized by a series of reform attempts in school programs including curriculum and expansion of educational opportunities to increase the number of school age population both at primary and secondary level. It was also a period characterized by reforms in the involvement and participation of educated Ethiopians. The participation reached its peak and Ethiopian involvement from policy making to class room practice materialized even though Ethiopian experts were not yet left to do by their own from the beginning to the end (Solomon, 2007).

The educational sector review was the first of its kind in being comprehensive attempt at educational reform. The objective that is envisaged was all laudable. They ranged from the provision of basic education to all; to the development of scientific outlook, to equality of access of education; to creation of integrated society and to narrowing down the generation gap (Seyoum, 1996).

ESR took place in 1971–1972 and was made up of an international group of experts. Its main mandate was to devise strategies for spreading universal primary education while at the same time resolving the acute problem of unemployment among secondary school graduates. The education system that prevailed in the country from the 1940s until the end of the 1960s could be described as an *elitist system* in so far as it reached some of the urban and even less of the rural population (Tekeste, 2006).

The degree of participation in the educational reform- teachers, parents, professional associations, and in short interest groups- is quit questionable. It is true that the

professionals who formed the core group of the study were quite large numbering about 81. About fifty, were drawn from Addis Ababa University, and were mostly Ethiopians. In addition, there were international consultants as well as representative of international organizations. All in all, it is believed that about 160 individuals. Their qualification and experience in the field of education were quite impressive (Seyoum, 1996).

These professionals were responsible (MoE, 1972 cited in Solomon, 2007).

- To analyze the education and training system of Ethiopia and its capability for promoting economic, social and cultural development
- To suggest, wherever necessary, ways to improve and expand the education and training system in order that it might achieve aims relevant both to the society and the overall development of the country
- To suggest ways in which education could best be utilized to promote national integration; and
- To identify priority studies and investment in education and training

Despite its attempts to address some of the chronic problems of the education system, the review met stiff resistance from left wing teachers and students, who were left out of the preparation of the review. They saw it as opening better opportunities for the better off and restricting the rural poor's access to higher education (Amdissa, 2010).

In the process of policy making 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. This is indeed a classic example of top down approach and elitist (Seyoum, 1996; Tekeste, 2006).

#### **2.4.1.2. Education Policy in Derg Period**

The Ethiopian political system that prevailed in the country between 1974 and 1991 was the complete antithesis of the Imperial one. Ethiopia was declared a People Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) and ruled by a socialist/communist workers party. The Cold War was indeed a decisive context which made possible the transition from the pro-West alliance of the Imperial system to that supported and protected by the Soviet Union. Buttressed by the ideological position of the Soviet Union and its East European allies, the Ethiopian government began to put more emphasis on the role of education for development. Socialist education stressed the inculcation of ideology as a prime objective with Marxism and the value of production as the main pillars. The United States of America, one of the main partners in the development of the Ethiopian education sector, was replaced by educational experts from Eastern Germany (Tekeste, 2006).

The socialist regime had no difficulties in criticizing the poor performance of the Imperial system in the field of education. Ethiopia was depicted as the poorest country in the world and this poverty was allegedly brought about by the Imperial (feudal) system of rule. The educational policy of the Imperial system was simply dismissed as *elitist and academic*. The new leaders, who proclaimed a People Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) in 1984, promised that they would transform the economy and hence pull the country out of its poverty. In this framework, the education sector was assigned a key role (ibid).

### **Evaluative Research of the General Education System in Ethiopia (ERGESE)**

The fundamental aim of education, as expressed by the Ethiopian government in the early 1980s, was to cultivate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the young generation, to develop knowledge in science and technology, and to integrate and coordinate research with production so as to enable the revolution to move forward and secure productive citizens (ibid.).

The ERGESE study had, however, made modest attempts to involve some sector of the public. For instance, teachers, students, and to some degree, parents, were made subject of the study. They were made to fill in some of the questionnaires that were prepared for the study. At the same time, the core of the study group was made up of professional educators. They were drawn from Addis Ababa University and to some extent from the ministry of education. A total of about 60 individuals were involved in the four task forces namely:

- Curriculum development and teaching learning process
- Educational administration,
- Structure and planning, educational logistics, supportive services and man power training
- Educational research and evaluation.

All members of the task force were Ethiopians. This was probably the first time solely an Ethiopian group was solely charged to study the problem of Ethiopian education. It is quite unrealistic to expect an open and free dialogue at the time when the order of the day, if one could help it, was to speak no evil (Seyoum, 1996) .

### **2.4.1.3. Education Policy of EPRDF**

Ethiopia experienced a change of government in 1991 that led to reforms in the education system of the country in 1994. The educational reforms include a new education policy, decentralization of educational administration, new school curricula, and the use of vernacular languages of nationalities as media of instruction (Belete, 2011).

#### **Education and Training Policy (ETP)**

The new Ethiopian education policy was put into effect in March 1994. The Ministry of Education (MoE), under the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), took the duty in organizing task forces for the development of the policy. The policy document is categorized into different areas of the education system of the country (ibid.).

The organization and management of educational system follows a decentralized administration structure of government: it divided in to nine regional state and two city administration, each with its own Bureau of administration and responsibility. The management of the Educational system is a collective responsibility of Ministry of Education, Regional Educational Bureaus and Woreda education offices. Ministry of Education is responsible for policy and guide lines that help to implement general education on the basis of research and policy analysis (MoE, 2006).

The Education and Training Policy (ETP) has focused on expanding access to educational opportunities. The educational reforms are intended to achieve universal primary enrolment by 2015, with local language used as the language of instruction in the primary grades (Gfeller, 1999). In addition to addressing the formal education system, the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP), adopted by the Government in 1997,

included non-formal education (NFE) opportunities for dropouts and out-of-school children and young people. The concept of NFE provides a second chance for all, through distance education, functional literacy and continuing education (Lasonen, Kemppainen and Raheem, 2005).

The process of formulation of the policy to some extent was transparent, participatory and democratic. As a result, twenty-two government institutions and sixty-two experts from Addis Ababa University served in various committees and contributed to the drafting of the policy. The aim of the study was to formulate a comprehensive and coherent education policy that would be in the service of development and democracy, to assess the problems of modern education in Ethiopia, to recommend solutions, and to broadly analyze all education related issues (MoE, 2002). The study was divided into six subsections as shown below.

- 1) Curriculum and teachers affairs
- 2) Education and assessment
- 3) Education and language
- 4) Educational organization and finance
- 5) Educational logistics and issues of support and
- 6) Integration of education, training, development, and research

As opposed to our tradition of policy making and/or introduction of nationwide reforms, the 1994 education and training policy was not introduced as a surprise to the regional governments and the public at large. The regional governments, informally, had known

the contents of the policy nearly one year before it was officially promulgated even though their input in its development had been minimal or nil (Tekeste, 2006).

From the historical over view that all attempts made at reforming the education system have one important characteristic in common. They were all initiated from the top with little or no involvement of the stakeholders. The top down nature of policy formulation means that through the years, the architect has been highly central Ministry Education that laid down the rules of the game (Amdissa, 2010).

## **2.5. Theoretical Perspective and Models**

Social scientists use theories and models to understand the way things work. They can generate meaning out of what otherwise might seem to be a complicated and chaotic world in which nothing makes sense and all act are random. Theories generally attempt to explain why certain things happen the way they do- in case of policy theories, why certain policies are adopted. Models tend to be more descriptive and less concerned with explanation (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010).

### **2.5.1. Models of Research Utilization**

According to Stone, Maxwell and Keating (2006), there are four major models of research utilization; the rational model, 'Muddling Through', The Knowledge Utilization School and Policy Paradigms.

*The rational (or rational-comprehensive) model* is 'rational' in the sense that it follows a logical and ordered sequence of policy-making phases. It is 'comprehensive' in the sense that it canvases, assesses and compares all options, calculating all the social,

political and economic costs and benefits of a public policy. The central principle is the collection and analysis of all data. This is intended to provide policy-makers with certainty. Extensive communication and consultation is required, and because policy-making is interpreted of as 'problem-solving', so is 'expert' participation. The role of the researcher (or policy analyst) is to research and present all policy options. As this model encourages the full examination of all policy options it mitigates tendencies for conservatism and habit in policy-making.

While '*Muddling Through*', recognizing that there are practical constraints on rational decision-making Herbert Simon developed a model of the policy process premised on the notions of 'bounded rationality' and 'satisfying'. This approach focuses on the boundary between rational and the non-rational aspects of human social behavior. Decision-makers, accepting the limits of their situation, choose compromise policies that satisfy (rather than maximize) organizational goals, and which are acceptable in the face of competing demands.

Lindblom (1980) has extensively criticized the rational model for being a poor guide to policy making reality. In Lindblom's conception, policy-making is viewed as a series of steps in which policies are gradually modified ('instrumentalism'). Lindblom took up the notion of 'satisficing', arguing that policy-makers are generally conservative in decision-making, and that policy is generally a matter of 'muddling through'. There is rarely the time, resources or inclination to conduct comprehensive research with the aim of informing the policy-making process.

The other model is *knowledge utilization school* (Sundquist 1978; Weiss 1978) view knowledge as cumulative. Knowledge, over time, becomes incorporated into practice, in a process termed 'enlightenment'. While research is rarely convincing or comprehensive enough to exercise a determining impact on policy-making, accumulated research findings gradually alters decision-makers perceptions of both the causes of problems and the likely effects of policy interventions. The activities of numerous research and policymaking actors, including Commissions of Inquiry, individual policy entrepreneurs, the research staff of government agencies, the media, interest groups and issue networks are important in this process (Weiss 1990 cited in Stone, Maxwell and Keating, 2006). Advancement in knowledge will therefore eventually be reflected in incremental changes in policy. Knowledge by its nature is incremental and the policy too but the dynamics of the world needs might necessitate immediate change.

