
Retrospects and Prospects of Multicultural Teacher Education in the Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia: Adama University in Focus

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to assess the retrospects and prospects of multicultural teacher education in Ethiopia in general and in Adama University in particular. A descriptive survey research method was used in the study. The subjects of the study include officials working at the various positions of the university, students of the university, and 150 teachers. The subjects were selected using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. To collect the data, questionnaire, interview, and focused-group discussions were employed. The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative approaches. Results of the study revealed that except addressing gender issues, Adama University did not practise multicultural teacher education. To help the University exercise multicultural teacher education, recommendations like arranging adequate short and long term trainings to raise the awareness of the instructors about multicultural teacher education, revising the current curricula and integrating them with multicultural education, developing a guideline for multicultural teacher education, giving multicultural teacher education as a course across departments in higher learning institutions, etc. are suggested.

Background and Rationale of the Study

The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995, p. 133) states that "...government shall have the duty to support, on the basis of equality, the growth and enrichment of cultures and traditions that are compatible with fundamental rights, democratic norms and ideas, and the provision of constitutions." Similarly, the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (1994, p. 10) states "...to provide education that promotes democratic culture, tolerance and peaceful resolutions of differences and that raises the sense of discharging societal responsibility." Moreover, the Education and Training Policy (1994, p. 29) states, "Special attention will be

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given to women and to those students who did not get educational opportunities in the preparation, distribution and use of educational support input.”

The policy, furthermore, underlines the relevance of investing in education especially in expanding and upgrading higher educational institutions to bring sustainable development in the country (TGE, 1994). This is because without adequate higher education and research institutions that provide a critical skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine indigenous and sustainable development. Without this, developing countries and the least developed countries cannot reduce the gap that separates them from the industrially developed ones (UNESCO, 1998, cited in Bedada, 2006).

Adopting the Education and Training Policy, the Ministry of Education has produced a document entitled ‘Higher Education System Overhaul (HESO)’ that outlines a reform for its tertiary education. Similar to the situation in other African countries, the objectives of the reform are to ensure equity, access, accountability, relevance, and responsiveness to the demands of the Ethiopian people (Ashcroft, 2004, cited in Tesfaye, 2006). Particularly, the reform process keeps the perspective of poverty reduction and bringing about sustainable development in the country.

Inequality of opportunities among various social groups for higher education is a serious problem in Ethiopia. The number of admissions and graduates has not been proportional to the size of population when we compare males with females, various regions, various ethnic groups, urban-rural residents, and the center with the peripheries. Usually, males, urban residents and the centers are the advantaged ones. Their participation, enrolment and graduates rates are much higher as compared to their counterparts (Habtamu, 2004). Hence, unless affirmative action is taken through practicing multicultural education, the gap among these different sectors will be widened from time to time.

Hence, the researcher believes that practicing multicultural education at all levels in general, and at the tertiary level of education in particular has considerable importance due to the following reasons. These are: 1) to minimize, if possible to avoid, in-campus students' conflict, violence, and interpersonal problems; 2) promote equality, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, cooperation among the communities of higher education institutions; 3) create an awareness that higher education institutions are melting pots where students come from different socio-cultural, economic, political backgrounds; 4) prepare students for the diverse society awaiting them in the world of work; 5) to empower females, minority groups, disadvantaged groups and people with disabilities; 6) enhance a multidisciplinary approach in today's world; 7) disseminate the idea of multiculturalism among the larger society through the graduates year after year; 8) promote the importance that higher education institutions have as role models for the other levels of education; 9) use indigenous knowledge, good values and norms to foster sustainable development; 10) ensure promotion of unity in diversity, etc.,

There are three approaches in the selection and inclusion of culture into an education system: assimilation, cultural pluralism, and multicultural education. The assimilation approach encourages one dominant culture in the society that should be adapted by the large society in the form of language, mode of clothing and others (Bank and Lynch, 1986; Baker, 1993). It does not allow the inclusion of the cultures of different ethnic groups into the education system.

