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THE USE OF PHILOSOPHY IN ETHIOPIA: CULTIVATING IDENTITY FORMATION AND EMANCIPATORY IMPULSE

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Abstract. Through a discussion of the historical trajectory within which modern philosophy in Ethiopia developed, the article situates the discussions of the spirit of cultural coexistence, the reflections on modernity, the process of state building, religion and modernity and the validity of indigenous traditions as the objects of analysis upon which social philosophizing in Ethiopia could take place within. Through such a discussion, it will be shown that the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia needs to be situated in the two-fold task of identity formation and the emergence of an emancipatory impulse. Concrete strategies for realizing such a function in terms of the development of curriculums, the cultivation of an interdisciplinary engagement between philosophy and other disciplines, community engagement, knowledge dissemination and the need to engage in an ethical and political reflection are identified.

Keywords: *Philosophy, identity, emancipation, Ethiopia, social function, education.*

Rezumat. Printr-o discuție asupra traiectoriei istorice în cadrul căreia s-a dezvoltat filosofia modernă în Etiopia, articolul situează discuțiile despre spiritul coexistenței culturale, reflecțiile asupra modernității, procesul de construire a statului, religie, modernitate și validitatea tradițiilor indigene ca obiecte de analiză, pe baza cărora s-ar putea manifesta filosofia socială în Etiopia. Printr-o astfel de discuție se evidențiază, că funcția socială a filosofiei în Etiopia trebuie să includă dubla sarcină a formării identității și a apariției unui impuls emancipator. Sunt identificate strategii concrete pentru realizarea unei astfel de funcții în ceea ce privește dezvoltarea curriculum-urilor, cultivarea unui angajament interdisciplinar între filozofie și alte discipline, implicarea comunității, diseminarea cunoștințelor și nevoia de a se angaja într-o reflecție etică și politică.

Cuvinte cheie: *filosofie, identitate, emancipare, Etiopia, funcție socială, educație.*

1. Introduction

In a nation like Ethiopia that is defined by a long history of literacy, rich cultural contact and ethnic and linguistic diversity, there is a search for a meaning that is able to confer a sense of a commonly shared sense of identity on the lives of individuals [1, p. 4]. Historically, religions and the complex interactions that have been established among

individual Ethiopians that are coming from different backgrounds led into the development of a moral fabric and a sense of a common destiny. Currently, the Ethiopian state is characterized by ethnic tensions and conflicts and the lack of a narrative that is able to serve as guiding glue that is able to provide a meaning beyond particular divisions [2, p. 41]. The source of such a crisis have been identified as being situated in the process of state formation and the subsequent system of ethnic federalism that was introduced as a way of addressing question of ethnic difference but ended up in the emergence of a polarized discourse that destroyed any sense of a common future [3, p. 297]. Such a crisis of normativity that is currently being experienced in the Ethiopian context calls for an intellectual intervention and among other things such an intervention, could be developed in terms of the possible social function that philosophy can play within the Ethiopian soil.

The attempt to delve into an exploration into the possible role that philosophy in Ethiopia could play within the society is situated within a world of diverging conceptions of the good. As a nation that is characterized by diversity, one witnesses the existence of rich cultural traditions within the Ethiopian context [4, p. 17]. Such diversity has served as a normative challenge as there is a quest to develop a normative foundation that is able to serve as a commonly shared sense of identity. Such a quest is also involved in the identification of the parameters through which the interactions among different forms of identities could be developed within and the need to affirm the limits of the processes of cultural translation and understanding [5, p. 155]. There is a need to explore what possible social functions of philosophy can play in a society where there is a diversity of worldviews and a state building process that is being plagued by the question of ethnic identity.

The possible investigation into the social function that can be played by philosophy in Ethiopia is taking place within a contested intellectual terrain that has the aim of determining whether or not philosophy exists in Ethiopia and if so, then what possible role can it play in the life of the community. Those like Claude Sumner argued that Ethiopian philosophy is made up of three main traditions and that all of them have a huge role in the life of the community [6, p. 41]. In the eyes of Sumner, Ethiopian philosophy which is made up of a written philosophy, oral traditions and foreign wisdom plays a crucial role in addressing the predicaments that are being faced by the community [7, p. 433]. Such an effort mainly concentrated on demonstrating the ways in which philosophical wisdom can be used in order to resolve moral dilemmas and questions that are of a normative and a political nature. Supporting such a function of philosophy in Ethiopia, it has been argued that “we can extract important lessons for enlightenment from classical written and oral philosophy of Ethiopia” [8, p. 4]. Without directly delving into the classical sources of Ethiopian philosophy, attempts have been made by those like Andreas Eshete, Messay Kebede and MaimireMennasemay who argued that philosophy plays a crucial social function in terms of diagnosing the nature of modernity and identity, by analyzing the anomalies of Ethiopia’s system of ethnic federalism and through a critical exposition of the failure to introduce a normative foundation that can serve as a foundation of social, moral and political philosophizing within the Ethiopian context [9, p. 5].