The fourth model is a '*policy paradigm*' which is "an overarching framework of ideas that structures policy making in a particular field" (Hall, 1990). Through these paradigms (or dominant sets of ideas) researchers, and crucially, policy-makers, view politics, economics and society, as well as their own role in these spheres. The paradigm serves to define the problems that are to be addressed, and what policies or instruments are appropriate to resolving them. In this approach socio economic and political factors become the main determinants of whether knowledge is acceptable. Ruling coalition's or powerful political interest groups exercise a crucial impact on the kind of research, analysis and advice that is selected in policy-making through their influence over these paradigms. Research becomes subordinate to political interests, a resource to be used in furthering those interests.

Since government resource is limited it seems true that the ‘muddling through’ approach is applicable for countries like Ethiopia and the gradual nature of this approach and its application needs reasonable amount of time and resources. Whereas the rational model might leads to calamity because of the overall change in policy, change in policy might cost a generation, even if the best part of rational model is inconsideration of the context of the given country. Muddling through model will be used in the analysis.

### **2.5.2. Theories of Non-Utilization of Research**

Prevailing theories or viewpoints accounting for the non-utilization of research in policy formation may be classified as follows: the *Knowledge-Specific*, the *Two-Communities* and the *Policy Maker-Constraint* (Worth, 1978).

The *Knowledge-Specific* theories contend that the non-utilization of research is a consequence of the narrowness or limitations of the kind of information provided by the research itself, the research techniques employed and the personal characteristics of the researchers. The proposed solutions call for a multi-disciplinary approach to research, with a diversity of methodologies and findings interpreted in the light of practical considerations.

By contrast, the *Two-Community* theories perceive non-utilization as a function of the different and often conflicting values, reward systems and languages of the researcher and the policy maker. The proposed solutions lie in making research and researchers an integral part of the policy making process, building mutual trust, confidence and empathy, and generally improving the linking mechanism.

Whereas, the *Policy Maker-Constraint* theories explain the non-utilization of research in terms of the conditions or constraints under which policy is formulated. Information is frequently required faster than researchers can respond, and policy makers usually have to consider variables outside the traditional realm of research, including political feasibility. The proposed solutions stress greater recognition of social and political variables by researchers, and the production of more timely research.

All likely had occasion to explain the *policy-research disparity* in terms of each of these three so-called theories or their variants. Insofar as such explanations give rise to subsequent changes in process they are quite valuable. For the direct us toward greater accommodation of important situational and political considerations in policy research as well as policy formation.

### **2.5.3. Public Policy Theories**

Policy-making is an essential part of every government. Each government must enact policies based on their own philosophies, backgrounds, and situations. Many governments develop very similar tendencies in policy-making while other governments have quite different tendencies about policy-making. Through looking at the different trends of policy-making in multiple countries, there are multiple theories that have been laid out which group certain countries together (Ezekiel, 2011).

Political scientists use several different theories and models to explain and describe the nature of policy making and the policies that result. Among the most common are elite theory, group theory, institutional theory, rational choice, political system theory and the policy process model (Anderson, 2006). Each offers a different perspective on the

principal determinants of decision making within government and, therefore, on what people might regard as the major forces that shape the direction and content of public policies.

***Elite theory***-It emphasizes how the values and preferences of government elite which differ from those the public at large, affect public policy development (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010). It also suggests that the peoples are apathetic and ill informed about public policy, that elite actually shape mass opinion on policy question more than masses shape elite opinion (Dye, 2005)

These policy actors may be economic elites, cultural elites and elected officials. Elite theory, then, focuses on the role of leaders and leadership in the development of public policy (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010).

***Group theory*** - begins with the proposition that the interaction among groups in the central fact of politics. Individuals with common interest band together formally or informally to press their demand on the government (Dye, 2005). It is reasonable to assume, however, that the group with greater financial resource, recognition, access to policy makers, and status are likely to have more influence than others. In certain circumstances, groups of shrewd, clever and sensible people do not properly consider issues or their consequences, and make poor decisions.

***Institutional model***- highlights the formal and legal aspects of government structure. It looks at the way government arranged their legal power, and their rules for decision making. The rules include basic characteristics such as the degree of access to decision making provided to the public, the availability of information from the government

agencies, and the sharing of authority between the national and state government under federalism (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010).

The major principle of institutionalism is that the structure and rules make a big difference in the kinds of policy process that occur and which policy actions are likely to be influential in them (ibid.).

***Rational choice theory***- It assumes that in making decision, individuals are rational actors; that is they seek to maximize attainment of their preferences or further their self interest. The theory suggests that analysts consider what individual values, how they perceive a given situation, the information they have about it, various uncertainties that might affect the outcome, and how a particular context or the expectation of others- rules and norms- might affect their action (Kraft, and Furlong, 2010).

***Political system theory***- It is more comprehensive, but also more general, than the other theories. It stresses the way the political system responds to demand that arise from its environment, such as public opinion and interest groups. It emphasizes the larger social, economic, and cultural context in which political decisions and policy choices are made (Dye, 2005).

***The policy process model***- points a logical sequence of activities affecting the development of public policies. It depict the policy making process and the broad relationship among policy actors within each stage of it. The model can also be helpful to understand the flow of events and decisions in different culture and institutional settings;

in other words, the concept and language are general enough to fit any political system and its policy process (ibid.).

The model dislike as asset of six distinct, if not entirely separate, stages in policy making. Sometimes the term policy cycle is used to make clear that the process is cyclical or continues, rather than a onetime set of action. Instead of a top down listing of each stage, it could be presented as a series of stages linked in a circle, because no policy decision or solution is ever final. In addition, in real world these stages can and do overlap or are sometimes skipped. In other words, policies might be formulated before they are high on the political agenda, or it may be impossible to differentiate policy formulation from legitimating (Kraft and Furlong, 2010).

In general, the above approaches have been used by different governments. A government might be used different approaches at a time or overlapping each other. But the political system theory is more suitable than the others because unlike other approaches it is comprehensive, it considers all the stakeholders and the context they are involved. Others like elite and group use top down approach engaged in limited environment and do not consider the public interest as whole and might lead to authoritarianism. Therefore political system theory is most applicable theory of the others since it considers the necessary stakeholders which the paper used.

#### **2.5.4. The Policy Cycle**

The traditional way of understanding the 'policy cycle' is to divide it into six stages – problem definition and agenda-setting, policy formulation; policy legitimization; policy implementation; and evaluation. It is an excessively linear view of policy.

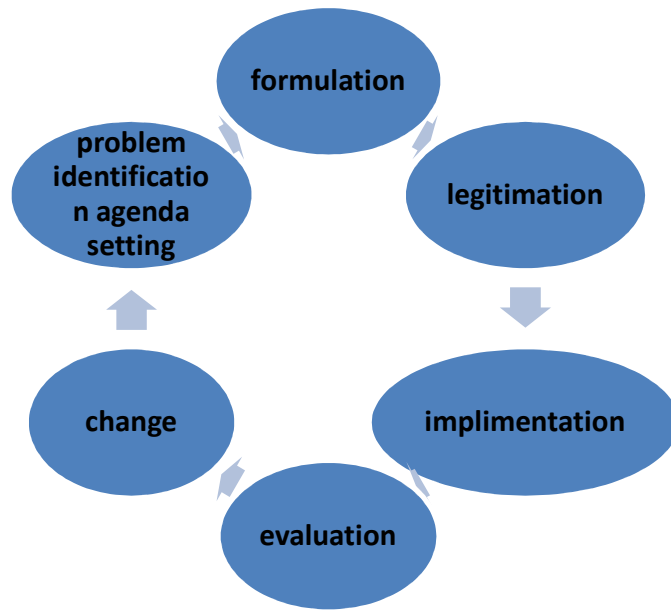


Figure2. The policy cycle

### ***Agenda Setting***

Cobb and Elder (1972: 14) define an agenda as “a general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity”. ‘Agenda setting’ is about influencing which issues receive attention and which are excluded from public discussion. The number of potential policy issues exceeds the capacity of the policy-making process, ensuring the importance of the policy agenda, and the necessity for issues (or their proponents) to compete against each other for a place on this agenda. Researchers are one small group in this process, competing against other actors to influence the policy agenda.

### ***Policy formulation***

Policy formulation is the development of effective and acceptable courses of action for addressing what has been placed on the policy agenda.

### ***Policy legitimating***

It is defined as giving legal force to decision, or authorizing or justifying policy action.

### ***Policy implementation***

According to Jones (1984 cited on Kraft and Furlong, 2010), implementation is the “set of activities directed toward putting a program into effect”. These activities include- organization, interpretation and application- that are particularly important to successful implementation.

### ***Policy evaluation and change***

The last two stages of policy process are evaluation and change. *Policy evaluation or program evaluation* is an assessment of whether policies and programs are working well. In practice, analysts look for evidence that a program is achieving its stated goal and objective or not *Policy change* refers to the modification of policy goals, the means used to achieve them or both: the change could be minor, moderate, or extensive. Termination of policy or program is one of the many kinds of change that might be considered, although it is rare (Kraft and Furlong, 2010).

## **2.5.5. Problems with the Policy Cycle Approach**

The model of the policy cycle depicts a linear model of policy moving from one stage to the next. In reality, policy making is messy. As Clay and Schaffer (1984) argue, a “divided, dichotomous and linear sequence” of policy making from problem identification through analysis to implementation is unrealistic. It is more accurate to conceptualize the policy process as a dynamic and random process.

## **2.6. Research and policy**

### **2.6.1. Research Roles**

Different types of researchers and research organizations have very different abilities to access policy-makers at various levels. According to Stone, Maxwell and Keating, (2001) it is possible to characterize these researchers into five different roles based on the type of relationship that they have with policy makers – contract researchers, in-house researchers, political advisors, civil society researchers, and the disinterested researcher.

- 1) ***Contract researchers:*** Governments, businesses, and international organizations contract out research work. This allows external researchers in universities or think tanks to have some policy impact. These researchers may be brought within official domains as consultants, expert advisors, members of a government committee or inquiry, or be attached to policy units or non-departmental public bodies.
- 2) ***'In-house' researchers:*** are usually public servants, for example those working in statistical offices, attached to the executive, or located in non-departmental public bodies. Various international organizations (e.g. the IMF Institute) may also employ experts as in-house researchers.
- 3) ***Political advisors:*** are appointed by or to political leaders, and likely to share their political and ideological interests. They may come from a scientific or scholarly background.
- 4) ***Civil society researchers:*** exercise influence through private think tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This is an 'out-house' strategy designed to

compensate for a lack of government research in a particular field or to present critical alternatives to government policy.

