

# Innovations

## Academic Staffs Engagement to the Implementation of Multicultural Education Dimensions at Hawassa College of Education, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

*The study aimed to investigate the engagement of academic staffs in practicing multicultural education dimensions at Hawassa College of Education at Sidama region. A qualitative case study research was used, and data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The findings revealed that academic staffs' engagement in using MCE dimensions was not actively affirmed, hindering their capacity to apply knowledge and create awareness of accommodating differences in classrooms. Descriptively; although an endeavor made by academic staffs to implement the fundamentals of MCE: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structures as part of their lesson design, the results found that quite a lot remains to come to the level we want. Lack of motivation, insufficient orientation from the College's deans and a deficiency in instructional plans and context-based curriculum materials were identified as barriers. The policy-practice gap and the need for knowledge formation, skill development training, and research studies were highlighted as crucial areas for improvement. The study recommended that the MoE, Regional Education Bureau, and The Hawassa Education College critically address these gaps and enhance teachers' endeavors in applying MCE perspectives effectively in culturally diverse classrooms to meet learners' needs and achieve principles and intended goals of MCE.*

**Keywords:** Academic Staffs, Dimensions of MCE, Engagement, Education College, MCE, Equity Pedagogy, Hawassa CE

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## 1. Introduction

Education is an intentional process that operates on both conscious and unconscious levels. It encompasses psychological, sociological, scientific, and philosophical dimensions, with the purpose of nurturing individuals to reach their utmost potential while simultaneously facilitating the comprehensive progress of society. The ultimate objective is to create a state of contentment and prosperity for both individuals and society as a collective entity (Ornstein & Levine, 2008). The essential elements in the educative process are a creative mind, a well-integrated self, socially useful purposes and experience related to the interests of the individual, needs and abilities of the individual as well as a social group (Dash, 2015). Being solely focused on educating learners, consciously designed educational institutions (EIs) provide a unique environment that caters to the formative period of human life (Dewey, 1977). As education is a fundamental human right and a means to other basic needs, the EIs should accommodate the learners' differences and cultural diversities in their environment. The EIs as formal social agencies should be ready to accept learners' natural character and values and greatly respect and appreciate the pluralistic approaches based on the philosophy of MCE (Banks, 2010).

At present, the topic of multiculturalism (MC) and MCE has emerged as a significant priority for the United Nations (UN), governments worldwide, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These entities have collectively endorsed and ratified various international declarations and conventions, aiming to promote MCE. The objective is to foster an environment that recognizes respects, acknowledges, and appreciates the diverse range of ethnicities and cultures within EIs (UNESCO, 2003; Banks, 2010). Upon this, it is described that the demographics of the population of the United States are changing dramatically because the change presents an ever-increasing challenge to education providers as no group needs to understand the differences among students. The need for teachers to understand and involve to the racial, cultural and socio-economic background of the students in their classroom cannot be overstated (Banks, 2010). Multicultural teaching is attuned to MC in the educational context and encompasses the consideration of diversities by incorporating MC into teaching approaches. In practice, however, the emphasis is not placed on delivering specialized formal teaching tailored to each specific cultural population (Basbay & Kagnici, 2011).

Literature in the area of MCE reiterate that culturally responsive teaching with new paradigms of competent instructional action, such as responsive teaching, though not sufficient, is the great start to multicultural awareness. Thus, teachers must have the moral courage and the will to stay the course in efforts to make the educational enterprise more multicultural responsive (Gay, 2000). Multicultural awareness for teachers means establishing parent communication of all cultures they need to realize that all parents send their children to EIs expecting them to be educated and improved because they care about them. Examining whether or not the professional teachers have been actively involving on the actual practice of MC, dimensions of MCE, and gender responsive teaching approach should help students to develop a balance of cultural, national, and global identifications because of rich diversity (Pedersen, 2007). One of the major problems, however, facing teachers in EIs was the lack of cultural awareness and exciting cultural differences in the classroom (Egne, 2015). It is suggested that classroom activities should be constructed to instruct as well as to enhance all students' self-esteem. No matter how small (great) the accomplishment, teachers should teach each student in the same manner, expecting only the best from him/her because when instruction is consistent, negative results were practically nonexistent (Banks, 2008). To this end, teachers' self-motivation and professional commitment to efficiently implement the dimensions of MCE in a multicultural classroom setting is critical and irreplaceable.

If teachers are pedagogically, psychologically, and sociologically fit to provide education for all diverse students equally and actively involve addressing their specific learning needs through the use of the core MCE aspects, students' educational achievement and success in life can be considerable. That is, when education policy and/or its curriculum design is constructed, delegated, and managed in such a way, the issue of

national integrity, tolerance, equality, equity, and social justice among diverse students or communities will be shaped progressively in their context. The reason for this is that (Smith, 2009) the success or failure of MCE depends on the effective preparation of teachers and administrators. The fundamental dimensions of MCE- content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure should be carefully applied in the teaching-learning process incorporating multicultural elements to satisfy varied needs of students with differences and diversities (Banks, 2001).

Diversity in culture, language, religion, beliefs, customs, ethnic background and living status are normal occurrence, teachers should develop consideration and tolerance towards differences of learners in the classrooms of CEs. Banks (2010) adds that cultural diversity and differences are natural conditions to human beings so that teachers should advocate these effectively and efficiently; and strive to realize and implement the philosophy of MCE in EIs. In this regard, Ministry of Education of Ethiopia states that Ethiopia is one of the multicultural countries in Africa with more than 80 languages having a good opportunity to celebrate and enjoy all the cultural diversities without any discrimination (MOE, 2002). A significant attention has been given during this time to rise of economic and social infrastructure and promoting pro-poor spending on education, health, and international diplomatic aspects with other world is securing quality education and promoting MCE for all citizens (Egne, 2015). However, numerous literary works emphasize that racism, marginalization, discrimination, and segregation based on factors such as race, poverty, economic disparity, and political dominance continue to persist as global issues, including in Africa and Ethiopia.

Consequently, the implementation of MCE dimensions encounters significant challenges, leading to a sense of hopelessness, particularly among teachers worldwide (Beswick, 1990). Coincidentally, it has been reported that there found imbalance as serious challenge between what was dictated in the ETP of Ethiopia about MCE and its actual practice in EIs at grass-root level (Egne, 2015). In Ethiopia the major contribution of teachers on implementing and the act of carrying out research in the field of MC and MCE at all level of EIs lacked deep considerations. It was so proved that yet now there is no sufficient conduction of scientific research study to explore whether and how the Ethiopian EIs Curriculum and Practice effectively treat MCE (Egne, 2015). Despite the increasing global attention to the topic, including in Ethiopia with its diverse society in Africa, the dimensions of MCE have not yet been thoroughly studied in EIs within our country. Therefore, the researchers were driven by the motivation to conduct a qualitative case study research at Hawassa CE in Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia, aiming to address the identified knowledge and content gaps and contribute to the existing literature on this subject.

The researchers firmly believe that this study will contribute to a better understanding of how to optimize teachers' engagement in CEs to effectively implement the fundamental dimensions of MCE. In pursuit of addressing the study's problem, the investigators have posed the following key research questions:

- How does the academic staff engage on the implementation of MCE dimensions at Hawassa CE in the Sidama region?
- In what manner are teachers committed to fostering the implementation of MCE dimensions at Hawassa CE in the Sidama region?
- How do the strategies employed by teachers in Hawassa CE make a difference in implementing the dimensions of MCE in the Sidama region?