In a nation like Ethiopia that is plagued by ethnic conflicts, lack of democracy and good governance and the absence of a normative foundation that is able to bestow a common purpose in the lives of individual citizens, there is a need to ponder the possible role that can be played by philosophy. The study of the social functions of philosophy in Ethiopia need to be grounded within the context of the problems in the crisis of legitimacy

and the fragmentation of identity that is being witnessed within the Ethiopian context [10, p. 2019]. The very idea of being an Ethiopian and the common goals that Ethiopians should strive for are being contested within the current context as a result of a politics of ethnicity that led into the raising of ethnic differentness into the level of irreconcilable ontological differences [11, p. 125]. Such an exercise needs to primarily concentrate on the areas of identity formation and the cultivation of a form of subjectivity that is able to strive for emancipation.

The philosophical exploration into the nature of identity formation in Ethiopia is an important task that allows us to identify the parameters within which conceptions of subjectivity are developed. It is also useful in terms of the development of a rational framework within which a collectively shared sense of identity could be developed within. Such an intellectual exercise is of a greater importance as it contributes to the emergence of “an Ethiopian political theory rooted in Ethiopian history” [12, p. 2]. The philosophical engagement with the question of the development of an emancipatory impulse in return is important since it leads into the critique of oppressive regimes and the identification of the ways in which the blueprint for a new society could be instituted upon. Such a process is also important as it to contribute to the process of freeing “African self-representations from Eurocentrism” [13, p. 107]. Such social philosophizing also helps us to identify the foundational assumptions that are found behind social, moral and political practice within the Ethiopian context and helps us to identify “the established metaphysics underlying the national unity” [14, p. 87]. It is a crucial step that needs to be taken in the attempt to build a new society that is founded on equity and social justice.

The article starts out by discussing the historical development of modern philosophy in Ethiopia. This section identifies the different approaches to assigning a social function to philosophy within the Ethiopian context. This is followed by a discussion of the need to situate social philosophizing within the Ethiopian soil. It is shown that philosophy in Ethiopia needs to be situated within a contested intellectual terrain defined by a spirit of cultural coexistence, a failed project of modernity, a complex process of state building and ethnic federalism, the need to understand the complex relations between religion and modernity and the attempt to unearth the value of indigenous knowledge. Such a discussion is followed by the section discussing the two-fold function of philosophy in Ethiopia in terms of the process of identity formation and the emergence of an emancipatory impulse. The last section identifies concrete proposals that need to be implemented to realize the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia.

2. Historical Development of Modern Philosophy in Ethiopia

The introduction of modern philosophy in Ethiopia is situated within the context of the relations that were established between Ethiopians and Europeans in the world of cultural contact and missionary discourse. Claude Sumner in particular situated the emergence of modern philosophy in Ethiopia in the hatatas of Zera yaeqob and Welda Heywat which are philosophical treatise that emerged in response to religious disputes in modern Ethiopia [15, p. 135]. Such an argument that is developed by Sumner was criticized by those like Anais Wion who argued that the hatatas are not produced by Ethiopians and that they situated as part of an Italian missionary discourse [16, p. 2]. Leaving aside the debate on when and where did modern philosophy in Ethiopian originated, one can still affirm that the opening of a philosophy department in author's institute played a huge role

in the popularization of philosophy in the Ethiopian context. Under such an institutional context, different social functions were assigned to philosophy and such functions mirror the ideological visions of successive Ethiopian regimes.