The cultural pluralism emphasizes the existence of cultures of different ethnic groups that has got equality in a society regardless of self or group identification. In addition, cultural pluralism holds the view that each individual without self or group identification is given respect, dignity, freedom, and citizen rights. It supports the equality of rights of all ethnic groups in social, political, and cultural respects (Hass, 1983; Steven and Wood, 1995).

Lastly, multiculturalism is an approach that admits the inclusion of culture of different ethnic groups in curricula and teaching materials that shows a sense of equality. This approach gives due attention to both diversity and unity (Banks, 1994). According to Kottak (1994), the difference between cultural pluralism and multiculturalism is that the former advocates any sense of common traditions, values, purposes and obligations; while the latter places a value on understanding all cultures in a society, without specific political agenda.

Multiculturalism has, as one of its foundations, the ideal of equal, harmonious, mutually tolerant existence of different and diverse languages, and of religious, cultural and ethnic groups in a pluralistic society. A multicultural viewpoint is partly based on the idea that an individual can successfully hold two or more cultural identities (Baker, 1996). Moreover, multicultural education is an education that entertains the education of diversified ethnic groups thereby promoting respect for human rights, equality, mutual understanding and cooperation among people. In line with this, James (1978, p. 13) states:

Multicultural education is preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters. These realities have both national and international dimensions. This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competency for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving in differential cultural settings. Thus, multicultural education is viewed as an intervention and an ongoing assessment process to help institutions and individual become more responsive to the human condition, individual cultural integrity, and cultural pluralism in society.

To realize the goal of this multicultural education, teacher-training institutions have paramount importance. This is because these institutions can serve as

centers for promoting and disseminating multiculturalism to the larger society through their graduates year after year.

In a nutshell, in Ethiopia, even if the policy emphasizes multicultural education at all levels of education, there is suspicion that the actual practices contradict with multiculturalism as assimilation is being practiced, especially in higher learning institutions.

Hence, there is a need for research that can reveal the degree to which efforts are being made to address multiculturalism in the education system of higher learning institutions. There is also a need for research that shows strategies as to how fair representation of the different ethnic groups could be maintained in the education system of higher learning institutions. Therefore, this article attempted to assess the retrospects and prospects of multicultural teacher education in Ethiopia in general and in Adama University in particular. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to answer the following basic questions:

- To what extent does Adama University practice multicultural teacher education?
- What are the challenges (if any) that hinder the proper implementation of multicultural teacher education at Adama University?

Under these general basic questions, teachers' awareness and preferences, students' interests, guideline, and curriculum were considered to generate the relevant data.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study were to:

- assess the degree to which Adama University practices multicultural teacher education; and
- disclose the constraints (if any) faced in implementing multicultural teacher education in the university.

Significances of the Study

The findings of the study:

- can help teacher trainers to be more aware of the importance of multicultural teacher education;
- can help the MoE, regional education bureaus, and teacher-training institutions revise their rules and regulations to accommodate multicultural issues in different aspects;
- can bring the magnitude of the problem to the attention of policy makers, curriculum experts, researchers and to the public at large.
- may contribute to the attempts of the Ethiopian government to maintain equity and social justice in the country where about 80 different ethnic groups live together; and
- will contribute to the efforts being made to empower females, decrease violence, increase self-respect and respect for others, and increase graduation rates.

Other researchers can also use the results of the study as a stepping-stone for further investigations as multicultural education is one of the areas not yet well researched in Ethiopia.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study is delimited only to Adama University. As a result, the conclusion that would be drawn will not include the other universities that normally train teachers. Moreover, even though multicultural education could be seen in different perspectives, in this research, however, only the degree to which Adama University practices multiculturalism and the challenges faced in the implementation were considered.

Limitations of the Study

In the study it was very difficult to exhaustively treat all the retrospects and prospects of multicultural teacher education. What is more, only the basic components of multicultural teacher education have been touched upon.

Operational Definition of Key Terms

Multicultural Teacher Education - refers to a teacher education program which accommodates cultural diversity, ethnicity and gender issues.

Retrospect – designates the practices of multicultural teacher education from the past up to the present in the higher education institutions of Ethiopia.

Prospect – refers to the future direction of the practices of multicultural teacher education in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia on the basis of the current practices.