By exploring these research questions, the study aims to shed light on the relationship between teachers' involvement and the practice of MCE dimensions, as well as the level of commitment among teachers to foster the implementation of MCE. Additionally, the study seeks to understand how the strategies employed by teachers in Hawassa CE contribute to the effective implementation of MCE in the Sidama region.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. The Origins and Contributions of Multicultural Education

Since the 1950s North American countries have been using the concept multicultural competence comprising four components: awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes whereas in the late 1960s Western European countries have focused on MC (Pedersen, 2007). In view of this, cultural competence is strongly related to culture that can be seen as a frame of reference for each individual perception of the world since culture influences traditions, beliefs, experience, education and social status. Multicultural competence then implies having the ability to recognize different cultures, understand their values and appreciate differences (Johansson, 2006). As a new phenomenon, MCE was originated in the USA in the 1960s when the people of the United States were forced to re-examine their cultural heritage in order to address the educational needs of a society that continues to struggle with the overt and covert national conflict about race, ethnicity, social class, and gender as a result of the imbalance of power between the dominant culture and other subjugated cultures. The debate on the discourse and practice of MCE then has been an effort to mine the possibilities of plurality through education (Banks, 2001).

The concept MCE thus appeared as a critical point of discussion involving various intellectuals and researchers; and gained attentions by the emergence of a body of scholarship on MCE by progressive education activists and researchers (Gorski, 2006 & Banks, 2001). On the ground of this dialogue, currently, MCE is meant different things to different people, even though the differences are not as great, confusing, and contradictory. Some definitions MCE rely on the cultural characteristics of diverse groups, while others emphasize social problems, political power, and the reallocation of economic resources. Some restrict their focus to people of color, while others include all major groups that are different in any way from mainstream Americans; and still others provide directions for school reform in all settings regardless of their characteristics (Banks, 2001 & Gorski, 2006). In spite of this fact, Banks & Banks (2010) put some of the most frequently used definitions of MCE as it is a philosophy that stresses the importance, legitimacy, & vitality of ethnic & cultural diversity in shaping the lives of individuals, groups, & nations; a reform movement that changes all components of the educational enterprise, including its underlying values, procedural rules, curricula, instructional materials, organizational structures, & governance policies to reflect cultural pluralism; and an ongoing process that requires long term investments of time & efforts as well as carefully planned & monitored actions.

Provided that all these enriched meanings of MCE, Gorski (2009) strongly committed to present the role and contribution of MCE is indebted to highly promote the democratic principles of social justice and/or democratic concepts of education: equality, equity, and tolerance. This approach to teaching and learning is based on consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within diverse cultural environment/classroom. A big question is however how one can expect teachers who are culturally maladjusted to teach multicultural student populations. That is, basically what the educational system is doing today, but the proposition here is that we must first of all find ways to address this problem among teachers before we can expect them to teach multicultural populations (DomNwachukwu, 2010). MCE acknowledges and incorporates positive racial idiosyncrasies in the classroom atmospheres. Generally, MCE is an inclusive educational process that engages all students in developing a strong sense of self-esteem; discovering empathy for persons of diverse cultural background; and experiencing equitable opportunities to achieve to their fullest potential (Banks & Banks, 2010). This new agenda is especially important if education is going to meet the needs of all students, including the linguistically and culturally diverse. It is sound to say that if one of the primary functions of Education Colleges is to transmit the socio-cultural legacy of the nation to its

citizens, then, it is imperative for the education system to incorporate MC and MCE as a prime part of its programs and practices (Reynolds & Miller, 2003).

## 2.2. The Fundamental Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Although there are various conceptual perspectives of MCE as generated by different scholars at different times, (Banks, 2006, 2010) the fundamental dimensions of the issues of MC and MCE are best analyzing tools to adapt MCE in EIs. It is professionally found critical that teachers in Education Colleges should internalize these five major dimensions for better understanding and effective implementation of MCE (Banks, 1997, 2010). On the other hand, for instance, Gay (2005) has come across with four basic theoretical approaches to the designing and delivery of MCE incorporating multicultural philosophy, multicultural theory, multicultural cognition, and multicultural pedagogy. But the comprehensive nature and broadness of these perspectives may be far-reaching to properly address and realize cultural diversity on the ground through the system of MCE. Accordingly, all these five core dimensions formulated by (Banks, 2006), the founding father of MCE, are clearly stated and briefly presented here in relation to a multicultural classroom instructional process.

The first dimension is content integration, which implies that contents and any learning experiences should be selected from various cultures. Instructional contents and learning experiences should have to be systematically organized as to meet the interest and capacity of the culturally different learners and the curriculum objectives. Zammit (2021) described that educators have an important task in the initiation and enactment of multicultural teaching, depending on the environment and schedules. As part of instruction, the contents incorporated in the curriculum should reflect the cultures of the different societies, communities, and groups that serve as a means of developing a sense of belongingness in the curriculum and that his/her culture has a contribution on the development of the society. So that students of different cultures develop positive attitude towards learning as they find some elements of their culture in the content designed to be learned by the students. They also enable to understand the cultures of others that enable him/her live and work together based on mutual understanding and respecting to each other (Banks, 2006, 2010).

The second dimension, knowledge construction which, Hanley (2006) viewed as the recognition that all knowledge socially constructed, created in the minds of human beings to explain their experience and thus, can be challenged. Ideas that shape society do change. As such, knowledge construction is a primary aspect of multicultural education, therefore, teachers can effectively teach multicultural; they must reconstruct their world view. The knowledge construction process moves to different levels because here teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions and frames of reference and perspectives of the discipline they are teaching. This helps students to be more readers and critical thinkers. Being more reader and critical thinker enables the learner to be active on extracting meaning and develop understanding from their learning and able to construct knowledge.

The third dimension is equity pedagogy which believes that teachers should use multiple teaching-learning strategies that could enable them to accommodate the existing different cultural varieties of diverse students in order to promote the intended educational outcomes. According to Banks & Banks (1995), equity pedagogy is a dynamic instructional process that not only focuses on the identification and use of effective instructional techniques and methods but also on the context in which they are used. It strongly draws its connection to culturally responsive teaching and learning approaches since the strategies are designed in such a way that improves the performances of all students (Gay, 2010).

The fourth dimension, prejudice reduction of MCE indicates that students learning in the classroom may come to the school having a sense of superiority than others or inferiority complex within their mind which they learn from their community or their family (Banks, 1997). These two extreme understanding toward

themselves and to others are social evils of mutual understanding and co-operative works within the social life of the community. Teachers should work hard to alleviate these negative attitudes towards themselves and others and develop positive attitudes to them and to others. According to Zammit (2021), the primary teaching and learning principles necessitate defending learners against any form of discrimination, including sexism, prejudice and racism. Educators should have to constantly examine their views, partiality, involvement, and prejudices which can impact learners' encounters.

Teachers are very seriously expected to work hard towards this end and be free from any biases and racial activities. They should have to present the cultures of the different groups in the classroom at equal base and they have to show equal prestige for all norms and ways of life of the different cultures. Lastly, the fifth dimension, empowering school culture and social structure of MCE gives no attention to individual student but it focuses on the schools as whole. The very objective of this is to create schools that motivate holistic development of all learners because both the school cultures and social structures are powerful factors that influence how students learn to perceive themselves (Banks & Banks, 1995). Education Colleges are social institutions where students who come from different backgrounds with their differences learn how to live, behave, and experience every activities as well as cultural issues together with others in harmony under the guidance of a commonly shared norm. So as to process their functions very effectively, the schools should have to develop (empower) school cultures that suit the social structures.