- 5) *Disinterested researchers*: is that of pursuing knowledge for its own sake. Most of these researchers operate outside or on the margins of policy making. They are likely to be unconcerned with the policy applications of their research, and to focus on scientific discovery, analysis or critique. Such research can still be relevant to policy making; however, disinterested researchers are probably not the most appropriate agents to be disseminating their research finding.

The main theme that the paper will depend on contract researchers since the Ethiopian Educational Policy was made by commissioned professionals.

### **2.6.2. Channel of Advice**

Targeting research requires different presentation and dissemination strategies. Professional associations, think tanks and pressure groups for example use many different mediums to make research policy relevant and publicly accessible.

#### ***The Legislative Route***

Parliamentary or Legislative Committees and Inquiries represent institutional targets for researchers both outside and within government. Commissions or Inquiries have an automatic route of bureaucratic and political access, as they are usually required to submit a report to parliament. They can also take access to internal resources and personnel including 'in-house' researchers. In democratic political systems Inquiries may utilize consultative mechanisms which give external researchers the opportunity to influence findings (through inviting written submissions for example). However, which

committees favor 'expert' opinions, and their deliberations are usually subject to political party discipline or other forms of control. Inquiries can also take years to run their course, and be significantly altered or abandoned after a change of government. Sometimes, Governments frequently ignore the findings of an inquiry, attempt to 'water down' recommendations, or try to delay policy response Stone, Maxwell and Keating, (2001).

### ***Bureaucratic Access***

In some political systems legislatures can act merely as a 'rubber stamp' for executive decisions. An alternative route for researchers is to cultivate relationships with senior bureaucrats and party advisors, either through informal interactions or within policy (ibid.)

### ***Educational path***

Academic institutes tend to focus on workshops, conferences and the publication of books or scholarly articles, rather than on the dissemination of policy relevant ideas. There tends to be little communication across disciplines, or even within sub-fields of the discipline. Existing practices and standards of excellence in the social science disciplines encourage scholarly policy research that may not be of immediately relevant to policy. The peer review process furthermore means that academic journals can actually dampen genuinely new ideas. The strength of the higher education sector within a country also affects the ability of researchers to communicate research findings (Frey & Eichberger 1997).

### *The environment of Opinion*

Another strategy for influence is to change the general environment of thinking about an issue or policy, and thereby the political contexts in which decisions are made (James 2000: 162). Appealing to the public or to civil society in order to shape the 'environment of opinion' is a long-term and indirect tactic for affecting policy change. Researchers need to market their research findings and policy ideas so as to reach a public rather than a political or bureaucratic audience.

### *Networks*

Policy networks seek to achieve collectively held aims. They are characterized by relatively stable (and often non-hierarchical) inter-relationships between a variety of actors with common interests. Within these networks researchers co-operate and interact with decision-makers, as this is recognized as an effective way to achieve common goals. Researchers can provide important information and analytic resources, initiate and undertake research, and develop network infrastructure (such as newsletters, databases, conferences and web-sites). They also provide the conceptual language, and help create common ideas and arguments that educate network participants into the values or consensus of the network. Networks with decision-makers as active participants have the potential to influence policy in both local and global domains. Even without such political involvement, the norms, values and aspirations of networks can have significant impact on the climate of elite opinion and culture of public debate (Stone, 2001).

## **2.7. Strategies of Communication and Dissemination**

It is important to ensure that research is linked to appropriate dissemination strategies. The most general approach evident in the literature on strategies for the communication and dissemination of research revolves around the concept of ‘two communities’ – researchers and research users – and how to close the gap between. As Stone (ibid.) understand there are two mechanisms used to maximize the interaction between two communities; the style of dissemination, interactive dissemination mechanisms.

### ***The ‘Style’ of Dissemination***

Research must consider carefully the type of language used in communication and dissemination. This can be taken literally, as often information disseminated in the local languages will broaden coverage of potential research users. More generally, however, researchers need to present findings in a nontechnical form, so as to appeal to non-specialist audiences. Short, clear and action-led articles may be an effective approach to dissemination and communication. It may be necessary to produce different versions of research findings suited to different target audiences Stone, Maxwell and Keating, (2001).

### ***Interactive Dissemination Strategies***

Conceiving of dissemination strategies as one-way communication flows (of information) from researchers to research users may actually contribute to the gap between the ‘two communities’. An alternative strategy for researchers is to engage in a constructive dialogue with research users, through a variety of techniques (ibid.):

- Participation in any forum that also has government participation.

- Contacting politicians or bureaucrats and trying to involve them in research centre activities.
- Engaging in long-term dialogues with policy-makers to build trust relationships and to ascertain their research needs.
- Forming coalitions of research organizations

## **2.8. Use of Research in Policy Making**

Knowledge utilization appears to be almost completely context-dependent. One particular research result may be used differently by different users. Politicians, civil servants in managing positions, and social workers can make three kinds of use of the same research result in the very same agency (Nilsson and Sunesson 1993: 29). The concept of 'decision-maker' therefore needs to be broken down. Formal policy makers include:

- Politicians
- Senior civil servants and appointed officials
- Middle ranking bureaucrats
- Street level bureaucrats
- Government appointed experts, specialists and advisors on advisory panels, attached to quasi-autonomous agencies, appointed to commissions of inquiry or in cabinet.

Non-state actors can also play a decision-making role in public policy. The norms and structures of an organization are also crucial to the decision-making context. High-level decision-makers are also more likely to view the policy-making process as a political activity, based on compromise, negotiation and bargaining between stakeholders, so they

are more likely to seek information or research that supports and legitimizes their policy position (Oh, 1997).

## **2.9. Policy Formulation**

The actual formulation of policy involves the identification and analysis of a range of actions that respond to these concerns. Each possible solution is assessed against a number of factors such as probable effectiveness, potential cost, resources required for implementation, political context and community support (Torjman, 2005). Among the standards for policy acceptance are economic cost, social and political acceptability, and likely effectiveness in addressing the problem policy analysis is abundant at this stage of the policy process, as the leading policy actor(formal and informal) look for information and ideas that will allow them to pursue their goal (Kraft and Furlong, 2010).

Formulation is a technical as well as political process. Policies that are carelessly formulated may fail (ibid.). The detailed of policy proposals are usually formulated by staff members rather than by their bosses, but staffs are guided by what they know their leaders want (Dye, 2005).

Notice that there are two parts to this definition of policy formulation:

1. **Effective formulation** means that the policy proposed is regarded as a *valid, efficient, and implementable* solution to the issue at hand. If the policy is seen as ineffective or unworkable in practice, there is no legitimate reason to propose it. Policy analysts try to identify effective alternatives. This is the analytical phase of policy formulation.

2. **Acceptable formulation** means that the proposed course of action is likely to be *authorized* by the legitimate decision makers, usually through *majority-building* in a bargaining process. That is, it must be *politically feasible*. If the policy is likely to be rejected by the decision making body, it may be impractical to suggest it. This is the political phase of policy formulation.

It would be unrealistic and even incorrect to say that the formulation of policy follows a clear and consistent pathway or route. Policy development is actually an involved and sometimes haphazard process that differs widely depending upon the concern being addressed. Sometimes it is a long and winding road with lots of detours and stops along the way (Torjman, 2005).

### **2.9.1. Actors in Policy Formulation**

The formal policy actors in government such as legislators, chief executives and agency officials who are especially influential at this stage. In most policy areas the appointed and career officials in a bureaucracy are among the most experienced knowledgeable policy actors. They have the technical information needed to develop policy and political knowledge that comes from working the policy arena (Birkland, 2010).

Other actors are informal actors usually called unofficial actors. These actors called unofficial because their participation in policy making is not fully specified in constitution. These include, individual citizens- many studies of policy process seem to be disconnected from the activities and preferences of individual citizens. This is because most analysts focuses on policy making undertaken at the group level, with various groups vying for attention, influence, and power-, interest groups-are important- perhaps

central- to the policy process because the power of individuals is greatly magnified when they form group-, political parties-serve important function in the policy process-, and think tanks and other research organizations- the emergence of complex problems and the need for greater analytic capacity than that possessed by the federal and state governments has led to the growth of independent research organization, often called *think tanks*. Other think tanks and research organizations are associated with universities and provide valuable input in to the policy process (ibid.).

### **2.9.2. Reasons for Policy Formulation**

According to Akindele and Olaopa (2004), there are six major reasons why government formulates public policy. These are:

1. *Policy making is a problem solving phenomenon.* That is to say, government formulates policies in order to provide solution to problem(s) affecting the public. Although in doing this, a distinction should be made between what is of public interest and what is of government interest. What is government interest may be incompatible with the public interest. Whether *public* or *governmental* interest, both actions would be deemed to be public policy making.

2. *Government formulates policy in order to accelerate economic development.* It is a known fact that, in the public administration, public policies involve planning especially at the implementation stage. If planning is part of policy making, and economic development involves planning, logically policy making is an instrument of economic development.

3. *Government formulates policies in order to make for the continuity in the public administration.* This is in line with the “theory of continuity of policy process”. In the

theory of continuity of policy process, it is believed that government comes, government goes but public administration remains forever. What actually makes for such continuity is public policy making. As one government comes and goes, initiation and implementation of public policy remain forever.

4. *Government formulates policy in the interest of the public rather than the government.*

After all, government exists for the perpetuation and preservation of human life, and liberty. In performing this role, government can be accredited for policy making or simply put; government formulates policy in order to better the conditions of the populace.

5. *Government initiates policy in order to render administration easy.* This is referred to as an administrative purpose of policy initiation and implementation. The administrative functions (like planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating and budgeting) all combined, are instruments of public policy making.

6. *Government formulates policies for their own self-interested ends.* This is to say, government's survival depends on the effective initiation and implementation of public policies.