Review of Related Literature

Different scholars argue that bringing the desired behavioral changes in learners requires; the teaching-learning process to be based on the interests and needs of the learners. One-way to make the learning process to accommodate the wishes, interests, and aspirations of the learners is through introducing multicultural education. This is because multicultural education aims at providing education for diversified learners in which the learning process is directed towards the interests of different ethnic groups, their culture, languages, traditions, socio-economic status and so on.

In this section, aim of multicultural teacher education, curriculum of multicultural teacher education, and the roles of teacher trainers in practicing multicultural teacher education will be discussed.

Aims of Multicultural Education

Like all other disciplines, multicultural education has its own aims. According to Ramsey (1987, p. 87), the broad goals of teaching from multicultural perspectives are to:

- help children develop positive gender, racial, cultural, class, and individual identities and to recognize and accept their membership in many different groups;
- enable children to see themselves as part of the larger society; to identify, to empathize, and relate with individuals from other groups;
- foster respect and appreciation for the diverse ways in which other people live;
- encourage in young children's earliest social relationships an openness and interest in others, a willingness to include others, and a desire to cooperate;
- promote the development of a realistic awareness of contemporary society, a sense of social responsibility, and an active concern that extend beyond one's immediate family or group;
- empower children to become autonomous and critical analysts and activists in their social environment;
- support the development of educational and social skills that are needed for children to become full participants in the larger society in ways that are most appropriate to individuals styles, cultural orientations, and linguistic backgrounds; and
- promote effective and reciprocal relationships between schools and families.

Lynch (1993, p. 63) has a similar list of general aims of multicultural education.

Curriculum to be used in Multicultural Teacher Education

The curriculum of teacher education program becomes effective in a heterogeneous society, among other things, only if it addresses multicultural issues. In line with this idea, Kallen (1982), as cited in Ray & Poonwassie (1992, p. 12) says:

An important contribution to equal opportunity among complex populations may come from teacher education.... Teacher education must also address a curriculum challenge. It should contribute to an understanding of the importance of and means of achieving equal opportunity despite complex population problems. For example, the curriculum for teachers of any school would include courses providing a comprehensive notion of human society, with no sub-humans, no sub-species, and no superior breeds.

Moreover, according to Farrell (1990, p. 33), multicultural education curriculum should encourage interest in the immediate and world community, an open mind, a positive self-image, tolerance towards other people irrespective of race, gender, disability or class, a desire to see change for the better, respect for our own and other people's life styles, and an understanding of the need to cooperate and work together.

From the above quotations, one can easily understand that multicultural education is very important to bring about equity and social justice in different ways. This, in turn, helps to a large extent, to minimize ethnocentrism; the tendency of judging other community from one's perspective, believing as if one's perspective is the only 'right' way to perceive the world. According to Bennett, Hammer, and Wiseman (2003), cited in Abebaw (2007), individuals who have received monocultural socialization largely have access only to their own cultural worldview, so they are unable to understand and experience the difference between their own perception and that of people who are culturally different.

On the other hand, there is a need for a strategy to introduce multicultural education into teacher education curricula. Concerning this, Lynch (1983, pp. 44-45) suggests the following five strategies that are useful to introduce multicultural education into teacher education curricula:

1. **Parallel.** Under this tactic whole course provision is attempted at the side of other (non- multicultural) curricula;
2. **Additive.** This involves small units, modules or components added to the existing curricula in order to achieve additional knowledge or perspectives;
3. **Permeation.** This involves the internal re-articulation or redesign of the epistemology or knowledge structure of the existing courses;
4. **Materials Production Approach.** This can aim at either of the above tactics from a predominantly technical knowledge-based approach to the broader and more affective purposes and strategies; and
5. **Consultancy Approach.** This tactic is normally institutionally cooperative in the sense that ideological approach is adopted with local advisors, syndicates, teacher education tutors.

To sum up, since the curricula determine to a large extent what students are to learn, their contents should, as much as possible, address the target students' cultural backgrounds. Of course, it is difficult to accommodate every culture of the various ethnic groups in the curricula in ethno-culturally diverse nations like Ethiopia.