At this point, Zammit (2021) stated that to become a successful teacher, one has to examine and continuously transform him/herself. The College teachers should therefore examine the structure of education that hinder learning and empowering students and families for diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups in school environments. In accordance with this, Hanley (2006), briefly states that understanding MCE is not something easy issue rather it requires critical thinking with attention paid to complexity. It also requires research and learning about the multiple perspectives involved in any historical or contemporary experience in order to understand the rich meaning therein. The College teachers should, therefore, with free mind and fair attitude process and internalize all the five core dimensions for the effective understanding and implementation of MCE. This is because there is an argument among scholars, in which a proper understanding of the individuality of each pupil should be the prime concern of the EIs and the teacher (Hussein, 1969).

### **2.3. The Practice of Multicultural Issues and Multicultural Education in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia is a country that has fostered harmonious coexistence among people of diverse cultures and languages for a significant period. This peaceful cohabitation has been achieved through a mutual respect for one another and by recognizing diversity and promoting tolerance of differences. Such values are regarded as a potent force that contributes to national unity and facilitates overall development (MoE, 2022). Educational practices that began in Ethiopia during the earlier days had a customary and religious purposes tied with indigenous knowledge and religions of Christianity and Muslim. The introduction of church education to the country is attached with the history of beginning of Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup>c while Quran education is connected with the earliest times of the introduction of Islam in Ethiopia in the 7<sup>th</sup>c. (Eyasu, 2016). The church education and Quran education have founded a compressive system of traditional education that provided and under planning for Ethiopian cultural, spiritual, literacy, scientific, and artistic life. Hence, both traditional and indigenous education systems of Ethiopia contributed a lot for the preservation of cultural heritages and introduction of modern education to the country (Derebssa, 2008).

The appearance of Ethiopian modern education system into existence and its policy formulation however seemed a very young and recent development when compared with the rest of the world. After it was commenced at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup>c from abroad, it had been experiencing a variety of foreign influences

and attempted largely in different aspects to introduce and systematize its structure (Tekeste, 1990). Modern education, which refers to the western type of education, is mainly secular in nature and scientific in character so that it was not ready to inculcate the socio-cultural dimensions of Ethiopian society. Due to this, a genuine formulation of education policy has not been observed and meaningful additive incentives and assets have not been realized yet. Researchers believed that in a multicultural society, the education and its system are supposed to offer education that is responsible to the cultural diversity because which is a modern response to cultural diversity in a given society that reflected in the school system and the classroom. It is through this approach that an education system can be a straight point to eliminating inequalities in society (Gorski, 2006). As education policy is a key and central to one country's overall development, with no hesitation, it is assumed that policy makers, the governing authority, and its agents all in common should formulate an authentic policy and work in collaboration with the implication of the international and national contextual levels for mutual benefits.

The ETP (1994) of Ethiopia appeared as a policy addressing long-existing problems as a response to the multicultural needs of the society in all aspects of life endeavor (MoE, 2002). One of the main factors to focus on MC and diversity issues is the increase in cultural/ethnic diversity has caused many educators to recognize and own the need to expand their understanding of MCE, especially in public schools (Nieto, 2004). To put into effect the currently prevailing diverse socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects of different nations, nationalities, and peoples of the country, the Federal Democratic Republic Government of Ethiopia emphasized on cultural pluralism and multicultural and multidimensional issues in its curriculum design (FDRGE, 1994). It is founded upon the view that educators might intentionally or unintentionally participate in traditional educational activities and procedures as they do not comprehend the linguistic, social, and racial diversities of the learners (Sharma, 2005). Accordingly, the ETP introduced a new paradigm of training by which education is indebted to promote democratic culture, tolerance and peaceful resolutions of differences that raises the sense of discharging societal responsibility (FDRGE, 1994). With this intension, MC and diversity nowadays in education are not only an option but also they are mandatory and means for a society to serve and exercise coherence among differences (Pedersen, 2007). Socio-cultural framework supports pedagogical methods that honor human diversity and emphasize social and historical contexts. The experiences of socio-cultural researchers using ethnographic approaches and the theoretical framework have contributed to a view of teaching/learning that places culture, context, and system at the center of inquiry (Reynolds & Miller, 2003).

It is objectively real that Ethiopia is ancient home of diverse communities and pluralist societies with unique characteristics and socio-political problems emanated from the past histories of ruling government system. There had been an extended quest for a long period of time among various ethnic groups of Ethiopia to get a clear-cut educational policy formulation that can address their specific diverse needs and devoted to achieve educational equality for all as citizens. For MCE has acknowledged in various international legal documents (the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Constitutions of South Africa, and the United States, and the UDHRs adopted by the UN), it builds on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity (Özturgut, 2011). Nowadays, it is globally recognized that integrating, systematizing, and contextualizing MC into the curriculum is among the priorities. The fundamental dimensions of MCE have to be carefully designed and implemented regularly to bear in abundance to establish the spirit of learning one from the other, develop the habit of living together, and cope up with the dynamic needs of new generation. That is, the major goal of MCE is to change the structure of EIs, in which male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school (Banks & Banks, 2001).

Aligned to this, learning is seen as a means for recreating, controlling, and directing experiences as the goal of education is not to prepare for life, but to be an integral part of life (Dewey, 1966). Learning from his perspectives has to be participatory, democratic, and the learner has to play an active role by reflecting on students irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, language, and religion. Local studies, however, conducted by (Milkias, 2006; Mebratu, 2011; Mehari, 2015) added that although the country is linguistically, culturally, religiously, and racially diverse, the issue of MC and MCE has not been appropriately addressed in the education system. Because of this, the MoE proclaimed that “...it has become necessary to create an appropriate legal framework to guide HE in achieving their missions expected of them by the government and public as the previous proclamation is found to have shortages in its contents” (MoE, 2019). General provisions of HEIs state that “they shall promote and uphold in pursuance of their mission are democracy and MC; justice and fairness; quality and effective service delivery based on reason and rational discourse; and economical use of resources and effective maintenance of assets” (MoSHE, 2020). The Curriculum Framework (MoE, 2009) is therefore underpinned by key principles that guide EIs in whole-school planning and curriculum development. Some of these key principles are respecting cultural heritage and diversity and providing equal opportunity because Ethiopia has diverse cultures that all contribute to the colorful tapestry.

All young people will be educated in a way that respects this diversity while unifying them into one country; and no matter what their religion, gender, ethnic group or physical and mental ability will be provided with equal opportunities within the curriculum to fulfill their potential (MoE, 2009). The teacher education curriculum is prepared for the purpose of organizing, leading, implementing, evaluating and changing teacher education programs meant for training future teachers who would serve in different capacities in the system of education. The major purpose of this curriculum developed for teacher education in Ethiopia is to prepare teachers who have the essential subject-matter, professional and general knowledge, attitudes and skills which would enable them to become competent in teaching and discharging all other responsibilities for cultivating the young in desirable ways and manners (MoE, 2022). As of worldwide migration and globalization, racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity is increasing in nations around the world, diversity in the United States has becoming increasingly reflected in the nation's Colleges and Universities (Özturgut, 2011).