## **2.10. Relevance of Research on Policy Formulation**

Research must be credible to be taken seriously. This means that all evidence gathered during a research process, must be based on reliable sources and reliable research methodologies. This is because governments generally favor evidence-based policy solutions, despite being heavily influenced by the tide of public opinion (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

To achieve influence in the decision making cycle, the researcher must maintain both academic credibility and a reputation of producing unbiased research by policy makers (Weiss, 1976; Roos & Shapiro, 1999). The academic credibility and the lack of a political bias of the researcher are key factors to acceptability. If those who make decisions see a researcher as too liberal or too conservative, they will not consider his/her research results acceptable if they do not share the same political philosophy. It is better for a researcher to have no political reputation at all, thus leaving his/her academic and professional reputation the only factor known by those who make decisions (Garrison, 2009).

According to Jones (2011), achieving increased relevance also requires a time-consuming commitment to approaching public and private officials and to developing relationships based on trust and reliability in the delivery of quality output that is timely and easily understandable to laypersons. Indeed, researchers are often criticized for producing lengthy reports in a language that is inaccessible to decision-makers. Even with the best of intentions, however, researchers' efforts may be stifled by governments' institutional cultures of secrecy and politically-motivated distrust of nationals who often play an active role in politics or whose political leanings are not evident. As a result, policy-makers may unwillingly deprive themselves of the services of experienced researchers when dealing with critical, yet sensitive issues, for which they may be ill prepared to tackle alone.

### **2.11. Research in Policy Making: Context, Evidence and Linkages**

Researcher's task is not to write policy but providing policymakers to identify and elaborate policy alternatives, stress their relative advantages, and point to positive courses of action or state context obstacles.

Policy processes are complex, multidimensional and unpredictable and there is an urgent need to find mechanisms to promote the use of research-based and other forms of evidence in development of policy. If more were understood about the context within which researchers, policy makers and stakeholders are working, if the links between them were improved, and if high quality research were disseminated more effectively, then better policy making might follow. Policy makers could make more constructive use of research and researchers could communicate their findings more effectively to influence policy (Court and Young, 2006 cited in Jones, 2011).

Policy must be seen as a dialectic process in which all those affected by the policy will be involved in shaping its development. Policy development is therefore both a continuous and a contested process in which those with competing values and differential access to power seek to form and shape policy in their own interests (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

Those in senior leadership positions face a particular challenge as they often represent the interface between the organization and the external policy environment. Key decisions must be made relating to the interpretation and implementation of external policy agendas – those decisions will in turn reflect a complex mix of factors including personal values, available resources and stakeholder power and perceptions (ibid.).

Research and knowledge are explicitly linked. So with the rise in value of knowledge, the role of research has become increasingly prominent in national and international policy debates. Research plays a central role in policy making processes, as it is used to identify problems with current policy and propose alternative viable solutions. The role of studies in problem formulation and the definition of alternatives cannot be overstressed, for this is how visions get onto the agenda for discussion in policy making. Governments have become more receptive to evidence-based policy solutions and as a result there is an increased demand for primary research and analysis (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

The idea of creating a direct link between research and policy is still controversial. Many researchers feel quite strongly that research should not be limited to or directed by the demands of society, but that more is accomplished when research is unfettered and free to follow its own discourse. All too often, however, research projects do not result in policy change, because they do not take into account the complex realities of a country or a sector and fail to involve the main stakeholders in the research process. Yet, better utilization of research and evidence in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life (Court and Young, 2006 cited in Jones, 2011).

On the other hand, the World Bank in a recent publication on Research for Development (2010 cited in Jones, 2011) highlighted that many researchers do not start with the key knowledge gaps facing development practitioners but rather search for questions they can answer with the field's current tools. The core problem in the research to policy gap is that despite the impressive set of data and analytical tools now available, it is not sufficiently anchored to the most pressing questions facing developing country leaders, advisers and investors. The World Bank paper advocates for a more strategic approach that is firmly

grounded in key knowledge gaps for development policy. Looking forward it is the policy questions that should drive the research agenda, and not the researcher's disciplinary background or favorite method. Applying to policy and practice what is already known from research and analysis can close the know-do gap, thereby enabling policies and interventions that reflect best possible current state of knowledge.

There are a number of gaps between research and policy that must be bridged such as (i): Limited policy relevant research; (ii) Insufficient access to research; (iii) Ineffective communication by researchers; (iv) An under-emphasized but very important area is the limited understanding by policy makers, politicians and incapacity of overstretched bureaucrats to absorb research and (v) improving the demand for evidence in a systematic and rigorous way (Johns, 2010).

Obviously, research *is* being used in policy formation. But it is often being used in ways which fall outside what might be called the traditional *problem-solving image* — the process in which a problem is defined, alternative courses of action are identified, and goals are set; with research serving to clarify the problem, provide information on alternatives and evaluate outcomes (Worth, 1978) .

Policy makers need research that provides clear conclusions to aid them in the process of policy making. When policy makers are at the information-gathering stage of policy making, they are at their most receptive point to research. But if that research does not provide clear answers, or raises more questions than answers, or provides too many qualifiers, the research will not have significant influence on the decision making (Garrison, 2009).

The policy making processes are complex and multifaceted, so identifying what factors can be attributed to a change in policy and specifically the contribution of research to this change is very difficult. However, the influence of research on policy change can be broadly divided into three areas: the political context; the evidence, and how it is communicated; and the links between the actors involved (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

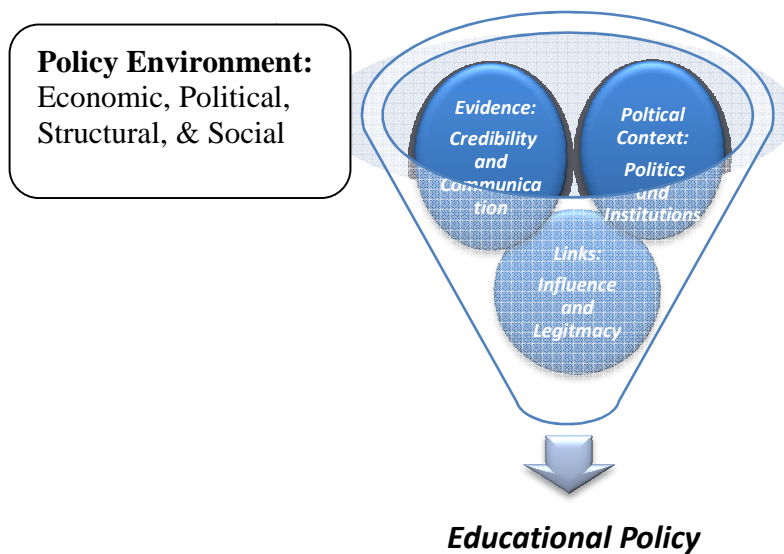


Figure3. Research into Policy

### 2.11.1. Political Context: Politics and Institutions

The *national political context* shapes research and policy through power relations and the specific ideology of the party in power. But, it is important not to forget that the wider political context and public opinion also has a significant influence on policy. (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

According to Jones (2011), Research-policy links are dramatically shaped by the political context. The political and institutional contract is the most important factor affecting how and why research is taken up by policymakers. The key influencing factors include the extent of civil and political freedom, political contestation, institutional pressures and vested interests and the attitudes, receptiveness and incentives among officials and power relationships. More open democratic political systems in general support evidence-based policy making because democracies imply greater accountability of government and therefore a greater incentive to improve policy and performance.

Democratic context also imply the existence of more open entry points into the policy process, and therefore there are fewer constraints on communications. The degree of representativeness of government is important in determining the likelihood that research will be taken up to influence policy debates and outcomes. In contrast autocratic regimes often tend to limit the gathering and communication of evidence and have weak accountability mechanisms (Jones, 2011).

### **2.11.2. Evidence: Credibility and Communication**

In terms of the *influence of evidence*, its reach is determined by the clarity of its key messages and the means by which those ideas are presented. A series of factors can affect whether the research evidence gets the desired effects, these include: the perceived credibility of the source, the way the idea is communicated, the language used, the format and the timing (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

In addition, Evidence including the quality of research is important for policy uptake. A critical issue affecting uptake is whether research has provided a solution to a problem. The other set of issues concern communication. Packaging of the research results for communication to different audiences is an important linkage between research and policy. Policy influence is affected by topical relevance and the operational usefulness of an idea. The sources and conveyors of evidence, the way the messages are packaged and targeted can all make a big difference (Jones, 2011).

### **2.11.3. Links: Influence and Legitimacy**

The influence of research on policy also depends on the *links between the actors involved*. Connections may be at an individual, organizational/institutional level or within wider networks. Through these relations people can informally or formally share ideas on policy which can in turn have an impact at the national or international level (Bourgonje,P.R., 2006).

Issues of trust, legitimacy, openness and the strength of relationship among the key actors have emerged as an important link in affecting policy change. Communities of practice, networks and intermediaries impact on formal policy guidance documents, which in turn influence policy (Jones, 2011).

## **Chapter Three: The Method**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In contemporary times, most social phenomena are complex and linked to multiple bodies of knowledge that belong to different disciplines. For this reason, better understanding of such phenomena requires a multidisciplinary approach and different research methods. Some researchers use quantitative method while others prefer to qualitative method, even some use in combination. Qualitative research methods are particularly useful for gaining rich, in depth information concerning an issue or problem as well as generating solutions (Dukeshire & Thurlow, 2002).

To maximize richness and accuracy of data, as well as transferability of the findings, a qualitative study was carried out in this study. Qualitative study is relatively an excellent method to use when endeavoring to understand the phenomenon being studied in depth. It allows the researcher to become familiar with the data in its natural setting and fully appreciate the context (Punch, 1998). In regard to this study, an educational policy does not operate as isolated subjects: rather, it is multifaceted and that needs the consultation of the stakeholders, ranging from the classroom to the whole society.

Thus to understand how policy is formulated, it is necessary to understand the viewpoint of the decision makers, research institute, researchers and the end users and see how it fits within the context of educational policy. My interest is on the process of policy formulation rather than outcomes in context rather than in specific variables.

A combination of both primary and secondary sources was used to collect data on the experience of Ethiopia in the use of research in policy formulation processes. Primary data was collected through interviews with relevant stakeholders such as Parliamentarians, Ministry of Education and Research institutions, while secondary data were literature review. In the literature review books, annual reports, journals, proceedings, internet sources and other publications; both published and unpublished on the subject were utilized.