Roles of Teacher Educators in Practicing Multicultural Teacher Education

As mentioned earlier, teacher trainers have key roles in implementing multicultural teacher education. In line with this, Hilliard, quoted in James (1978, pp. 18-20), indicates the roles of teachers from multicultural perspectives as follows:

- the teaching process is always a cross-cultural encounter;
- the personality, values, and social background of the teacher are critical cultural inputs;
- all teaching tools are cultural bound; 4) the classroom is not a benign context but a potent matrix;
- teachers must know that students can be victims of oppressive social and economic conditions;
- teachers must understand that all minds are equally complex;
- teachers [student- teachers] must be helped to understand that the poor and racial or ethnic minorities can and actually have been able to learn at the same level as others when proper environmental support is provided;
- teachers must understand that learning is related to a sense of power over some of the forces which impinge upon our lives;
- teachers must understand how their own expectations are determining factors in building a climate of growth for students; and
- teachers must also understand intimately the culture of their students.

Training the prospective teachers with a general awareness of different cultures is essential and must precede concentration on concrete teaching strategies. Training the teachers to teach children from many cultural backgrounds exposes the teachers to a broad knowledge base (White, 1973).

Moreover, Banks (1992, pp. 91-92) states three dimensions that should be addressed by teachers when they try to respond to issues in multicultural education. These are:

1. **Content Integration** - deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and contents from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts.
2. **The Knowledge Construction Process** – deals with the extent to

which teachers help students to understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions serve as frames of references.

3. **Equity Pedagogy** – exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate academic achievements of students from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, and gender groups.

In general, understanding variations in values, communications, rational learning and problem-solving styles are particularly important for teaching culturally diverse students (Gay and Fox, 1995). Similarly, Banks (1991) quoted in Melaku (2007), says sound materials and other instructional program components are ineffective in the hands of teachers who lack the skills, attitudes, perceptions and contents and background that are said to be essential for a positive multicultural school environment. So, having ‘good’ understanding about multiculturalism helps teachers to construct sound cross-cultural relationships between educational institutions and the communities.

Research Method

In this study, descriptive survey research method was carried out. This is because the aim of the study was to survey the extent to which multiculturalism has been practiced in the university, and the challenges faced in this regard.

Sources of Data

Instructors of Adama University, selected officials and students of the University were the subjects used as data sources in this study.

Sampling Techniques

In this research, out of the 352 teachers of Adama University, 176 teachers

(50%) were selected using stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The stratified sampling technique was employed to make the number of male and female teachers proportionally represented in the sample. On the other hand, the simple random sampling technique was used to create a situation in which each teacher got an equal chance to be included in the sample.

To maintain proportional allocation of the samples from the two sexes, the total population was divided into male teachers and female teachers strata. Then, from the total population of the teachers, (i.e. 332 males and 20 females) a stratified sample of 176 teachers (i.e., 50%) was taken. Finally, 166 male teachers and 10 female teachers were drawn by simple random sampling technique. Moreover, purposive sampling technique was used to select the officials and the students included in the samples.

Instruments of Data Collection

In the study, data were gathered using three data collection instruments. These were questionnaire, interview, and focused-group discussion. Before using the tools for collecting the main data, pilot study was conducted. During the pilot, the questionnaire was administered to 15 randomly selected teachers. Then, reliability coefficients were computed using the internal consistency methods (Cronback, 1951, as cited in Ferguson and Takane, 1989). Accordingly, the reliabilities of the items dealing with the sub-scales teachers' awareness, teachers' preferences, students' interests, guidelines, and curriculum were found to be $\alpha = 0.76, 0.68, 0.86, 0.82$ and 0.64 respectively. Moreover, the reliability of the overall instrument was found out to be $\alpha = 0.75$. According to Gay (1980), if reliability coefficient is ≥ 0.50 , it can be accepted as reliable instrument. The items were, therefore, found to have good grounds to be used in collecting the relevant data for the study.

Furthermore, the items of the interview and the focused-group discussion were given to two experts in educational psychology and two experts in curriculum and instruction. As per the judgments of the experts,

amendments were made to some of the items. Some items which were found to be vague were totally discarded.

Semi-structured interview was also used to collect related additional information from 10 teachers and 15 purposely selected students.