During the time of the imperial regime, philosophy in Ethiopia was developed under the idea of striving for a universal knowledge and it was mainly dictated by liberal ideals. Philosophy was given the task of familiarizing students with universal principles although such an exercise was concentrated in academic circles and it was far removed from the daily lives of the people. Education was introduced during such a period under a western model of modernization that had the aim of learning from the latest achievements of the western world [17, p. 270]. Such a focus on universality was replaced by the attempt to assign an ideological social function to philosophy with the coming to power of the Derg regime after the downfall of the imperial regime [18, p. 263]. The Derg specifically assigned an ideological function to philosophy and philosophy was being used as a way of inculcating the principles of Marxism-Leninism. As part of such an ideologically oriented conception of philosophy under the Derg, books that deal with Marxism-Leninism were translated and a new curriculum that concentrated on a socialist political economy was introduced. Even during such a period, those like Sumner tried to engage in a comparative philosophical exercise that has the goal of unearthing the different sources of Ethiopian philosophy.

In terms of delineating the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia, after the downfall of the Derg and the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a new curriculum that was mainly dictated by continental philosophy was introduced. Just like the previous regimes, the new rule also assigned a specific social function for philosophy. Philosophy in such a context was seen as a way of realizing societal progress and development. In a period that was dominated by the theme of development, attempts were being made to show how philosophy can contribute to the realization of development. Among other things, interpretations of the ideas of EgualeGebreyohannes and the hatatas were made having the aim of showing the role that is played by philosophy in realizing social progress through education and inculcating the idea of cultural coexistence [19, p. 105]. Under such an intellectual climate there was a relatively larger space that was given for a public engagement with philosophy and works by Messay Kebede, Andreas Eshete and MaimireMennasemay emerged trying to explain the nature of modernity and Ethiopia's contemporary predicaments from the perspective of a philosophy that is situated within the continental tradition.

In looking at the development modern philosophy in Ethiopia under different periods, one can argue that it has not been able to play a social function that contributes to societal progress because of a number of reasons. First of all, during different historical periods, attempts were made by the state to assign an ideological function to philosophy and as a result of this; no profound philosophical discourse that is able to develop a conception of rational practice that is able to reflect on the foundations of society emerged. During the time of the imperial regime, the social roles of any discipline including philosophy was seen in terms of the realization of western modernization that is expressed in the introduction of an instrumental form of modernization [20, p. 95], while the Derg in return, had the goal of using philosophy as a way of spreading Marxism-Leninism. Such an act of assigning an ideological function to philosophy also persisted during the EPRDF regime where the theme of development dominated the social role of philosophy in

Ethiopia. Modern philosophy in Ethiopia as such did not develop within a vibrant intellectual environment where different ideas were being freely contested and on the contrary, it was developed under the tutelage of a repressive political environment that stood against the freedom of speech. In its experimentation with different ideologically assigned motifs, philosophy has not been able so far to play a profound social function in the life of the community in the Ethiopian context.

Separating philosophy from ideological visions that are dictated by state ideology, there is a need to identify a new social function for philosophy in Ethiopia. The agendas that are discussed by philosophers need to be separated from the attempt to develop an ideological justification of the Ethiopian state [21, p. 117]. Besides freeing philosophy from the claws of state ideology, there is a need to introduce a conception of an Ethiopian philosophy that is not trapped within the pitfalls of cultural revivalism, intellectual sophism and a politicized debate on decolonization and African philosophy. Based on works of Sumner who has carried out an extensive research into the existence of classical written Ethiopian philosophy, attempts have been made to set the Ethiopian past as the foundation of all philosophical inquiry [22, p. 47]. Still, such an attempt is not able to overcome the problems of authorship and is trapped within nostalgia for the past.

Equally attempts are being made to reduce philosophy into a commodity that is being sold to the masses as a quick fix. Still, such sophism does not have the capacity of introducing a socially grounded philosophical practice within the Ethiopian context. Moreover, Ethiopian philosophy should not be trapped inside a debate on the existence of African philosophy and the usage of philosophy as a way of refuting the colonial paradigm as this only culminates in performative contradiction. What is needed is a two-folded conception of Ethiopian philosophy that takes the contradictions that arise within the process of modern Ethiopian state building as its material for reflection and sets identify formation and the development of an emancipatory impulse as the two major areas of occupation that emerge in the attempt to assign a social function for philosophy in Ethiopia.