In conducting this study, researcher focused on the extent, to which research has influenced the formulation of educational policy specifically it has seen,

- Key steps in the formulation of the policy document,
- the research inputs in the policy formulation and
- Dissemination mechanisms of research findings.

### **3.3 Research Setting**

Given the fact that, the major actors in educational policy formulation such as Ministry of Education, research institutions and the parliamentarians who are responsible for policy formulation in education are situated in Addis Ababa, thus this study by and large were mainly conducted in Addis Ababa. These was reach specified category of participants at the appropriate place.

### **3.4 Research Participant and Sampling Techniques**

Selecting participants is one of the most important aspects of planning and designing a research study (Corkery, Land, and Bossuyt, 1995). For this study a total of sixteen key informants were interviewed, from Ministry of Education, Parliament, Addis Ababa

University, Kotebe College of Teachers Education, former experts in Ministry of Education, private researchers and Addis Ababa Education bureau and they have served in different capacity and currently hold positions like; higher officials, senior expert, curriculum expert, senior Researchers, academicians and coordinators.

Table 1: Participants Location, Qualification and Size

<b>Place and Persons</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Size</b>	
Parliament	MA		1
Ministry of Education	All MA		3
Addis Ababa University	4 PhD, 2PhD candidate		6
Private Researcher	MA		1
Addis Ababa Education Bureau	MA		1
Kotebe College of Teacher Education	1PhD, 1MSc		2
Former Officials	1PhD, 1 PhD candidate		2
		Total	16

The sampling method used by qualitative researchers is termed purposeful sampling by Paton (1987) as cited in Martella, Nelson, and Martella, 1999). In this study, purposive sampling was applied to generate a chain of information and to get the needed data from the predetermined individuals. The main reason using purposive sampling method was the nature of policy formulation process allow only selected individuals and these individuals may know what, how and why question of policy formulation process. Therefore in order to get the necessary information those individuals has to be selected purposefully depending on the status they involved in the process.

### **3.5 Data Gathering tools**

In addition to what was obtained from the literature review, the body of data essential for addressing the research questions is collected through elite interviews and document analysis.

#### **3.5.1. Elite interview**

Elite interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. The use of interviews to study those at the 'top' of any stratification system be it in academia, social status, religion, whatever. In practice, however, elite research focuses mainly on political and economic notables (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Elite interview were conducted during the three weeks' time to the headquarters of the Ministry of Education, Parliament, Addis Ababa University, Kotebe College of Teachers Education and Addis Ababa Education office in Addis Ababa with officials and experts working in the Institutions and Ministry of Education. The main purpose of the interviews was to elicit information on the official and institutional position regarding the conception, rationale and area of educational research and educational policy formulation. In this regard, the in depth interviews have proved to be valuable sources of information given the unavailability of information on the specific issues.

#### **3.5.2. Document analysis**

Besides the elite interviews, document analysis was used as another data collection strategy in this study. The researcher employed document analysis to compliment

evidence obtained from the elite interviews with the overall purpose of the study. Document analysis enables researchers to filter through large amount of data with comparative ease in a systematic fashion. It can be a useful technique for allowing one to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional or social attention. It also allows inferences to be made which can then be supported using other methods of data collection. Researchers analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience and even the culture and time of which these are a part. Document analysis is popular method of data collection for qualitative researcher where the data is presented as a permanent product (Martella, Nelson, and Martella, 1999). Documents with different form like books, Journals, reports, and internet sources; both published and unpublished will be used in the study.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative analysis was used to examine the influence of and linkage between research and policy formulator in research and policy interface. The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2010).

The analysis is meant to find answers to all the questions related to the diversity of research and conduct of research; mechanisms for interacting with policymakers and researchers.

For this research qualitative content analysis technique was employed. I go through a process called data analysis to analyze each unit of data with the objective of identifying repetitive content and pattern. Content analysis means analysis of the content of transcript in order to identify the main themes that emerge from response given by participants (Dawson, 2002).

Therefore, the following basic steps were used to record and analyze data:

- First, conducted and audiotape interview for those who were willing and to record on tape recorder and the others write down in note book.
- Second, transcribed data from interview by tape recorder and written in the note book
- Carefully went through the descriptive responses given by participants to each question in order to understand the meanings. Based on the data and leading questions I developed broad themes that reflect the meaning of responses by selecting words that actually represent each theme. This is to mean that the responses are categorized in to different themes accordingly; these themes were considered as the basis for analyzing the text interviews and data from reviewed documents.
- Finally Generalize from the themes about the fact in question and interpret in the light of the available literature

### **3.7 Role of researcher**

Written qualitative research study, the researcher plays a essential role. As mentioned in Creswell (2009), qualitative research is interpretative research in which the researcher

typically involved in sustained and intensive experience with the participants. This introduces a range of strategies, ethical and personal issues into qualitative research (ibid.). Accordingly, I identify the bias, value and personal back ground that may shape the interpretation of the research.

While conducting the study, I have been careful to control for my own subjectivity. For example, the method I used in a data analysis (content analysis) was selected to decrease the influence of subjectivity. Following the points suggested by Creswell (2009) for being a responsible qualitative researcher, I looked how my own biases might influence the research.

Therefore, the procedure I used to representing the data and teams could be considered as a reflection my understanding with the perspective and experience of participants in general. I believe that the contribution of this research can be useful and positive for further research.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Put simply, validity is related to research methodology because its primary purpose is to increase the accuracy and usefulness of findings by eliminating or controlling as many confounding variables as possible, which allows for greater confidence in the findings of any given study (Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger, 2005).

Perhaps the most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible. The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the participant, and the substantive content of the questions.

To address this, the researcher used different mechanism in order to have valid information; data were cross checked using different segments of policy framers.

Reliability, on the other hand, indicates that the researcher's is consistence across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2010). The researcher deals with reliability by using check documents to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes made during documentation.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics refers to any set of rules or guide lines or human directions on the part of the researcher that directs the appropriate treatment of people participating in the research (Best and Kahen, 1999 cited in Ayalew, 2010). In planning a research project involving human participants, it is important to consider the ethical guidelines designed to protect the participants. In line with the ethical issues suggested by scholars the following effort were applied;

#### **➤ Informed Consent**

Many social researches necessitate obtaining the consent and co-operation of subjects who are to assist in investigations and of significant others in the institutions or organizations providing the research facilities. Then;

- The researcher was informed the participants about the purpose and the process of data gathering.

#### **➤ Access and Acceptance**

The relevance of the principle of informed consent becomes apparent at the initial stage of the research project—that of access to the institution or organization

where the research is to be conducted and acceptance by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task (ibid.).

- Accordingly in this study I obtained official letter from the department as well as the target institution or individuals consented to cooperate in the research process and provide necessary information.

➤ **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Research participant should be told on the outset of the study that they will have access to data. Once the research data has been collected, the researcher must ensure that confidentiality, and the privacy of individuals to whom the data apply is protected (Gall & etal., 1996 cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000).

Therefore;

- The data gathered in this study was solely used for academic purpose where participants in this research will not be liable to for permission of information and for their position.

## **Chapter Four: Analysis and Discussion**

*“It goes without saying that who posses information possesses power this can best be achieved through research because it is the only way of generating reliable information”.*

(Amare, 1998)

### **4.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of educational research on policy formulation. In this chapter the data collected through interview and document review presented. Participants from Parliament, Ministry of Education, Research institutes, and researchers included to cross check the data.

### **4.2. Educational Research towards Evidence Based Policy Making**

“Education in democracy is a vital matter on which the whole principle of self government depends. The determination of educational policy, therefore, must be sustained by the views, supports, and criticism of everyone who participate in the system” (Cohen, 1973).

Educational development is actually a serious of untidy and overlapping episode in which variety of people and organizations with diversity of perspectives are actually involved- technically and politically- in the process through which issues are analyzed and policies are generated, implemented, assessed and redesigned (Haddad and Demsky, 1994).

There is a general agreement between most researchers that research can provide evidence and information to policy formulation. In Ethiopia as it has been described in literature review part, we have passed three major education policy processes based on the period and ideology of the respective governments. Through this process the

relationship between research and policy making has been unavoidable since policy cannot be made in vacuum despite there was alleged ideological and elite inclination.

In practice, most of time there is political interference in policy formulation since the government sets its agenda based on a given ideological or political orientation and depending on certain evidence however the extent of the political interference always determine the extent of the research influence.

A political science scholar from AAU argues: *“there is always political interference in policy making process since it is used as an instrument to disseminate a particular ideology and government agenda and the extent of interference also depending on the type of government on a given time”*.

As been discussed in literature review each of the three policies- ESR, ERGESE and ETP- has passed through political interference and also there were huge educational research undertakings regardless of ideologies and the composition of experts and professionals.

However, there have been different views in the use of educational research in ETP, since its inception; on the one hand, Amdissa (2010:64) argued:

*Throughout the history of Ethiopian education, what has been consistently missing is the lack of genuine consultation with primary stakeholders on the shape and content of education policy. Despite the rhetoric, the tradition continued to the present day and the policy has by large remained top down.*

The same comment was given by a researcher from KCTE, *“of course there was research there but the nature of usage of research findings different in the case of ETP, the political interference overshadowed the research findings.*

On the other hand, as Amare (1998) perceived that, ‘in the development of the Education and Training Policy (ETP) during the period of transitional government of Ethiopia in 1994, some of the findings of educational research were used as a source to policy formulation’.

One participant from MoE also said that, *“I heard and read different debate about the use of educational research in the new education policy formulation process; whatever the debate is educational research was used in the process as it is basic”.*

Therefore, the concurrence between educational research and educational policy making in Ethiopia should be ensured, since research is key in economic growth and national development. The pressure has been great on research and policy makers to care for their outputs as direct inputs to the policy process and vice versa. In this perspective, the input-output relationship is considered deterministic and hence measurable at any point in time. Literally it is believed that, ‘Research is supposed to be the bedrock in policy formulation as well as research should inform policy, and in turn policy should inform research’.