Apart from the data gathered through the interviews, focused-group discussions were made with 12 randomly selected teachers. The focused-group discussions were conducted on the grounds that the group situation may reduce the influence of the interviewer on the research subjects by tilting the balance of power toward the group. Focused-groups emphasize the collective, rather than the individual; they foster free expression of ideas and encourage the members of the group to speak up Denzin (1996) and Frey and Fontana (1993), quoted in Bedada (2002).

Procedures of Data Collection

To collect relevant data for the study, a questionnaire consisting of relevant items was prepared. Moreover, to get additional data, semi-structured interview was used. The items of the questionnaire and the interview were designed to generate data related to the objectives of the study. Besides, the items of the questionnaire and interviews were made similar to crosscheck the responses of the subjects of the study. Then, the questionnaire was administered to 176 sample teachers. One hundred and fifty respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. To make the results of the study more valid and reliable, interview and focus group discussions were held with purposely selected officials of the University. Teachers and some deliberately selected students were also involved in the interview conducted for the purpose of the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected using the three tools were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Nevertheless, before applying chi-square (χ^2) as a method of data analysis, the results obtained from 150 teachers through the questionnaire were sorted out and tallied. Besides, in scoring the responses of the subjects, the positively and negatively stated items were sorted out and the negatively stated items were reverse-scored and assigned scores and frequency numbers accordingly. Then, chi-square was employed to determine the statistical significance of differences between proportions of responses in the groups. The five-point scale was reduced to a dichotomous scale, as the main intention of the study was to determine the extent to which Adama University practices multiculturalism, the challenges that hinder this practice, and what should its future direction look like. In so doing, the value of the neutral option, namely, that of 'no opinion' was liquidated proportionally to the disagree and agree sides (Babbie, 1995). Besides, the level of significance, in all the above cases, was determined at $p < 0.05$.

However, the data gathered using open-ended items of the questionnaire and the focus group discussions were not tabulated or computed; rather such pieces of information were used as qualitative data, and were included in the interpretations and discussions of the study.

Results and Discussions

This section presents analysis and interpretations of the data collected from different respondents and informants. Accordingly, the data gathered from the sample teachers using the questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion are presented as follows.

Table 1: Level of Multicultural Teacher Education Practices at Adama University

No.		Observed Frequency		x ²
		Disagree	Agree	
		1+2	4+5	
1	Adama University is practicing multicultural teacher education as expected in the policy.	129.03	21.49	77.10*
3	Special treatments like giving guidance and counseling services, arranging tutorial classes, etc are being made to retain students from minority groups, peripheral areas, rural areas and females in the university till graduation.	144.90	5.09	130.32*
5	When you teach your lessons, you use methods and approaches that address multiculturalism.	91.94	57.47	7.92*
7	You have attended a training to improve your awareness about multicultural teacher education.	137.63	12.90	103.72*
9	There is proper implementation of multicultural teacher education at Adama University.	141.32	8.69	117.28*
	Overall multicultural teacher education practices	644.82	105.64	436.34*

* $P < 0.05$; $df = 1$; the expected frequency for agree and disagree columns is 75 and the overall level of practice is 375; and $X^2_{crit} = X^2(1, 0.05) = 3.84$

As can be seen from Table 1, the calculated x² value of all of the items is greater than the x² critical value (1, 0.05) which is 3.84. The description of each of the items is presented as follows.

In Table 1, the first item deals with whether Adama University is practicing multicultural teacher education as expected in the policy. Regarding this, the

chi-square calculated value (77.10) is greater than the chi-square critical value (1, 0.05), which is 3.84. As can be seen from the table, the magnitude and direction of the difference indicate that Adama University is not practicing multicultural teacher education as expected in the policy.

Table 1 also shows the degree to which Adama University makes special treatments like giving guidance and counseling service, arranging tutorial classes, etc., to retain students from minority groups, peripheral areas, rural areas, females etc., in the university. Concerning this, the calculated x^2 value is 130.32. As compared to the x^2 critical value (1, 0.05) which is 3.84, it is by far greater which indicates that the university is not making special treatments to retain students who need such treatments.