3. Situating Social Philosophizing in Ethiopia

In the attempt to identify the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia, there is a need to identify the object of analysis that can serve as a material for reflection. The different attempts that have been made so far in order to situate philosophical practice within the Ethiopian soil have mainly taken the form of trying to demonstrate the existence of a unique philosophical tradition within the Ethiopian context [23, p. 280]. This led into the development of comparative exercises that are by motivated by the need to identify the similarities that are found between Ethiopian and western conceptions of philosophy [24, p. 3]. The limitation of such an effort is found on the fact that it does not have the ability of laying the foundations for a philosophical analysis that is rooted within the life of the people. Taking this into consideration, there is a need to introduce a conception of Ethiopian philosophy that is grounded within the contradictions and the predicaments that are being faced by Ethiopians at the current stage. The study of the social functions of philosophy in Ethiopia needs to be grounded on a proper historical consciousness and the identification of the parameters within which the contemporary political landscape is founded on. Thus, to develop a socially engaged conception of philosophy in Ethiopia, there are five main areas that serve as a point of reflection.

The first area that serves as a material for reflection in the attempt to identify the social functions of philosophy in the Ethiopian context deals with the philosophical investigation of cultural coexistence. Ethiopia is a nation that is defined by the fact of cultural diversity and this has served as a major challenge behind the process of state building and the fabric of the relations that are being established among individual citizens [25, p. 53]. Through the development of a philosophical engagement with the nature of cultural diversity and the limits of mutual understanding, one can use philosophy as a way of understanding the ways within which relations of mutual dialogue could be developed among different cultures. Such a philosophical exercise could be grounded on the concepts of centrism, dialogue and polylogue that are taken from intercultural philosophy [26, p. 46]. So far the celebration of cultural differences was being utilized for ideological functions and there is a need to introduce a philosophical analysis of cultural relations in reference to the limits of a political system that is grounded on ethnic identities.

The second area that also provides a material for reflection in the attempt to determine the social functions of philosophy within the Ethiopian context deals an analysis of the issue of modernity. The nature of modernity within the Ethiopian context so far has been associated with the attempt to learn from the scientific and the technological advances of the western world [27, p.111]. The discourse so far been dominated by the attempt to emulate western values as a foundation of social progress [28, p. 93]. As a result of this, there is a lack of an intellectual deliberation on the issue of modernity that emerged in response to the problems that Ethiopians faced as a society and is grounded on conceptions of subjectivity that are situated in the Ethiopian soil. Through the development of a philosophical analysis of the concept of modernity, one can actually develop a discourse that is attentive enough towards indigenous traditions. Such an exercise is also important in terms of freeing Ethiopians from a dependence on western modernity and delineating a unique path towards social progress.

The third issue that invites a philosophical reflection in the Ethiopian context deals with the process of state building and the limits of the system of ethnic federalism that has been introduced as a way of addressing the quest for recognition. The process of state formation in modern Ethiopia has served as a site of contestation and led into the emergence of a discourse on political modernization that is being led by the pan-Ethiopian camp on one hand and the ethno-nationalist camp on the other hand [29, p. 610]. The centre of contention among such camps is the debate on the processes that gave birth to the modern Ethiopian state and the nature of the political system that is needed in order to address the quest for recognition. Currently, the nation is experimenting with a system of ethnic federalism although this system is criticized for multiplying differences and causing ethnic conflicts and displacements [30, p. 115]. The discussion of the process of state building and ethnic federalism has implications for the discussion of interethnic relations, political representation and social cohesion. Looking at such an importance, there is a need to engage in the development of a socially embedded practice of philosophy in Ethiopia that is able to make sense of the limits of the system of ethnic federalism and the anomalies of the process of state building.

Fourthly, a reflection on the relationship that is found between religion and modernity serves as an object of analysis in the attempt to identify the social functions of philosophy in Ethiopia. Historically, relations among the members of different religions in Ethiopia were characterized by relations of peace and conflict and this has led into the

emergence of a moral fabric that is able to bestow a sense of a common identity on the lives of individual citizens [31, p. 484]. This has been radically altered at the current stage as one sees the politicization of religion [32, p. 255]. Furthermore, one of the things that are lacking in the Ethiopian context is a discussion of the role that has been played by religion in the process of modernization. there is a need to engage in an analysis that has the aim of understanding the relationship between the religions and the public spheres and identify the role that has been played by the greatest religions in the modernization of the society as seen in different areas like the process of state building and the development of ethical norms and values.