### **4.3. Educational Research for Policy Formulation**

In Ethiopia, Ministry of education has the power and responsibility of making education policy formulation process. According to TGE (1993), “the ministry of education shall have the power and duties to formulate the country’s education policy and strategies and,

and upon approval, follow up and supervise their implementation”. Thus Ministry of Education has the first hand to formulate education policy.

As pointed by Ministry of Education (2002:4),

*Beyond having no policy direction, the previous educational system had acute and severe problems of both access and quality. That is why it was necessary to seek solutions and to frame a policy. However, these were not the only reasons for formulating a new policy. At the time the policy was framed, the Ethiopian people were embarking upon a new historical path to establish a new order, and begin a new life.*

On the other hand some agreed with the idea of the new educational policy reform with exceptions, as addressed in Solomon (2008:56) with an interview with the member of the task force at that time:

*“It is true that policy should not be formulated for the sake of policy. However, our education policy has its own pressure from behind that necessitated its formulation. Our previous educational problems definitely call upon the formulation of new policy. We have had no full- fledged education policy except some curricular materials adopted from various countries at different period. Similarly, various research outputs of varying magnitude the necessity of a change of policy. Therefore, the formulation of a new education policy was unquestionably a pressing need of the country in 1991 just when EPRDF assumed power”.*

These ideas were also accepted by some participants of the study with some modification like the above. And one participant from then Ministry of education official said that:

*The need for the new policy had not seen questionable and it was necessary because of many reasons this was done before the new*

*government took power and the new government was fortunate, because the necessary research of educational sector problems was completed.*

Therefore, the need of new educational policy was necessary and convincing even if additional push was behind and have political derives and the necessity of additional research. From this initial idea let us proceed to the main theme of study whether the policy formulation process was supported by research findings or not. According to MoE, task force was formed under the prime minister's office to coordinate and oversee the study. Once a draft of the study was completed, various discussion forums were organized for criticism and for compiling comments on the study (MoE, 2002).

According to the Ministry of Education (2002:4-5), *“The aim of the study was to formulate a comprehensive and coherent education policy that would be in the service of development and democracy, to assess the problems of modern education in Ethiopia, to recommend solutions, and to broadly analyze all education related issues”*.

An official from the Ministry of Education said, *“The process of education policy formulation was participatory and interactive”*. Similarly, with these ideas the member of the task force and researcher at AAU argue that, *“there was a discussion in every region and we used the valuable comments as additional input for policy formulation in addition to different research findings included in the process”*. The former curricular expert from MoE also said that, *“In ETP we used different inputs from the consultation from the stakeholders and some of the initial ideas in the draft policy were changed”*.

In contrast, some disagree for the participatory nature of the policy formulation process, according to Amdissa (2010),

*There were some evidence of consultation in ETP, but it was simply to endorse the document rather than make a fundamental change. The Top-down nature of policy formulation means that through the years, the architect has been a strong central Ministry of Education that laid down the rule of the game. Even under the present decentralized system of governance, the country has a dominant Ministry of Education.*

Similarly a participant from AAU agrees with this point and said that, “*there was meeting with the primary stakeholders in Addis Ababa and different regions but the output from the discussion was not considered beyond the political consumption*”.

However, research has a role to inform policy makers to make ‘good’ decision and understanding of the situation under study, and therefore the use of research is compulsory.

According to one of the members of the task force, cited in Solomon (2008:58):

*“Many sources of information were used; various documents have been referred to amongst which ERGESE was vital. It is a research conducted during the Derge period. It includes almost all aspects of the country’s educational system. Many well known curriculum experts the country have had participated in the ERGESE. I can say it is one of the most comprehensive pieces of educational research nationally produced in Ethiopia’s history. The findings of this research, ERGESE, have been reflected in the current educational policy. Furthermore ESR is also comprehensive research in the area of education. Therefore the current policy used findings and recommendations of various researches including ERGESE and ESR”*

Likewise the former official to the Ministry of Education witnessed the contribution of the former period's educational researches to the current educational policy formulation, he said that, "*The current policy has got its inputs from the ESR of Imperial period and ERGESE of Derge and he also acknowledges the content of these policy findings*".

In contrast, some raise a question of the necessity of additional research for this Solomon (2007) perceived that, "*the MoE assumed the problem of our education system to be self defined so that a new policy could be proposed without future study*".

Also the Ministry of Education (2002:4) addresses in its book entitled *The Education and Training Policy and Its Implementation*,

*The public forums in which numerous suggestions were made and researched papers were submitted had greatly helped a great deal of people to grasp the spirit of the policy and had immeasurably contributed to the development and improvement of the policy itself.*

From the above we learn that, the question of participation and the usage of research findings at 'accepted' way with the primary stakeholders have been controversial till date.

#### **4.4. Quality and relevance of Research Produced**

Determining the relevance, impact or influence of findings is often a subjective exercise. The criteria or indicators are multiple. An institution may have huge impact on the media but little or no input into policy development. A government agency consulting and commissioning researchers will not necessarily adopt and incorporate the resulting scientific advice into decision-making. Furthermore, in those instances where ideas or

policy recommendations from outside government are seriously considered, they are invariably modified and adapted by internal bureaucratic dynamics and other political considerations (CEC, 2007).

Depending up on the context the importance and relevance of research in policy decisions is fundamental. All the interviewed scholars and officials acknowledge the importance of research in making policy decisions and admitted that information derived from conducted researches is very important in informing and influencing policies that can be effective for the education policy formulation.

A researcher from AAU said that, *“First of all research must be credible to be taken seriously. This means that all evidence gathered during a research process, must be based on reliable sources and reliable research methodologies”*. This idea made strong by former official and a member of task force from ETP and researcher:

*not all research outcomes are genuine, some write without responsibility, some methodologies are questioned, some research findings address mature issues, some are highly specific and technical and some write in ‘guess’ Amharic version ‘ኢይቸውን ጩፍነው ነው የሚሰፉት’*. Hence research institutions and researchers should be more ethical, moral, and professional.

Governments regularly state that they would like to use credible and relevant research results to enrich their decisions and to feed their choice of policy options.

However, evidence shows that though many researches are done still a lot of good research results are not well communicated to policy makers instead they remain kept in

shelves or dumped. The first of this comment came from a researcher from Addis Ababa Education Bureau said that,

*The last two years we did at least three to five most important researches per year but the officials from the Ministry of Education did not use it except one research output. The reason for this is if research findings do not comply with politics, it is not recognized even if relevant and qualified.*

An expert from Ministry of education seems agreed with the above statement and he said that, *“Whatever the relevance and the quality is, we only want the findings to be similar with the findings we are expecting otherwise we will not accept the result and put it in a shelf or dump it”*.

The major advantage of decentralization is that it facilitates better management of educational resources, since the administrating agencies are located closer to the communities. And because of the proximity to the society the regional Bureaus have easily manage research findings and can generate reliable and relevant information. But the above statement demonstrates the reverse.

Thus, the prevailing problem in education policy in particular and public policy in general is accounted to failure to make use of research findings for policy formulation.

#### **4.5. Interaction between Educational Research and Policymakers**

Studies have proved that mechanism promoting exchanges and interactions between researchers and policy makers would be useful for two communities to understand each other's role and work in close collaboration. It will generate evidences that are inline of policy needs and therefore facilitate utilization of evidences in policy formulation process.

#### **4.5.1. The Modes of Educational Research Dissemination and Communication**

A major intent of research dissemination is to provide and use information as input to decisions or policies that might require a change in policy on behalf of the target audience. This indicates the need for active promotion of the desired message. Approaches taken will depend on the target audience as well as the specifics of the research. One of the challenges may be matching the research findings to the wider perspectives or requirements of the groups who are being addressed.

The dissemination of research findings at the national level can take several forms. One popular way is to present these findings at workshop, seminars and conferences. These forms have now become popular venue to present research findings (Derebssa, 2004).

As it has been stated in the literature review strategies of communication and dissemination, model *Interactive Dissemination Strategies* conceiving of dissemination strategies as one-way communication flows (of information) from researchers to research users may actually contribute to the gap between the ‘two communities’.

An expert of MoE explained the issue of dissemination as,

*Even if there are a number of research institutes and researchers (from private, non governmental and governmental), only few send us research findings/evidence like World Bank and teachers, and intern we provide them a feedback. Research institutions in general are better to send us research findings.*

On the contrary, educational researcher from Institute of educational research disagree with the idea of the ministry expert as,

*We disseminate our findings through different journals to stakeholders like Ministry of education, the donor organizations, and libraries within and outside the country but the problem with Ministry of education are they have not been sending as positive or negative feedback. Furthermore our findings disseminated through journals and other mechanisms are used by international as well as local scholars as a source.*

An expert from MoE argued that,

*The real question in terms of dissemination of research findings here is; who should send research findings them or us, for me it is them who should come to us since they know what their findings and collection about in terms of relevance and quality as well as other related issues.*

This also supported by the other MoE expert;

*.....researchers are promoted for publications in referred journals that stress theory and technical advances. Predictably, the products from this world would have less immediate value for policy makers who need information that is applicable to a specific set of circumstances.*

Generally, there is a clear disagreement between the views of the MoE and some researchers concerning the dissemination process. Whatever the case is dissemination is a key for educational research to communicate with policy makers in order to have an influence in education policy formulation. Therefore, there is a need to properly design a dissemination mechanism.

#### **4.5.2. Reception of Policy-Makers to Research Results**

Governments regularly state that they would like to use credible and relevant research results to inform their decisions and to feed their choice of policy options. In his different speeches, Minister of Ministry of Education Ato Demeke Mekonen expressed

the government's willingness to facilitate and working together with research institutes (AAU, 2009). However, both the culture of government and the political context influence the degree to which the research reception by policy makers.

In many countries, decision-makers continue to take their decisions on the basis of intuition, ideology, or pressure from different interest groups. They often refer to research only to justify or legitimize their choice. But in democratic societies, research concepts, theories and findings do percolate through informed publics and through the media, and after several years, end up influencing policy debates and decisions. Here research findings influence decisions (UNESCO, 2010).