In the same way, the table presents the extent to which Adama University teachers teach using methods and approaches that address multiculturalism. In this regard, the calculated x^2 value (7.92) is greater than the chi-square critical value (1, 0.05) = 3.84. Hence, most of the teachers are not using methods and approaches that address multiculturalism in their lessons.

The table also depicts whether Adama University teachers have attended any training to improve their awareness about multicultural teacher education. In this regard, the x^2 calculated value (103.72) by far exceeds the x^2 critical value (1, 0.05) that is 3.84. Therefore, the magnitude and direction of the difference show that the majority of Adama University teachers have not attended training on multicultural teacher education.

As shown in Table 1, the last item is related to whether there is a proper implementation of multicultural teacher education at Adama University. Concerning this, the x^2 calculated value (117.28) is greater than the x^2 table value (1, 0.05) that is 3.84. Hence, there is no proper implementation of multicultural teacher education at the University.

In general, as regards the overall status of multicultural teacher education practices at Adama University, the calculated value of x^2 is 436.34.

Compared to the χ^2 critical value (at 1, 0.05 =3.84), it is by far greater, and this which indicates that there is very little multicultural teacher education practice at Adama University.

In response to one of the open-ended items in the questionnaire which reads: 'how do you judge the practices of multicultural teacher education at Adama University?' most of the respondents replied that the level of practices of multicultural teacher education at the university is very low. The factors they mentioned to be responsible for the low practices were inadequate support from administrators, teachers' indifference to diversity issues existence of inadequate services and support from the gender office and the guidance and counseling office of the university, absence of platform for the University community to share experience about tolerance, respect, mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence, unity in diversity and other related factors.

To get additional information about the status of multicultural education practices at the University, an interview was held with 10 randomly selected teachers. The interview data indicate that multicultural teacher education is not practiced in Adama University. The respondents said that there were only few attempts (such as forming gender-related clubs) to address gender issues. Beyond this, the interview respondents seemed to hold the opinion that addressing difference students at the classroom level is time-consuming. They also said that addressing such dedicated issues required special training.

Moreover, during the focused-group discussions, almost all of the informants said that multicultural teacher education is a noble idea for the community of the university. They, further, said multicultural teachers education is a new concept around which awareness raising efforts need to be made.

Not many studies conducted on practices of multicultural teacher education in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia, appear to be available. However, below is a report of some of the studies conducted on multiculturalism in the local context.

A study conducted by Abebaw (2007) on the treatment of diversity within Awra Amba community revealed that there is a positive diversity (age and gender) treatment. There are no discriminations or biases based on age and gender. Every person is respected for being a human being. Females are equal to males. Work is assigned based on ability rather than age and gender. In this regard there is a similarity between the findings of Abebaw's research and the results of this study.

Since 1992 the Ministry of Education has been providing female students with special admission opportunities to higher education institutions through the implementation of affirmative action. The admission requirement for female students is lower than that of male students by 0.2 (Meron, 1998 as cited in Tariku, 2007). Besides, the annual orientation program for all first-year female students, female-only tutorials, special counseling, academic guidance, and special material support for female students are some of the institution-based affirmative action programs. This provision shows that affirmative action and equal opportunity policies in university admission are positive and crucial step towards closing gender gap in higher education (Tariku, 2007).

However, the findings of the studies conducted by Habtamu (2004) and Tesfaye (2006) on gender issues in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia showed that the efforts made regarding gender equity in higher learning institutions were still at infant stage. They recommended further studies to be conducted in higher learning institution to catch up with what is expected in the government policy. It is true that affirmative action program has increased the enrolment of female students in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, it seems there is a need for more endeavor to scale up the number than exerting an effort on creating hospitable environment in higher institutions to enhance female students' retention and achievement rate (Tariku, 2007).

During the interview held with students, the respondents revealed that most of the teacher educators in the University focused on teaching the courses rather than entertaining differences which exist among the students. The

respondents further said that almost all of the teacher educators focused on covering course contents without giving attention to the differences between the learning styles of the different students. The interview respondents also said that literacy related to students social, political, academic, etc. back ground not seem to be attracting the teachers' attention at the University.