Fifthly, a possible reflection on the nature and the value of indigenous knowledge and local traditions can also serve as an object of philosophical reflection in the attempt to develop a conception of a socially situated form of philosophizing within the Ethiopian context. Although, there is a consensus that there are rich indigenous knowledge traditions within the Ethiopian context, still such a stock of knowledge has not been integrated into the process of societal modernization [33, p. 3]. Furthermore, the indigenous knowledge systems are being studied by a framework that is being dictated by Eurocentric categories and thus led into the relegation of indigenous knowledge into the lower status tradition [34, p. 89]. Taking this into consideration, there is a need to develop an examination of the local knowledge systems with an aim of determining their value in the current context. This can also be carried out in a form of a reflection on the nature of cultural heritage and the challenge that is being presented by western modernity on indigenous knowledge systems. As such, the five main areas of cultural coexistence, modernity, state building and ethnic federalism, religion and modernity and indigenous knowledge can serve as an object of analysis that a socially conscious conception of philosophy could be developed within.

4. The Two-Folded Conception of Philosophy in Ethiopia

After identifying the objects of analysis that philosophical practice in Ethiopia could be developed within, there is a need to identify the utility of such an exercise by delving into the fabric of daily human relations. In the contemporary stage, there are two main social functions that philosophy could fulfil within the Ethiopian context. Such areas of engagement are of a greater importance in the attempt to develop a historically rooted conception of Ethiopian philosophy that also has the potential of addressing the predicaments that the society is dealing with. Such functions of philosophy in Ethiopia need to be identified as identity formation and the development of an emancipatory impulse. Such functions of philosophy represent crucial areas of engagement because of three main reasons.

First of all, developing a socially situated Ethiopian philosophy that deals with identity formation and the cultivation of the emancipatory desire is important as it helps us address the challenges that are currently being faced by the Ethiopian nation. In a nation that is characterized by ethnic conflicts, the lack of a democratic culture and economic development [35, p. 85], philosophy needs to play a constructive role and such a role can be situated in terms of the development of a commonly shared sense of identity. It also plays a role in the construction of a conception of subjectivity or human existence that strives for freedom and liberty. Secondly, such social functions allow us to liberate philosophy from ideological functions that are directly being imposed by the government. Philosophy in Ethiopia needs to be cultivated as a reflexive social practice that is able to serve a social

function and for this to be realized, it needs to be freed from ideological visions of the status quo. Thirdly and most importantly, dealing with the issues of identity formation and the cultivation of an emancipatory impulse allow us to develop a diagnosis of society's problems and also the envisioning of a new society that is being situated at the end goal of an emancipatory practice that is being developed by Ethiopians who are resisting oppressive structures. So, what are the components of identity formation and emancipatory impulse that are developed under the two-fold conception of Ethiopian philosophy?

The first aspect of the two-fold function of philosophy in Ethiopia deals with the nature of identity formation. Ethiopia is a nation that is defined by the existence of diversity and a rich cultural heritage [36, p. 1]. Still such linguistic and ethnic diversity did not lead into the realization of societal progress and inclusiveness. On the contrary, it is leading into ethnic conflicts that are causing the fragmentation of the state [37, p. 13]. In such a context, philosophy can play a constructive role in the Ethiopian soil by developing a rational engagement with the question of identity. This is an important step in the development of a commonly shared conception of identity. It allows us to develop a philosophical examination of the sources of the conflicts among different groups and develop a new conception of identity that is able to go beyond ethnic, religious and linguistic divisions. Philosophy plays a huge role in such a context since it gives us a platform through which we are able to reflect on the sources of ethnic conflicts in the Ethiopian context.

Philosophy can reflect on the nature and the pitfalls of ethnic politics in the Ethiopian context by examining the historical, the normative and the social aspects of identities, the factors that are leading into the conflict and the ways in which a shared sense of identity could be developed within. It also allows us to identify the existence of a commonly shared sense of identity and also the limits of cultural understanding and translation. It also allows us to identify the shared structural patterns among different groups that is being expressed in the form of a surplus history [38, p. 17]. In terms of understanding the essence of identity formation, philosophy also plays the role of developing a public sphere that serves as a ground through which ideas are being debated among different forms of identities. By the understanding of the ways in which identities are being historically constricted, philosophy can help us to develop a new culture of tolerance and accommodation among different forms of identities that can serve as a foundation of a spirit of forgiveness and societal reconciliation [39, p. 120]. Societal reconciliation can serve as the end result of the philosophical examination of the nature of identity, human values and power relations within the Ethiopian context.