Nonetheless, educational research in Ethiopia has been criticized by the policy makers for serving the interests of researchers, rather than those of policy-makers, providers and users of educational services. In this respect a curriculum expert said that, " *some research findings are not prepared for addressing the problem of the society rather for the satisfaction of the researcher*".

In addition, a official from the MoE raises other related issue and said that, " *the problem with the educational research findings is first some are ideological oriented, some are not timely and parallel to the policy formulation and others are too academic only doing for the purpose of getting academic excellence*".

On the other hand the researchers also show their concern. In this respect one of the participants said that, " *The researchers have the intention to contribute to policy making process but the policy makers are not willing to use the findings that we come across*". In

addition a participant from KCTE said that, *“policy-makers are usually aware of research outcomes. Hence, they put forward informal and non-cooperative attitude towards research. They are usually afraid of being evaluated and assessed due to nonperformance”*.

In recent years, There is a conference in every three month, held by ministry of education and Higher Educational institutions, is regarded as particularly useful. However there is always argument between researchers and policy makers, for example within the last two conferences in Baherdare (North Ethiopia) and Addis Ababa, researchers raise different issues and forward their findings and the findings were clear and sound like the question of quality and relevance raised and assessed and set findings, these were raised also by the public at large but the response with the government officials was defensive only they assert opinions. According to a researcher from IER, *“despite this we have been giving them research findings that facilitate policy making process”*.

Similarly a researcher from KCTE said that, *“Researchers have principles but they are being frustrated by politicians who use their influence on self interests without consulting the researchers’ opinions. Sometimes very crucial researches end up being highly ignored”*.

In addition curriculum expert from MOE agrees with the above idea he said that, *“I have a doubt that policy making officials have the interest to read research findings and even the capacity to translate or be relevant”*.

As discussed in the literature in the *Two-Community* theories, because of the differing and often conflicting values, reward systems and languages of the researcher and the

policy maker in concurrence. Policy-makers need research to help make decisions but also to support policy positions. Consequently, research can be distorted to political ends.

Within the reception of policy makers towards research findings, different issues with the same context rose, and this shows that because of the nature of the two community 'genuine' research findings were not used at the cost of huge resources.

Linkages and interactions between researchers and policy makers can be facilitated by establishing institutional mechanisms that will promote holding meetings between researchers and policy makers for priority setting exercises, convening national policy dialogues, debates or conferences. In order to become more familiar with problems that occur in practice or policy making, researchers have to engage in more discussions through collaborative relationships with target users. Policy-makers could also be engaged as a responsible partner in various stages of education research process right from setting priority research questions, conducting corroborative research projects, discussing results, knowledge transfer or dissemination, utilization of research evidences in decision making and governance and funding educational research.

Therefore, the proposed solutions lie in making research and researchers an integral part of the policy making process, building mutual trust, confidence and empathy, and generally improving the linking mechanism for the proper usage and interaction of two communities.

## **4.6. Challenges facing Research – Policy Interface**

Despite the fact that research – policy relation has been recognized as important in the development of any nation, its realization has been difficult in Ethiopia. However as it has been revealed in the findings, currently such linkage is declining and even absent in Ethiopia as there is a little use of research results in policy processes. This situation has been contributed by a number of challenges that hinder the ability of both ministry (as policy formulator) and research institutions to be linked so that the latter informs the former and vice versa. Among the challenges threatening the research-policy linkage include

### **4.6.1. Politics**

Political interference is the main challenge of facing the Educational research. In most cases political interests dominate educational interests, and therefore research findings which seems to contradict political interest do not be considered when formulating particular policy even if they are been channeled to reach the policy makers.

In Ethiopia, education policy making is more of political decision in the sense that it goes along with the political ideology and the program of the government or the party. Policy making often towards to be characterized by political bargaining, value judgments, not well informed and biased towards political goals and methods decision (Habtamu, 2002).

As Seyoum (1996) argued that, *it is important to emphasize that there has been shortfall in the influence of educational research on educational policy formulation in Ethiopia.*

*The statement is premised the fact that most policies implemented in Ethiopia are not custom-made as they are mostly handed down from politicians (from above).*

Ruling coalition's or powerful political interest groups exercise a crucial impact on the kind of research, analysis and advice that is selected in policy-making through their influence over these paradigms. Research becomes subordinate to political interests, a resource to be used in furthering those interests (Stone, Maxwell and Keating, 2006). In Ethiopia the formulation of education policy had been less academic and more political process and decision (Solomon, 2008).

Most of the participants were concerned about the Political interference in the educational research and educational policy formulation. For example, according to the political science Scholar from AAU, *“What they are doing is not for the wider benefit of the country rather for the principle of the government specifically for ‘elite’ satisfaction”*. Similarly, Scholar from Kotebe College of teacher education perceived that *“Government is not willing to work with us and moreover they are always protecting only their sphere of influence”*. And another participant from AAU also agrees with this idea, *“Because of political orientation and other side issues Policy makers are not willing to accept and even sometimes to read research findings”*.

Therefore, the above discussion implies that there is a political interference by the government that affects the educational research to be effectively and efficiently used for policy formulation process even if there is always political interference in policy formulation process but the extent of interference seems affect the influence.

#### **4.6.2. Research Funds**

Funding for research is one of the main constraints. Unfortunately the amount is minimal to the extent that it is not adequate for their research undertaking. As a result, research personnel are underutilized because not much research is being done. It all depends on the sharpness of these research institutes to attract consultancies and to apply for both local and international competitive research grants in order to actively conduct comprehensive research that can yield relevant impacts in the national development.

High cost of research hinders most research institutes and educational researchers from adequate participation in research activities. The government has not played the funder role adequately. Where research activities are constrained, the crisis of relevance is common within the educational research. While minimal research grants are available, researchers have also been charged for using such grants for personal usage. This may affect the outcome of the research as methodology may contravene scientific rigorosity.

Budget is the main constraint in doing research and also publication of journals. The price of journal publication is rising in a minimum of 150%, for example the press cost of 500 copies was 8,000-10,000 Ethiopian Birr, recently increasing to 20,000-25,000 Ethiopian Birr but the budget is not far from the initial. For example because of the constraint of beget Journal of Higher education were not published since 2006. "Limited budget and high cost of publication hinder publication process" said a researcher from IER

Similarly a scholar from AAU addresses the issue of fund, *"Because of the minimum amount of fund we tried to cutoff some of the activities, like minimizing participants in the*

*research, reduction of personal cost, and cutting of some sites; if you are supposed to work in wider area". Funding problem is shared by most of the participants including the officials from MoE one official said," Definitely there is a problem of fund".*

As Derebssa (2004) perceived, "one of the key factors that seem to be affecting volume and quality of research in the university is under funding. Under funding of research is manifested in university budget. Funds for conducting research in the university are relatively scarce".

The other problem raised by research institutes is relation to fund was, even if the fund is available for a given research, the timing of the fund released is most of the time at the closing of a budget year.. These situations tend to affect their performance in terms of implementing their annual work plans and research projects planned for the year. These situations therefore obstruct the research findings from giving adequate and quality of information.

Researcher from AAU addresses the issue, *this became a habit that the administrators release research fund at the end of a budget year and make us ill, because the whole thing is doing in rush in order to finish within short period of time and definitely affect the findings.* Other participants also share the same idea but additionally they raised a bureaucratic nature of the fund, *"even if there is a fund selection criteria, giving a fund does not consider professionalism rather ideological and companionship"*

There is clearly a mismatch between the amount of government funding for research into Educational research and the level of the problem that the research will address. The

government therefore needs to revise funding for educational research. And also the bureaucratic problem of funding has to be avoided in order to have educational research findings have to give the necessary information.

#### **4.6.3. Quality and Relevance**

Sometimes educational research is not designed to be relevant to educational policy formulation. Sometimes it is so designed, but fails to have an impact because of problems associated with timeliness, presentation, or manner of communication. Sometimes (probably quite often) policy-makers do not see research findings as central to their decision-making. Because of this the relationship between research and policy is often weak. One reason why research might have little influence on policy is simply that it may be of low quality. Not all research is of equal value, and it is unreasonable to expect policy makers to use evidence that is not of the highest quality. The other is the originality in some data is usually in doubt mainly because the qualities and values of good research setting are not usually put in place. Data collection is not careful, sometimes due to socio-cultural setting or economic factors.

The quality of research cannot be taken for granted. Some research is more rigorous, professional and scholarly, adhering to recognized standards. Such standards need to be cultivated and protected as policy-makers and other users usually require policy research and analysis produced in a professional context. In other words, they want research findings that help legitimate policy, and these come from recognized institutions and experts.

However, trend in production of educational research output in research institutions is not as expecting in quality and relevance since they are not able to produce many research reports or publications due to limited financial and administrative reasons. The information gathered of research institute and researchers also show that few number of research findings are produced and few publications.

#### **4.6.4. Communication**

The other constraint is major communication problems between policymakers and researchers. Some of these problems are usual, they say, because policymakers and researchers live in different worlds with differing languages, values and professional rewards. Habtamu (2002) also writes the following about the links between decision makers and researchers in Ethiopia. “Though there are some links between some of the policy statement and research findings, it leaves a lot to be desired. Lack of trust between decision makers, researchers and practitioners seem to have been existing for decades. Researchers not providing options, underdeveloped culture and discourse and verification, and differences in goals and outlook are some of the major contributing factor for the poor link”.

According to researcher from Kotebe College of Teacher Education, “*We did not have almost any interaction with MoE, we only meet whenever they need something from us, like small researches, giving training*”.

Most researcher policy makers interaction is through conference and workshop, but sometimes the surprising thing is the officials responsible for policy making are available for only opening and closing speech and they do not know what the findings about in the

work shop or in the conference. The ceremonial nature of officials might arise from the professional background. “There is lack of professional competence of politically assigned individuals” said one participant

Similar response is given by MoE expert, *“as far as I know there is no as such strong interaction between researchers and us, we only interact with two or three research institutions like world bank, even if there are lots of governmental and NGO research institutions”*.

Most of the participants in this study agree with the suggestion of ‘no interaction’ or ‘seasonal interaction’. This shows that the interaction between the researchers and policy makers is not as expected, it reveals a missing link.