To make things worse, the teacher educators judged the performances of the diverse students using the same yardstick, without giving the appropriate guidance and support to deserving students in the University. In short, the interviewees are of the opinion that multicultural education practices in the university is at a very rudimentary level.

Table 2: Challenges to Multicultural Teacher Education Practices at Adama University

No.		Observed Frequency		x ²
		Disagree	Agree	
		1+2	4+5	
2	Adama University has failed to practice multicultural teacher education due to lack of awareness.	48.95	101.06	18.10*
4	The courses you teach make you not to use multicultural way of training teachers.	24.99	125.01	66.70*
6	Absence of guideline is one of the factors that make teachers of Adama University not to use multiculturalism.	32.19	117.24	48.23*
8	Adama University teachers have failed to practice multiculturalism due to students' lack of interest.	112.04	37.35	37.19*
10	You know about multicultural teacher education, but you do not want to practice it as you prefer to teach the way you used to teach.	120.69	28.74	56.36*
11	Overall challenges to multicultural teacher education practices at Adama University	338.86	409.40	226.58*

* $P < 0.05$; $df = 1$; the expected frequency for agree and disagree columns is 75 and that of the overall level of practice is 375; and $X^2_{crit} = \chi^2(1, 0.05) = 3.84$

As shown in Table 2, the χ^2 calculated values of all the items are greater than the chi-square critical value (1, 0.05) that is 3.84. The first item in the table states whether Adama University has failed to practice multicultural teacher education due to the teachers' lack of awareness about it. Concerning this, the χ^2 calculated value (18.10) is greater than the χ^2 table value (1, 0.05 = 3.84). Hence, based on the magnitude and direction of the difference, it can be concluded that teachers' lack of awareness was one of the factors that prohibit Adama University to practice multicultural teacher education.

Concerning awareness about multicultural teacher education, one of the open-ended items in the questionnaire asked if the respondents have ever attended a training which focuses on multicultural teacher education. Almost all of the respondents said that they have not attended any training that emphasizes issues of multiculturalism. Another item is the open-ended questionnaire was designed to see if the respondents have ever made any effort to treat trainees who are from peripheral areas, minority groups and students with disabilities in any different way. Almost all of the respondents reported that there was no such special support for students in need.

Moreover, among the 10 interviewed teachers, 8 of them said that the main reason why Adama University teachers did not practise multicultural teacher education is their lack of awareness about the importance of multicultural education. Lack of encouragement and support from the administrators of the university and the Ministry of Education was also mentioned as another reason for Adama University's academic staff failure to practice multicultural teacher education. The data obtained during focused-group discussion also agrees with the interview data.

Table 2 also demonstrates the extent to which the courses given at Adama University allow multicultural practices. In line with this, the χ^2 calculated value is 66.70. This indicates that the curricula being taught by the teachers are one of the factors that hinder the teachers from using multicultural teacher education in their respective classrooms. Towards this, all of the

interviewed teachers (100%) also said that the curriculum in use is one of the factors that hinder them from practicing multiculturalism in their lessons. Moreover, through the focused-group discussion, it was found that the curricula in use were not prepared in a way that enables them to accommodate differences in the teaching-learning process. The interviewees also added that absence of multicultural elements in the existing curricula has made it difficult for items to practice that hindered that cross-cultural education in the University.

Abebaw (2007) also found that the curriculum prepared for the Awra Amba Primary School was one of the challenges that inhibit the practices of multicultural education in the area. The curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education does not represent all variations of the society. Because of this, it does not meet the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economic needs of different communities (Sahin, 2003). This implies that designing the curriculum based on the real context of the community it serves very vital.

Table 2 also presents whether absence of guideline is one of the reasons that prohibit Adama University teachers from using multicultural teacher education. Regarding this, the χ^2 calculated value is 48.23, which is again greater than the table value (1, 0.05 = 3.84). Based on the above results, it can be said that lack of a clear model or guideline on the practice of multicultural teacher education is one of the reasons that hinder Adama University from practising multiculturalism in training teachers. In connection with the need for guidelines, the respondents noted that if multiculturalism is wished to be practiced by teacher educators in the University, a guideline which serves as a benchmark for all teachers should be prepared through the collaborative efforts of the stakeholders.