The second aspect of the social function of philosophy within the Ethiopian soil deals with the development of an emancipatory impulse. Such an attempt could be situated as part and parcel of the African quest for emancipation and the quest to develop a historically rooted philosophical practice that can allow us to reflect on the African sense of selfhood and also aids in the realization of the goals of decolonization [40, p. 45]. The question of emancipation and the quest to emancipate the people should occupy a central importance in the minds of Ethiopians. So far, Ethiopians have been ideologically manipulated and oppressed by different regimes that violated the basic rights of the people [41, p. 53]. Ethiopians lived under successive oppressive systems that deprive the people of their basic liberties and democratic rights in the name of modernizing the nation and meeting the goals of development [42, p. 23]. One thing that is lacking here is an Ethiopian form of subjectivity that is able to serve as a foundation of an emancipatory practice. Taking

this into consideration, there is a need to participate in the creation of an Ethiopian form of subjectivity that is able to question the status quo and simultaneously envision the dawn of a new societal order. Through the liberation of the individual from repressive regimes and from the power of conventional authority, philosophy can have a greater contribution in Ethiopia by serving as a foundation of the development of an emancipated form of subjectivity.

The role that is played by philosophy in Ethiopia in the realization of an emancipatory impulse can be seen in the development of the attitude of critical thinking [43, p. 74]. Philosophy can contribute to the creation of an emancipated Ethiopian subject by allowing for the critical examination of existing powers relations and the identification of the bounds within which human relations are being constituted within. Hand in hand with this, the development of the emancipatory impulse can be seen in the development of a new vision of a new society that is grounded on the relations of equality. Thus, philosophy can help us develop a reflection that is able to diagnose the problems of the society and also posit a vision of a new society that is founded on relations of equality.

The focus on identity formation and the development of an emancipatory impulse shows us that a socially grounded practice of philosophy that is founded on the analysis of societal predicaments could emerge within the Ethiopian context. Such an exercise is important in terms of developing a conception of cultural coexistence and the emergence of a discourse on modernity that is grounded on local realities. It is also of a greater importance in terms of addressing the anomalies of the process of state formation and the limitations of the system of ethnic federalism that Ethiopians are experimenting with [44, p. 150]. Additionally, it can also invite a renewed discussion of the relationships that are found between religion and modernity and the ways in which one is able to revitalize indigenous knowledge systems. In order to realize such a function of philosophy in Ethiopia within the life of the community, there are concrete steps that need to be taken.

5. Concrete Proposals for Implementing Philosophy's Use in Ethiopia

In order to practically realize the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia in terms of identity formation and the development of an emancipatory impulse, there are different concrete steps that need to be taken. Such steps that are related to the introduction of a curriculum that can host critical thinking and reasoning skills, the development of an interdisciplinary approach that can lead into constructive relations between philosophy and other disciplines, the participation of the community in the realization of philosophical ideals, the dissemination of knowledge and the introduction of a normative and a political reflection, can help us realize the social function of philosophy in the Ethiopian context.

One of the most important issues that need to be taken into consideration in order to realize the identity formation and the emancipatory impulse cultivation roles of philosophy in Ethiopia is the need to introduce a curriculum within the Ethiopian system of education that has the capacity of cultivating the nature of critical thinking and reasoning skills. Currently, there is the course critical thinking that is being given to all freshman students at a university level but in order to realize the full potential of philosophy in the society, there is a need to introduce philosophy at the different levels of education. Such a process contributes in the process of democratization and the creation of a citizenry that are able to critically reflect on societal predicaments [45, p. 587].

Philosophy so far has not played a greater role within the Ethiopian society since it was perceived as a discipline that is abstract and one that is far removed from the daily experiences of the people. In order to overcome such a short sighted conception of philosophy, there is a need to introduce a curriculum that is founded on the development of critical thinking and analytic skills. Furthermore, within such a curriculum, there is a need to familiarize learners about the existence of different local and foreign philosophical traditions. Furthermore, the introduction of philosophy across curriculums could be used in order to develop a reflection on the impact of colonialism on the state and to understand the multifaceted impacts of the processes of globalization on Ethiopia. As part of such a process, there is a need to introduce texts that are well balanced towards different knowledge systems. Methodologically, there is a need to use a Socratic dialogue as stimulating learners in order to develop their thinking abilities [46, p. 233]. Curriculum development as such plays a huge role in the creation of citizens that rationally reflect on their lives.