Generally, it can be argued that the minimal or no interaction between researchers and policy makers or formulators adversely affect the research findings to be useful for education policy. For research to contribute to addressing major educational problems interaction at different levels such as across the discipline and between researchers and policymakers are increasingly seen as essential.

#### **4.6.5. Dissemination Mechanism**

Dissemination activities are now widely acknowledged and given priorities by national and international development programs as an essential means of maximizing the impact of research on development.

It is noted that dissemination is a life line for research findings to end users. However, it is stifled by different challenges. According to Derebssa (2004),

*Until recently research reports have tended to remain on bookshelves, unread and untouched by policy makers, other researchers and practitioners. Efforts to attract policy makers in these reports have elicited complaints that they are too bulky, or are written in a format and language which is quite incomprehensible to readers, and that the subject matter of the reports is of little relevance to policy formulation or implementation. Some of these complaints are indeed applicable to some of the research reports. However, many of the reports do have relevant and interesting findings which could be utilized to improve practices.*

Dissemination provides added value to educational research projects, as the influence of educational research can be potentially wider than the original focus. Dissemination promotes the profile of educational institution and strengthens its research capacity.

The dissemination and utilization of research findings are seen as important part and as a basic means of expanding positive impact of research on the development practices. Though much remains to be improved, these areas have been accorded increasing attention. Research findings of major projects are disseminated in a quite organized way through international and national workshops, seminars, and publication proceedings and journals (Derebssa, 2004).

There is a need to overtake the research barriers from disseminating research work and necessary mechanism taken by stakeholders for the benefit of the wider society in general and for educational research in particular.

#### **4.7. Findings**

From the analysis the following findings were derived;

- Initially educational research has influence with regard to government interference.
- The influence of educational research become declining from time to time until date.
- Interactions between Educational Research and Policymakers have not been as expected.
- Receptions of policy-makers to research results are not satisfactory.
- Political interference is the main challenge of facing the Educational research.
- Funding for research is one of the main constraints for doing research to support policy formulation process.
- Sometimes educational research is not designed to be relevant to educational policy formulation.
- Some research is more rigorous, professional and scholarly, adhering to recognized standards.
- There are major communication problems between policymakers and researchers.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The analysis and discussions in the preceding chapters have demonstrated the need to promote co-existence between Educational research and policy making process, because research is a key to policy making process, economic growth and subsequently the national development. To a larger extent this framework does not work appropriately in the country for various reasons and/or challenges facing the research industry and the country at large. These challenges include underfunding of research, political interference, poor quality and irrelevance of research outputs, inefficient communication and insufficient dissemination.

This has encouraged imposition of unknown policies which often confront implementation problems. It has been widely acknowledged that policy formulation needs to consider research findings. Negation of this fact amounts to poor policies which will not enhance any socio-economic and political progress. It was in line with all this that this paper examines the aforementioned factors as detrimental in transforming research to policy. Hence, this trend needs to be reversed so that the crisis of relevance of educational research in formulation of education policies will be redressed.

Research has become of immense value to the development of human knowledge. Its importance can be seen in the fact that nearly all current developments depend largely on research. Today, research is seen as the principal agency by which our knowledge of the universe can be enlarged. Without research, the countless educational problems cannot be resolved and progress would therefore be slow.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Transforming the work of researchers and policy-makers will require a better understanding of how one relates to the other, and how to look after collaborative relationships. Therefore based on the findings the following recommendations derived.

- Researchers, research institutes and policy makers have to work together for the wider vision of the country and national competitiveness- ‘team work is necessary’.
- researchers and policy-makers setting aside enough time and resources to take collective approaches to research, strengthening relationships, facilitating mutual understandings, working collaboratively, and providing support infrastructure for coordination
- The subject of the research to be relevant to the concerns of the policy makers. Dialogue between researchers and policy makers is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for effective policy-oriented research.
- Researchers must analyze the policy process and understand policy actors, actors’ interests, power dynamics, institutions and policy spaces, as well as pay attention to research demand from policy-makers, and research needs to be presented in an easily digestible format.
- Information from the research should be provided in time, that is, before the policy decisions have to be made, in a form readily understandable by those who have to make the decisions, preferably in non-technical language and in summary form.
- Political interference must be minimized

- More funds need to be sourced to finance research institutions in the country. This will ensure that research institutions and researchers is well facilitated to contribute in developing big and long term competitive research projects to ensure sustainable social and economic development in the country.
- Research dissemination mechanism beyond journal and workshop has to be facilitated by Stakeholders
- It is necessary to encourage research strategies which focus on dissemination mechanisms, in order to improve the accessibility of outputs. The types of instrument include electronic summaries, literature reviews, training, conferences or involvement of the media.
- Effective dissemination and utilization require an understanding of the change process, critically linked to its timeliness and comprehensiveness requires careful planning and effort throughout the life of a research project and requires ongoing support and personal intervention to achieve utilization.
- Policy-makers should also be direct producers of knowledge, in collaboration with researchers and research institute.
- Researchers and research institutions should be encouraged

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**Appendix I**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUTE STUDIES  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

**THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL  
POLICY FORMULATION IN ETHIOPIA**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**Introduction**

The major objective of this study is to draw some research based evidence on the interaction between policy makers and researchers in the process of policy formulation. The task is expected to draw some evidence from Ministry of Education (MoE), Research Institutes, Researchers and parliamentarians.

Interviews will be conducted in their corresponding offices for Parliamentarians, Ministry of Education experts, Research Institutions and Researchers. This will also help them to share more relevant information and speak out what they have inside freely which in turn would assist the research in holding more accurate and necessary information. It would also give the researcher to observe their emotional situation.

The questions constituting the interview will be both open-ended and close ended questions with follow up questions as necessary. The core (specifically open ended) questions to be asked to the interviews are less than six questions including follow up questions that may come up during the process of conducting the interview.

<b>Interview #</b>	_____		
<b>Interview place</b>	_____		
<b>Participant Name (if applicable)</b>	_____		
<b>Position (if applicable)</b>	_____		
<b>Date</b>	_____		
<b>Time</b>	<table border="1"><tr><td><b>Start at</b></td><td><b>End at</b></td></tr></table>	<b>Start at</b>	<b>End at</b>
<b>Start at</b>	<b>End at</b>		

### A. The main Questions

- How was the policy formulation process conducted?
- Do Education policy makers use research findings while formulating a policy?
- To what extent do educational policy makers in Ethiopia make use of research findings in formulating policies?
- To what extent educational researchers produce quality research result that can influence policy?
- Is there a forum where Education policy makers interact with educational researchers?
- Is there available mechanism and support for dissemination of research work so that the findings reach policy makers?

<b>B. GENERAL QUESTIONS ON POLICY AND RESEARCH LINKAGE</b>
<b>I. Ministry of Education</b>
1. What are Ministry's objective, mandate, and roles in policy formulation?
2. Does the Ministry have a research department/unit?
3. In the last 20 years, have you reviewed or formulate any policy in the Ministry? If yes, please mention the reviewed/formulated policy.
4. Do you work with researchers/research institutions when reviewing/formulating policies? If yes, please mention them..... If No, please explain.....
5. Are there any interactions between your Ministry, researchers and research institutes outside the ministry? If yes explain how ....if no why.....
6. What is the mode of your interaction? The mechanisms used to interact?
7. In your view, what roles do research have influence in policy formulation?
8. How do you see the relationship between researchers and policy makers?
9. How do you see the capacity of research done?
10. How do you see the capacity of researchers in communicating research results to policy makers/formulators?
11. How do you see the capacity of policy formulators in using research results?
12. Do you see any relevance of research in policy decisions? Please explain
13. What do you think are the challenges for research-policy linkages in Ethiopia?

14. Is there any opportunity for research-policy linkages in Ethiopia specifically in ministry of education? Please explain
15. What do you think are the possible contributions of research to national competitiveness?
16. Please suggest ways of strengthening the influence of research in the policy formulation process in Ethiopia.
<b>II. Research Institutes</b>
1. How many of your research results have been used by policy makers?
2. How often you are involved in policy formulation process?
3. Do you get any complains with regards to your research output?
4. Do you have enough resources for undertaking research?
5. How do you handle the quality and relevance of research? Do you have any mechanism of quality control?
6. Do you have any regular research evaluation system to learn on your strengths or weaknesses and opportunities? Please explain
7. What mechanism do you use to disseminate research findings?
8. How do you communicate research results to policy makers?
9. What do you think are the opportunities for research and policy linkage?
10. What do you think are the challenges for research–policy linkages?
11. What do you think are the possible contributions of research to national competitiveness?
12. What do you think need to be done to improve research and policy linkage?
13. Please suggest ways of strengthening the influence of research in the policy making processes in Ethiopia?
<b>III. Researchers</b>
1. How many requests do you get for undertaking a research?
2. What do you think are the objectives for undertaking research?
3. Do you have enough resources for undertaking research?
4. How do you handle the quality and relevance of research?
5. What are the impacts of research that you are doing in policy processes?
6. Do you have mechanisms to interact with policy makers?
7. What do you think are the challenges for research–policy linkages?
8. What do you think are the possible contributions of research to national competitiveness?
9. What do you think need to be done to improve research and policy linkage?
10. Please suggest ways of strengthening the influence of research in the policy making processes?
<b>IV. Parliamentarians</b>
1. What is the parliament educational standing committee mandate, and roles in policy formulation?
2. In your view, what roles do the policy-makers and users play in research initiation, implementation, monitoring and dissemination?

3. How do you see the relationship between educational researchers and policy makers?
4. Is there a mechanism in your office to follow the research findings? If yes explain... if no why.....
5. What do you think are the challenges for research–policy linkages?
6. What do you think are the possible contributions of research to national competitiveness?
7. What do you think need to be done to improve research and policy linkage?
8. Please suggest ways of strengthening the influence of research in the policy making processes of ministry of Education in Ethiopia

## Appendix II

**Declaration**

I the undersigned, declared that this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other University and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been properly acknowledged

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The thesis has been submitted for the examination with my approval as a University  
Advisor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_