Based on the literature review, several key points can be emerged regarding MCE. Firstly, it is recognized as a crucial approach to promoting diversity and inclusivity within educational settings. MCE aims to create an environment that respects and values the cultural backgrounds of students, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing their overall learning experience. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the importance of incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices. This entails acknowledging and integrating students' diverse backgrounds and perspectives into the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessment strategies. By doing so, educators can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that caters to the needs of all students. Another significant point highlighted in the literature is the role of MCE in preparing students for a globalized society. As societies become increasingly diverse and interconnected, it is essential for students to develop intercultural competence and the ability to navigate multicultural contexts. MCE provides opportunities for students to develop empathy, critical thinking, and communication skills necessary for engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds. Overall, the literature underscores that MCE is not just a theoretical concept but a practical and impactful approach to education. By embracing MC in teaching and learning, EIs can foster an inclusive and empowering environment that prepares students for a diverse and interconnected world.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research Design

A case study design is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme, or system in a real-life context. Its primary purpose is to generate an in-depth understanding of a specific topic (Simons, 2009). The case study method requires tools so the scientists can study the comprehensive view within their contexts (Gustafson, 2017). If the case study method is applied rightly, it will be advantageous when you study science, evaluate programs and develop theories and involvements (Baxter & Jack, 2014). A qualitative case study was employed in this study for it is (Gustafson, 2017) an intensive study about a person, an organization, and a group of people, which is aimed to generalize over several units. Briefly, as to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.

In this study, the interpretive and naturalistic approach of qualitative research was involved as a paradigm, the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques, and so on shared by the members of community (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hatch, 2002). The main reason is that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research as constructivist/subjectivist, post positivist or postmodern perspective began as a counter to the positivist paradigm in which the interaction of external reality and internal mediation to create meaning is denied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Stephen & Kasim, 2015).

#### 3.2. Sources of Data

Primary and secondary sources of data were utilized to obtain more accurate information. The main sources of primary data were academic staffs at Hawassa CE. This is due to the fact that according to the current intent of the Ethiopian MoE, all teachers serving in every HEI are responsible to respect MC and promote MCE in order to enhance students’ learning outcomes (MoE, 2002). Secondary sources of data provide second-hand information (Kumar, 2011). Policy documents, legislation of Education Colleges, HE proclamations, the ETP, the Constitution (1995), the Cultural Policy (1997), guidelines, and modules were used as relevant inputs in this study.

#### 3.3. Sample-Size and Sampling Technique

The geographical area or the group of people to which a researcher intended the results of a study to apply was Hawassa CE in Sidama Regional State of Ethiopia (Belay & Abdinasir, 2015). In view of this, Hawassa CE was selected using purposive sampling method because of its geographic accessibility, the nature of the research, and the manageability of the study subjects. Purposive qualitative sampling is a good technique that helps a researcher to obtain the in-depth and appropriate data about the academic staffs’ involvement and endeavor in practicing MC and the core MCE dimensions in the study area (Patton, 2002). The study incorporated a total number of fifteen academic staff (teachers, stream officers, and department heads) selected purposely from all the six streams as the main participants considering their subject-area knowledge, experience, richness-information, and academic position (Silverman, 2006).

#### 3.4. Data Collecting Instruments

Interviews and document analysis were used as primary methods for collecting data. The in-depth interviews and documents were used in order to gather credible, valid, and valuable data from the respective participants. An interview is the most commonly used qualitative data gathering tool in the studies of social sciences as it has unique qualities consisting of high response rate, possibility to correct misunderstandings of respondents, and control over the time and place of the interview (Sarantakos, 2005). This study invited an

in-depth interview because it enables the academic staff to express their emotions, feelings, views, beliefs, opinions, and understandings deeply and freely in an interactive way (Bryman, 2012). Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### 3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, a qualitative method of research was used to analyze the data collected through the instruments of in-depth interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative methodology provides the opportunity to gather, analyze, and interpret qualitative data and thereby help the researcher to have in-depth understanding of the research problem under consideration (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Most commonly qualitative researchers use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability while quantitative researchers stress on internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity to confirm the findings of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility. As credibility in qualitative research concerns the truthfulness of the inquiry's findings, variety of methods to support the validity, and reliability of a qualitative interview data and its prior and forth interpretations (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003).

The data collected using the in-depth interviews and documents were analyzed through qualitative inductive approach (utilizing a content and thematic analysis approach). The data analysis process involved transcribing, which included constructions from an oral conversation to a written text, coding, and sorting out the frequent themes that emanated from the collected data (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). This is because qualitative coding as a method is used for categorizing the data of the study and discovering common themes or categories from its organizational structure (Aurebach & Silverstein, 2003). The academic staff respondents (AcSR) were coded and thereby assigned as AcSR-18, AcSR-19, AcSR-20...and AcSR-31). The findings were discussed thoroughly predominantly in line with the related literatures, basic research questions, and objectives of the study.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Analysis of Findings

The findings obtained from in-depth interviews and document analysis conducted at Hawassa CE for the qualitative case study were organized into three primary thematic areas based on their similarities and alignment with the research questions. These themes were subsequently presented in a sequential manner, following an inductive approach to thematic data analysis, which is a common qualitative research method. This involved the inclusion of interview extracts in the form of direct quotations to highlight key insights. Through careful examination of the data, the researchers identified recurring themes, topics, ideas, and patterns that held significant meaning, thus contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the research findings.

#### **Theme 1: Academic Staffs' Knowledge and Experiences on the Issues of MC and MCE and the ETP (Curriculum Design) of Ethiopia**

An investigative elaboration gained from previous knowledge and personal experience of each academic staff at Hawassa CE indicated that teachers have theoretical and conceptual knowledge to shed light on the philosophical assumptions of MC and MCE. By their own similar words, all the teachers defined MC as a natural endowment, a normal condition, and a genuine reflection of socio-cultural aspects of each and every society in a given area. They further viewed MCE as an organized body of education consisting of students' diverse nature of learning to achieve educational equality and impartiality in a multicultural classroom.

On condition that, they called the Education Colleges to come to this consideration with higher responsibility to act, foresee, and devote firmly in facilitating an overall educational activity for teachers to incorporate the fundamental dimensions of MCE in their subject-matter so as to harmonize teaching diversified groups. The background knowledge and understanding of academic staff has significantly contributed a lot to make them professionally involved in accommodating students' socio-economic differences and cultural diversities. One of the in-depth interviews extracts reveals:

*MC can be seen as a composition of two or more ethnic groups and social classes living together in a particular country with the reflection of their own culture, languages, religion, histories, identities, beliefs, norms, and values. When we look into Ethiopia, one can find so many cultural, linguistic, and religious differences in all directions even within shorter distances as you go upward, downward, and alongside. MC is a concept that rejects and fights against any one's cultural, linguistic, ethnic, economic, religious, educational, and political dominance over the others' socio-cultural groups as it is about the co-existence of all diverse communities peacefully, equally, and equitably. MCE is a philosophy of educational thought that is aimed at having of an organized system of education designed in consideration with all these socio-cultural differences of students and plural societies. The major principles of MCE are stemmed on the views that any instruction or lesson given at Education College should critically incorporate cultural elements of the diverse students as well as the society. Any kind of education delivered for students with cultural diversity and various socio-economic statuses need to secure equal learning opportunities and equity in the course of teaching-learning process. The preparation of educational materials, instructional planning, selection of teaching methodologies, and teachers' self-readiness must be aligned with multicultural nature of the students. MCE is all about to strive to meet the current needs of those students coming from various socio-cultural backgrounds to learn one from the other(AcSR-30)*

Based upon this expression, all the academic staff imagined that MC and MCE are helpful to lay a basic foundation for Education Colleges to make its bounding communities introduce persuasively with the necessity of acknowledging, respecting, and recognizing cultural pluralism as a source for unity, as unity always exists in diversity. In essence of this, the following is a quotation extracted from the in-depth interviews text:

*In a pluralistic society, the presence of different cultures, languages, and several different issues can form or bring understanding in one's mind about the term MC. These cultural differences are practiced by different respective societies so that they live together in a country. Under this condition, if societies follow their own culture, religion, and things, all their things will be perpetuating and flourishing. If they do not have good views towards others at their religion, languages, and cultures, it could be difficult for life and impossible. In MC, we try to bring these differences together because we cannot change or we cannot mix them rather we may develop in the society, in children, and in adults' attitudes which respect language of others, culture of others, and life styles of others. It is only if we do that nation can continue as a nation; otherwise, it is difficult and disintegration would come. I believe MCE is an instrument that enables to bring unity in diversity. We respect and tolerate diversity but we strive for unity. We have been trying to bring the knowledge of MC and MCE dimensions to classroom as we need to develop our students' understanding and experience in this line (AcSR-18)*

Significantly, the meaning and importance of MC and MCE is inevitably understood by all respondents. They believed that the concepts MC and MCE are very vital to safely shape the life of the society and the system of education to address different needs of students coming from various ethnic groups with diverse social and education identities. They briefly justified their position on how they come to this point to like to work in such an environment where socio-cultural diversities are available and enjoy teaching diversified classrooms, is that, it means 'Serving Our Selves.' On this basis, they all confirmed that Hawassa CE is a symbol and home

of learners with diverse religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds; social and economic bases; and educational and living statuses. A view point of one of the interviewees administers:

*For countries like Ethiopia having various cultural diversities (ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic differences), MC is crucial concept. There is a need for us to co-operate each other with our differences and diversifies. We should establish an organized socio-cultural system or social cohesion to manage and integrate the issues of cultural pluralism and MCE as they are always happening events and/or because of their unavoidability. In our context, this is a way we define what MC is. As HEI teachers, we have to understand our students' individual differences and their diverse needs because they are from different ethnic, religious, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds. Particularly; this is normal in Hawassa CE, in which both students and teachers are ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally different. College teachers should use appropriate teaching-learning methodologies to accommodate all these differences of students. When we use examples, offer courses, and employ methods of teaching, we have to take care of those examples, activities, and methods because of their sensitivity and criticality. We have to sure to ensure a good communication with our students, and plan ahead for what we deliver for students not to affect their ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. In Education Colleges, every professional teacher is required to have methodological skills, empathy, and knowledge about the students' MC in every aspect of their learning. I am speaking this to you genuinely and confidently because I know that I have a good intension and outlook about MC and MCE. I have been applying the core MCE dimensions in the classroom and relatively involving on those students' cultural differences in different ways (AcSR-26)*

Alike, the subjects in Hawassa CE felt that they all belong to a College community with diverse socio-economic backgrounds. In their statement, it was added that differences being reflected among academic staffs and students should be viewed as having multiple alternatives in all spheres of their lives. All appreciated and interestingly illustrated an overall environment of the College as it is so regarded as conducive as different course offering teachers of different regions deserved freedom of celebrating their unique cultural events. Provided that the staff has a strong feeling of engagement to create a good opportunity for learners to learn culturally, linguistically, and ethnically in order to develop their social and education identities. Teachers in the College are attempting to tackle-down prejudice, discrimination, marginalization, and stereotypes so as to bring about social justice, equality, equity, and tolerance in education. Among others, one of the narrations of the academic staffs' states:

*There exists many diverse academic staffs as well as administrative members in Hawassa CE. All these diverse cultural groups are enjoying in deprivable of their identity, culture, language, and religion in different ways. As part of education policy, they all are allowed to celebrate their diverse socio-economic backgrounds representing different nations, nationalities, and peoples of their regions. They are working together jointly with peace; and helping their students in coordination with the College community and the society of the catchment area. These all are common elements we have in MC. I believe in MC because it is naturally enriched for human beings as beauty and unique identity to be celebrated within the system of a particular group of society freely without oppressive power. MCE is a new discipline of teaching, whose primary purpose is to insightfully looking into culturally, linguistically, religiously, and ethnically diverse learners to help them gain equal learning chance. It is an education system in which students by themselves, guided by teachers, can reflect their cultural values at appropriate place and time to build understanding about different ethnic groups; and exercise socio-economic aspects of their own, as to promote and learn each other at large. Such an approach of education may lead students to foresee the values and principles of democracy that, in turn, pushes them to consolidate a wider-range of cultural pluralism. Ethnically, I belong to Guraghe society and when I was a student I had accumulated knowledge from others, and contributed a lot to the culture of the Guraghe people. Now; I become one of the*

*academic staff members at Hawassa CE and I am still doing the same with other teachers, and organizing some sort of cultural ceremonies of the Guraghe ethnic group to share for others to promote MC and MCE(AcSR-22)*

The academic staffs of the College, on the other hand, described that the ETP of Ethiopia opened the ways for the practice of multicultural components and the concept of MCE at all levels of education. They forwarded that the ETP is nicely talked over document of education, which helped teachers to involve and endeavor on accommodating cultural differences of students but it was not actualized in a good way as it lacked timely evaluation to improve; systematic strategies to control; and finally, overrode by political leaders. They solidified that if we fail to implement what is planned, we are failed in policy formulation as implementation is one of the pillars of policy formulation process. However; the ETP is not merely about the document, rather it has important contents to be implemented in a well-defined fashion because it is endowed by un-rejectable ideas. Underlying this, an interview extract of the study consolidates:

*Undeniably, the ETP has contributed a lot and played a great role to make all cultural, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and religious groups and their beliefs, opinions, customs, indigenous knowledge, values, and socio-economic as well as socio-political issues outshine equally, especially at primary education level. The ETP is very good and pleasantly written document, in which some historically derived sorts of prejudices, the feelings of superiority, and dominance of a few ethnic groups over the rest of the larger society have been managed and coped up with the principles of cultural pluralism. Many students in HEIs representing various groups of society become culturally, linguistically, educationally, socially, and politically advantageous and benefited much more. However, as the ETP is a monopoly of a few political elites, it was improperly manipulated and administered laissez-fairly with an impetus of leading the whole society into cultural tensions, social-economic crisis, and political instability (AcSR-31)*

In a descriptive term of recounting, the findings of the study as generated by all respondents are presented hereunder as:

*The ETP gave a greater attention for the components of MC to be implemented wherever EIs exist as a body of MCE. For a long period of time, cultural diversity and its contents have been practiced and promoted in the College as well as in the country in one way or another. Some of the major directions of the ETP and the Cultural Policy (1997) narrated could be the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and integration of inclusive curriculum or MC content integration in Colleges and Universities. Some other concerns of MCE consist of the celebration of cultural ceremonies, provision of gender-responsive pedagogy, provision of affirmative actions, and short-term and long-term diversity-oriented trainings, workshops, conferences, panel discussions, and awareness creation programs. Although the policies emphasized on those democratic values as equality, equity, tolerance, and unity in diversity, it is understood that it was not realized on the ground as stated. If the ETP and Cultural Policy widely focus and critically invest all its own potential to promote relatively homogeneity and heterogeneity of students, MC and dimensions of MCE in HEIs, the issue of equity, social justice, tolerance, and national integrity would come to surface area to prevail at large(AcSR-27)*

Comparably; another subject reflected the ETP is well-framed and included fundamental educational principles, which, however, needs to be contextualized. How much our social contexts of education and professional commitment towards the policy issues are really considered might be a big question for all stakeholders. Upon this, the interviewee adds:

*I don't think that there is a gap on the ETP of Ethiopia because the policy of education may be established once. The ETP is committed to bring about educational achievement or success and learning opportunities to all its citizens to ensure the concepts of democracy in education. The question is to what extent it is being applied? To what extent are the education bureau officials following and/or providing necessary materials? To what extent*

*are the dimensions of MCE being applied in the College? To what extents are the College deans dedicated to motivate and reform the attitude of teachers on multicultural activities? Or, to what limit is it being actualized in the classroom situation? The question is, we need an accord to have on this critical issue of our education system. The common agreement is that we have to begin it as a new culture as it hasn't been applied as it is planned in the policy. There is a problem on implementing at grass-root level(AcSR-24)*

With regard to the practice of the Cultural Policy, the findings demonstrated that the engagement of academic staff seemed promising. They have been directing their students in general and female students in particular to be successful in academic activities and become frontier line in social, economic, and political agenda of the country, but the case is not all true that they are not as such gaining what they need in accordance with what is stated in the policy. Some female students do not like to confidently communicate with others and afraid of even to make participation on educational, social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena because of cultural and psychological factors or other barriers. On this basis, an academic staff of the study elucidates:

*Those core concepts included in the Cultural Policy are well-comes as to empowering women's participation in development and accessing and increasing educational engagements of female students at all levels to achieve gender equality and equity. Equality is better implemented than equity and prejudice because equality is about the provision of all things equally but the equity may not be implemented over there as the meaning of equity is something that requires detail and probing into the problem to see that is equity. Some prejudices have of course developed towards the positive for that educational policy, especially regarding nations with no or little access to education. There is an attempt in the College to bring about gender balance by designing like affirmative action program; and priority has been given for female candidates even during the selection of degree program to compete as possible as they can, and most of them joined degree program in different disciplines. Individually, teachers are involving providing variety of teaching-learning activities by arranging tutorial programs and gender-responsive pedagogies, particularly for those female and male students from poor, rural, and minority groups to maximize their academic performances. Nevertheless, academic staffs get a small percent at the essence of practice of equity and prejudice reduction in order to realize cultural policy and the components of MCE. Because gender equity and/or gender-disparity remained critical as the expected satisfaction is not yet gained requiring systematically organized strategies and coordination of all stakeholders. (AcSR-28)*

In the same tone, one of the interviewees boldly describes:

*The level of female students' participation is still less than that of males in some departments: physics, mathematics, and chemistry. For example, from forty-five total number of students in chemistry department, only 5 of them are females. This may be associated with their educational background as well as the attitudes they have toward natural sciences. Most of them prefer to join the department of languages, social sciences, physical education, music and arts believing as if they will successfully complete their program. This is a real challenge to attain what is coined in the policy as an overall readiness in the College to improve such a condition is insignificant. In spite of the fact that female students' involvement and competence in educational and related activities is improving progressively, it still demands extra efforts from all of the concerned bodies(AcSR-30)*

## **Theme 2: The Roles and Engagements of Academic Staffs in Practicing the Core Dimensions of MCE, Research Studies, Strategic Instructional Planning, and Managing Challenges and Opportunities of MCE**

The respondents at Hawassa CE discussed all the community and different concerned bodies are responsible to play their own role for the effectiveness of MC and dimensions of MCE. Particularly, teachers are the most responsible stakeholders to consciously and skillfully inform, endeavor, and educate their learners about MC and MCE. One of the study subjects reasonably forwarded his or her perception as follows:

*In the 1<sup>st</sup> place, teachers must know MCE dimensions and the presence of cultural diversities in the classrooms and implement them willingly fully. 2<sup>nd</sup>, students themselves must have known how of these views and must be ready to use or practice the opportunity. The 3<sup>rd</sup> partner is the College community as a whole must know the concepts of MC and MCE. The 4<sup>th</sup> one is the government, which means MoE, scholars, educational experts, and other stakeholders must work together in order to enhance the idea of MC and perspectives of MCE. However; whatever the management and/or the government body does, eventually it is better to practice that makes reality. The great concern here is that it lies on the teachers; and this idea will be well-practiced and the fruit of it is in the hands of the teachers. Because they have an opportunity and a regular and direct or daily contact with their students to encourage and explore their cultural, social, educational, and religious backgrounds; and create integration as well. It is so quite right that teachers are principal stakeholders to actually precede the basics of MCE to help culturally diverse students achieve common learning outcomes though it is different from teachers to teachers. But, I doubt that how far all of them are equally understood the issues and they are made themselves ready to practice it well. This is my doubt whether there is equally going through, equal contribution, and equal professional commitment. This varies anyway from person to person, from group to group, and from place to place (AcSR-20)*

In this sphere, the study depicted that the College administration played insignificant role to organize orientation for students, academic and supportive staff to be informed about MC and MCE. The College is unable to build teachers' capacities and increase their heartedly involvement to promote MCE dimensions. In spite of this, it is learnt that teachers have been playing some major roles to enhance the dimensions of MCE in coincidence with their daily classroom activities. With respect to this, one of the central themes in the interviews is briefed as:

*The first role that teachers should play is to exchange ideas, experiences, views, beliefs, and form a forum to reflect these because the views of some of us because of understanding and lack of knowledge into the cultural and diversity of that society makes difference. I have learnt quite a lot from the teachers of the College how they handle and manage the students' diversity because I missed something that I do not know the cultural background of that student how I understand him exactly. The role of the teachers is that to come together and exchange ideas culturally, economically, and socially. Of course, teachers are doing these, keeping dimensions of MCE in mind and plan ahead of the actual classroom begins in order to harmonize students' MC and they are bothering about the contents of MCE to incorporate as part of every instructional planning. It is now ensured that the way we select instructional contents, employ teaching methods, use examples, and utilize teaching materials should be carefully explored to consider students' diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Making students to have knowledge on MC and sensitizing them to learn about their culture and understand the culture of others' is amongst the major roles of teachers. So, teachers should be assertive to unconditionally accept all students of different cultures to promote diversity in the classrooms. We feel and we act in that way because we don't know the economic and cultural background of our students unless somebody tells us. Whether that is incorporated in the curriculum as one issue, however, even if it is there, how I treat that is missing. Little is done at College level to supply multicultural curriculum materials, motivate teachers and invite them to modify teaching strategies along the diverse nature of students learning (AcSR-17)*

Correspondingly, the academic staff asked about how far motivation and professional commitment influence the implementation of MCE dimensions in the classroom suggested that both self-motivation and self-commitment of teachers are most importantly and irreplaceably contributing tools. Unless they are professionally engaged and intrinsically motivated, even if there are positive things in them, they may not be ready to pass to others. As the curiosity of the College directors to encourage teachers is poor, it was reported that it is less implemented. It has been underlined that teachers' self-commitment and self-motivation are central as multicultural thoughts need determination to fulfill all its objectives. A brief explanation drawn by one of the academic staffs reads:

*We are working and offering courses to some extent for students with different ethnic identities without external motivation. I feel that teachers are more or less self-initiated to handle teaching diversified groups because they have nothing else to expect from the College. Self-motivation, which comes from our internal feeling and that, may not wait for other incentives or external motivators, and professional commitments of teachers are key ingredients for diverse nature of students' learning. If teachers are motivated internally, they can accomplish the task of MCE dimensions constructively in their respective classrooms without any facilitators. Or, if teachers have internally developed desirable impression toward students' differences in terms of MCE dimensions, they do not expect and need some sort of supports that come from outsiders as motivators to incentivize their tasks. When teachers are aware about the diverse nature of students internally by themselves, they will run those multicultural varieties passionately with a good feeling because they are self-motivated and professionally devoted although the situation may be challenging. To promote the fundamental dimensions of MCE in the classrooms, internal motivation takes priority as teachers get it in nature and it increases a tendency of genuine involvement of teachers on that issue (AcSR-21)*