Another main concrete step that needs to be taken in order to realize the social functions of philosophy in Ethiopia in the areas of identity formation and emancipatory impulse is the introduction of a renewed relationship between philosophy and other disciplines. For this to be realized there is a need to develop an interdisciplinary approach. In order to analyze complex social problems, philosophers need to collaborate with practitioners from other disciplines [47, p. 375]. Philosophy within the Ethiopian context has so far developed in separation from other disciplines. As a result of this, studies and analysis of the contemporary problems of the Ethiopian society that have the power of approaching the issues that is being examined from different perspectives have not been introduced. Taking this into consideration, there is a need to develop a need to develop a holistic analysis of contemporary Ethiopia's predicaments through the usage of tools of analysis that are borrowed from philosophy and other areas of investigation.

Alongside the introduction of philosophy in Ethiopia across curriculums and the introduction an interdisciplinary framework, other concrete steps that need to be taken include the engagement of the community, the dissemination of philosophical knowledge into the community and the development of a normative and a political analysis into the predicaments that are being faced by the society. In terms of the realization of community engagement, there is a need to develop a philosophy that is not just confined to the academic community. The attempt to introduce philosophy to the community in Ethiopia so far has been limited since the discussions that were being discussed within the academia were far removed from the problems that were being faced by the members of the community. Taking this into consideration, there is a need to make sure that philosophical ideas are being presented in a manner that is appealing to the daily lives of the people.

Philosophical knowledge also needs to be disseminated to the masses so that it can have a profound impact on the lives of the people. Philosophical works need to be written in different languages and through the usage of modes of expression that are easily accessible to the people. Furthermore, the works of philosophy need to be disseminated through the usage of different mediums like the usage of digital platforms. Most importantly, philosophy needs to play a more prominent role in the public sphere and it needs to be situated within the lives of the people [48, p. 53]. Another major step that needs to be taken is the development of a normative and a political reflection on the issues of the day. Philosophy could make a greater contribution through the discussion of the

ethical problems and the moral dilemmas that are being faced within the society. It needs to have an impact on the development of public policies and the contestation of different conceptions of the good. It should also make a contribution in the attempt to make sense of the nature of the power dynamics as well as the development of a moral fabric that is able to confer a sense of belongingness on the members of the community. Such steps dealing with the revitalization of the role that is played by philosophy in the academic setting and the world of knowledge production, as well as through the lives of the members of the community can help us realize the social functions of philosophy in Ethiopia.

6. Conclusion

The paper situated the social function of philosophy in Ethiopia in terms of the nature of identity formation and the development of a new emancipatory impulse. Such a two-folded social function of philosophy in Ethiopia arose out of the analysis of the complex processes that gave birth to modern Ethiopian society and are currently haunting the Ethiopian state. The attempt to assign a social function for philosophy in Ethiopia is grounded on a context where there is a lack of a normative foundation that is able to serve as a source of meaning and social coordination. In such a context, philosophy could play a huge role in terms of identifying the factors that are leading into the contestation of identities and also in terms of the positing of a new shared sense of identity among individual Ethiopians that are coming from different backgrounds. The development of an emancipatory impulse was in return situated in terms of the need to resist oppressive regimes and the exposing of the asymmetrical power relations that are found within the community.

In the attempt to realize the two-folded function of philosophy in Ethiopia, there are many concrete steps that need to be taken. Such steps are ways of making sure that the discussion of the social role of philosophy in Ethiopia is not just being carried out at the theoretical level and that it is being implemented within the fabric of daily human relations. To such an extent, there is a need to introduce philosophy across curriculums and develop an analysis that is able to foster relations of learning between philosophy and other subject matters. Furthermore, there is a need to realize the participation of the community, disseminate philosophical knowledge through different mediums and engage in the analysis of ethical and political issues. In the end, for philosophy to play a positive role in Ethiopian society, there is a need to situate the analysis in the context of the problems that are being faced by the society and the ways in which very meaning of an Ethiopian identity is being contested. Philosophy allows us to provide an alternative social imaginary that can overcome contemporary Ethiopia's polarizing political space.

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