Data obtained from the interview held with the 10 teacher educators also supports the questionnaire data related to the need for guidelines that might serve as a framework for preparing and presenting lessons in ways which address diversity. Similarly, during the focused-group discussion, the

teacher educators stressed that lack of clear-cut model is one of the factors which discourage them from practicing multiculturalism in their respective courses.

Table 2 illustrates whether students' lack of interest contribute to minimal practice of multicultural teacher education in Adama University. In this connection, the χ^2 calculated value (37.19) is greater than the χ^2 table value (1, 0.05=3.84). But, the magnitude and direction of the difference clearly show that students' interest has no significant impact on the teachers' practice of multicultural teacher education at Adama University. Moreover, to see the extent to which students have the interest to learn through multicultural practice and to cross-check the responses of the teachers' collected through questionnaire, interview was made with 15 randomly selected students. All the interviewed students said that they had interest to learn multiculturalism. They said that they had already got some insights about multiculture in the lower grades through the courses they learned in general and civic and ethical education courses in particular.

Table 2, moreover, examines whether Adama University teachers' preference has a bearing on their multicultural teacher education practice. The χ^2 calculated value is 56.36, which is by far greater than the χ^2 table value at (1, 0.05=3.84). This means that the magnitude and direction of the difference clearly show that teachers' preference has no significant impact on the practice of multicultural teacher education at Adama University. This means that, teachers of the university do not intentionally avoid practices of multiculturalism.

Generally, as can be observed from Table 2, the χ^2 calculated values of the overall challenges to multicultural teacher education practices at Adama University is 226.58 which is greater than the χ^2 table value (1, 0.05 = 3.84). This apparently shows that teachers' lack of awareness, problems related with the curriculum, and lack of guideline are the major factors that would not allow Adama University to practice multicultural teacher education. However, students' interests and teachers' preferences have no significant impacts on the teachers' practice.

Conclusion

After analyzing and interpreting the data, the following results were obtained:

1. Adama University, other than a limited aspect of gender issues, did not practise multicultural teacher education. It has also been noted out that the University did not give special treatments like guidance and counseling services. There were also no tutorial classes and arrangement of training programs which focus on self-concept, assertiveness, study skills, life skills, and the like for trainees from minority groups, peripheral areas, etc. to retain them in the university until they complete their studies.
2. Teachers' lack of awareness about multicultural teacher education, lack of guideline on multicultural teacher education and problems related with the curriculum were the major challenges that hinder the practices of multiculturalism at Adama University.

In general, from the results obtained, it can be concluded that the status of the implementation of multicultural teacher education at Adama University is very low. The factors that attribute to this low practice were lack of awareness, absence of guidelines and inappropriateness of the existing curriculum to practice multiculturalism. Factors like teachers' preferences and students' interests were found to have no significant impacts on the teachers' practice of multicultural teacher education at the university. This has implications for policy makers, curriculum experts, researchers, consultants, and the public at large.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. To help Adama University to practise multicultural teacher education to extent stipulated in the policy, teachers' awareness should be promoted so as to make them culturally responsive teachers. To this end, adequate short and long term trainings which focus on multicultural teacher education should be given to the teachers.
2. To the curriculum in use should be revised by the responsible bodies like the Ministry of Education, universities, researchers, domestic and foreign consultants and other stakeholders in collaborative way. Fundamental aspects of multicultural education need to be incorporated.
3. To alleviate the problem of lack of guideline, responsible bodies such as the Ministry of Capacity Building, Ministry of Education, universities and other stakeholders should work hand-in-hand, and develop a sound model which serves as a benchmark for planning, developing and implementing multicultural-based teacher education program in the higher education institutions of Ethiopia. Moreover, to bring a sustainable improvement in the status of multicultural teacher education, an attempt should be made to design and offer multicultural education as a course across all departments in higher educational institutions in general and in teacher training institutions in particular.
4. To retain students who are from minority groups, peripheral regions, rural areas, female students and students with disabilities in the university, special treatments like giving guidance and counseling services, arranging tutorial classes, giving trainings which focus on self-concept, assertiveness, social life, etc., should be accomplished by Adama University.

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