More related point posed as one of the major findings showed that intrinsically being positive to peaceful life are normal so that one doesn't think he or she has to motivate by outsiders to engage him or her to practice MCE dimensions. The person himself is naturally motivated and/or MC is natural condition that doesn't require external motivators. Teachers are minimally ready to act on and begin to think for good for society, for respect, for tolerance, and for such things with self-motivation. The view of an interviewed respondent-teacher is reflected as follows:

*The practice of MC and dimensions of MCE requires teachers' internally acquired motivation and self-engagement. In the absence of intrinsic motivation and self-commitment of teachers, nothing can be applied in class, for a teacher, it is mandatory to have a commitment even for the regular class to be delivered. Otherwise, how can we integrate MCE dimensions into our regular classes? How can a teacher deliver a lesson? We may sometimes inculcate MCE dimensions into our education system by dramatizing and using something as a role model in order to how to promote diversity. This one needs the teachers' effort because sometimes we deliver classes in the absence of motivation with praises. For example, if you see the current condition of our country, it is difficult to expect all from that of the government and from the officials. Self-motivation and commitment cannot be replaced by a certain amount of money. It is therefore better to encourage and follow up teachers to what extent they are applying. For example, if teachers are being paid hundreds of thousands for this one, they may not be motivated; rather they should have to worry about the generations. With the course of time and the stability of the country, the government may pay and raise wages. As long as we are working with generation, we have to work with self-commitment because I believe in self-commitment and intrinsic sort of motivation. But, as self-commitment doesn't require a certain other sort of motivation, much remains yet (AcSR-24)*

Likely, a little is reported on the role of academic staffs' engagement on conducting scientific as well as action research studies to enhance MCE dimensions. In this regard, all Colleges and Universities have two major aims, education and training and research studies to run to improve every aspect of human lives and bring up fundamental changes by constructing a new knowledge base and identifying the underlying problems and solving them justifiably. A particular attention has lost in this area as to promote cultural diversity in the College. Among those agreed upon themes, one elaborates:

*At College level, we have been conducting different research studies on different topics, however, it is a surprise for me that diversity and MCE dimensions are not even part of thematic area to be considered. Of course, I am currently conducting a research on environmental literacy, and this year we have planned to carry out four research studies but yet now all of them are out of the issues of MC and MCE. The implication is that the academic commission does not give much attention for MCE dimensions to be studied more scientifically as a*

*thematic area. In my professional career, I haven't had such an experience of doing multicultural and diversity-oriented studies. As a professional teacher, what I personally confess is that I am reluctant in this respect, which is my weakness. The same is true that the College by itself has no significant experience in studying scientific investigation on MCE(AcSR-26)*

Aside to this, some teachers however reacted that actually the College is calling for action research considering the organizational culture and/or multicultural issue as one of the thematic areas. A very few teachers conducted scientific research but the problem is that its finding was not disseminated for the whole academic staff of the College to provoke others. One of the high level scholars, in his scientific study, found that the cultural aspect of every student has to be considered critically. An experience of this interviewee clearly reports:

*Up on a time I had a research on two Colleges, namely Arbaminch and Hawassa CEs, and it was about the socio-economic backgrounds of the students and how it is affecting the psychological and economical aspect of them. The research indicated that there was a difference between Hawassa and Arbaminch CEs, with the same pocket money, what was reflected is that more of cultural. From our experience, though other factors affect our teaching-learning process, mainly the cultural aspect placed great role. The distance was almost the same from where the students were coming and the economic background was the same but culturally there was difference. We have to make it number one because it is from the results of these two Colleges to put it as number one so that other issues are already part of that. From our experience and the research as well, unless we really exercise the cultural issues and understand our students, we are missing quite a lot of things. The great things are there, others can be variables but this cannot be variable because their culture-the way how all of them are acting. We have to give a priority to culture, bio-diversity, socio-economic and then, other in order to enhance cultural pluralism and dimensions of MCE in the College(AcSR-28)*

Having the same response in common, the participants did not see that there are standards established at College level in order to manage and control particularly multicultural dimensions and problems related to this condition. Although the College has legislation with its details, the respondents could not see the instructional strategies prepared to promote MCE except what the teachers do in the class using their own personal effort depending on modular curriculum. In line with this, an interview quotation generated by one of the academic staff explains:

*Educational and social interaction-based guidelines if developed by Education Colleges are primarily helpful standards to manipulate and shape the diverse nature of students' learning and can reduce some problems as discrimination, stereotyping, and marginalization. However, the College has no standards set on the basis of the classroom composition and nor strategic instructional planning designed by academic commission as well as academic staff, specifically to handle MC by applying basic principles of MCE. My lesson design or curriculum plan has to fit with what is existing on the ground and should help me to deal with MC. When you plan, you plan to do something and you have to plan according to that. Our plan or design has to be based on the cultural and diversity of the students so that we agree with all these so that our contents will go accordingly. My plan has to be just based on the students' cultural view, social, gender, and whatever. Harmoniously, not all but some of the teachers in our College are doing this and developing ground rules, providing advisory services, and organizing consultation schedule to deal with such kinds of concerns of encountering problems that may suddenly happen in the course of teaching multicultural. Sometimes; more technically, teachers by themselves design classroom instructional strategy to contrive students' diverse needs through incorporating culturally exciting components into their curriculum or lesson they offer. Teachers' specific ability of teaching employed in the lesson should clearly consider students' emotions and individual difference of their learning. So, teachers should always design*

*their lesson strategically to provide equity pedagogy and equal learning opportunity for all students with diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds (Code-25)*

As part of the study, the academic staffs argued the implementation of MC and the basic dimensions of MCE have multidimensional advantages and full of opportunities. In a certain case, it is sometimes very challenging and requires much time to invest to be successful on the ground. Provided that, one academic staff member put his or her idea as what comes after:

*Some of the major challenges prevailing in actualizing MCE dimensions are lack of well-prepared curriculum, shortage of modular materials, absence of the department of MCE as a discipline, and lack of purposeful focus on MC as the directors of the College are not introduced well about. Some teachers are not self-motivated to involve and endeavor on such critical multicultural issues as required. Another associated challenge is, the lack of tolerance, respect, and some sort of polarization-going to one side. We have to break such kind of perception to come to the level what we want because if I want to be respected culturally and linguistically, I have to respect others accordingly. What is correct for you have to be accepted by me, and I shouldn't say 'no,' 'mine is correct and yours' is not correct.' As an intellectual, we have to think from the point of view 'your pain is my pain.' We have to accept the contribution from all to come to tolerance so that we will be to the same level. As still diversity and culture are there, it is beautiful because our educational system is there, in which everybody can get himself or herself or everybody can be reflected in that mirror so that we improve everything but lack of tolerance and the view is that 'mine is better' is a big challenge (AcSR-23)*

As a consolidation, an interview citation drawn by one of the study's respondents sheds its light as:

*The presence of differences and diversities is an opportunity for the people of Ethiopia, as it brings variety of colors to one's mind as beauty so that one can appreciate another. Our differences beautifully will help us and they are favorable conditions for us to come to one level. MCE induces a feeling of hospitality, respect, tolerance, recognition, and acknowledgement among culturally diverse students or multicultural society to flourish as possible resources for sustainable economic growth and national integrity to stand as a nation. Handling the social, economic, educational, and political aspects of different communities as well as harmonizing cultural diversity of various ethnic groups in the curriculum of the College is an opportunity of MCE. The opportunity gained from MCE and diversity is a pillar that the country itself can stand and can be on the hard rock if we build it that way. Otherwise, we will be on the other direction (AcSR-28)*

### **Theme 3: The Roles and Engagement of Academic Staffs in Providing and Developing Curriculum Materials Related to MC and MCE and Its Dimensions**

It was critically pointed out by the respondents that the role of teachers to involve and endeavor in providing and designing instructional materials for the courses what they are offering in relation to students' cultural diversity is tremendously significant. In this direction, although some curriculums are prepared by MoE and available in the College for the purpose of MCE, teachers did not pass through the process of curriculum materials development. It is dictated that the width and depth of cultural pluralism needed as something relevant and the contexts we lived in multicultural society was ignored during the preparation of the materials. Most of the modules developed lack purpose, partially because the contributions of teachers have not incorporated in these curricular materials. The materials are more of a reflection of practices, concepts, and theories directly magnifying the cultural behavior and philosophical assumptions of the out-side world. This is verified in the speech of one of the interviewees:

*We have some course materials developed by MoE for the induction of MC and dimensions of MCE in the College. However, these are not sufficiently available to safely satisfy the wide-range interests of cultural pluralism in the*

*country. It is proved that there is a lack and a variation in the provision of curriculum materials, content selection, and preparation to comprehensively practice and effectively integrate all the diverse needs of our students in all disciplines. Because when these curriculums are designed, they are designed such in a way they are applied in America, or in Britain, or somewhere else in Western world. They are not determinably contextualized. The point is that the curriculum materials have to be culturally localized and we have to begin with that and develop it go back to indigenous knowledge and show how it can be related with the culture of international community. That is what is lacking in our curriculum (AcSR-22)*

Likewise, the respondents mentioned that there was a lack of focus and disparity in the development and distribution of multicultural teaching materials from the beginning at the level of MoE, and nothing was added as to adapt the materials in the College. For example, except in the stream of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, all the remaining departments or streams have either multicultural contents (topics to be learned by students) or courses of MCE. This has imperatively posed by an interviewed subject as:

*Unlike to the stream of Natural Sciences, there are directly or indirectly related multicultural curriculum materials in the streams of education, language, social sciences, music and arts. That is the way how we should go and how one department can go into another department or interlinked because of the nature of beauty. But, if you come to my department (chemistry), I don't see such kind of curriculum designing linguistically, culturally, socially, and economically. It is the common traditional way of lesson delivery that I see in this department and/or when you come to Natural Science, it is as usual. If there is no curriculum material in a particular department, it is possible to enrich the subject area knowledge for diversified classrooms by designing such kind of module because the course is there or the content is there. It is only a matter of making it local, cultural, linguistic, and multicultural as all, in which the students can involve and design different kinds of models and real objects in some cases. It is that way that we can bring this curriculum itself to that one, at least a minimum of having how a subject-matter incorporates cultural and linguistic issues (Code-28)*

In the perspective of mother tongue education as a major component of MCE, the study's subjects agreed that cultural diversity of the nation, nationality, and people of the country has been celebrated and incorporated in the curriculum of the College. Huge budget was invested to prepare curriculum materials for the provision of mother tongue education to accommodate students' differences and diversities in order to bring equal learning opportunity and equitable educational access. Emphatically, a text of the in-depth interviews stresses out that:

*Before five years ago, at national level (MoE), we prepared good modular curriculum materials of mother tongue education for Education Colleges incorporating those multicultural components in seven languages of Ethiopia: Afaan Oromo, Amharic, Hadiyisa, Sidaamu Affo, Tigrigna, Aff Somali, and Wolaytato. We observed that our students are happy and become interested in learning their mother tongue education through these modular curriculum materials in the College. I know that there are some multicultural modules prepared by MoE for all Colleges in all regions. If you examine their contents, you see that they are prepared too hurriedly. Concepts appeared repetitively; they are downloaded from the internet; and nobody edited them thoroughly. They are not efficiently designed educational materials to reach out the diverse needs of our students in the College (AcSR-25)*

## 4.2. Discussion

The qualitative case study data was gathered through in-depth interviews and document analysis primarily involving the academic staffs at Hawassa CE, including teachers, stream officers, and department heads. The findings derived from the qualitative data are presented, analyzed, and thoroughly discussed in relation to the research questions, objectives, and pertinent literature reviewed in the study.

This study has provided a clear and comprehensive understanding that Ethiopia situated in Africa, is inherently characterized by its multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and multi-religious composition. It highlights the diverse and pluralistic nature of the country across all dimensions of its society, revealing an objective reality. The previous research study proves that “multi-ethnic teaching as a teaching and learning strategy founded on democratic elements and notions and identified the ethnic diversities in an interlinked society with ethnic pluralism (Aydin & Tonbuloglu, 2014). Plausibly, it is true that students we get in the classrooms are the representatives of variety of communities of the country. Therefore, when MoE develops curriculum and prepares educational materials and teachers design instructional planning and teaching-learning strategies should critically consider MC, students’ diversities and differences, and the fundamental dimensions of MCE. That’s why, Johansson (2006) dictates “as MC and the acceptance of diversity have become major issues since the world was defined as a global village and since the “story of four times” reflected “an increasingly interconnected world where concepts that appear to be unrelated actually are related.”

The findings coincidentally define MC as a composition of cultural pluralism and differences consisting of people from various social, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, economic, political, intellectual, physical, and other different backgrounds and living together with their unique cultural values. This entails MC is natural idea in that somebody grows up in some society or in a certain cultural background and/or it may be endowed innately as a normal condition for every human being on the planet, in which we all live together recognizing one another. Being of part of some society, somebody may have certain culture, belief, identity, language, and religion as a multicultural. MCE may be provided for students by somebody formally, informally, and non-formally to follow certain beliefs; understand themselves in terms of others; and get some education from some schools or from somebody like colleagues or friends. The concepts MC and MCE must be interconnected in the system of education to handle the socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects of each and every student as well as a multicultural society. Because the role of “MC in the education curriculum aims to democratize the curriculum and teacher’s training to give everyone a more neutral and free perspective” (Banks, 2015).

As an organizing instrument, it is found in this study that MCE is all about equally and equitably providing and accessing learning opportunities and education for all those students we find in the College with their own peculiar cultural values, traditions, norms, beliefs, and different socio-economic backgrounds. This relates itself with the view of (Banks & Banks, 2010), by which MCE is described as a kind of educational system that attempts to bring about fair and equal chance of participation on education for all diverse students coming from various ethnic, cultural, linguistic, economic, religious, and social classes or groups. In terms of classroom instruction, those dispersedly distributed topics, concepts, and elements of MC and MCE as tolerance, equality, justice, ethnicity, equity, and democratic principles need to be integrated by all teachers to encounter students’ differences. The big question, however, is that “how can teachers integrate the cultural contents into their classroom instructional process?” As reported in the findings, when teachers involve to make it practical, most of the time they consider their students at different educational level as academic or achievement difference, knowledge or understanding level, language skill, and whatever. But as a culture, students have their own culture related within teaching and learning procedures of various subjects. This is partially because the manner in which the educational materials, concepts, and value systems from a variety of cultures are not well-integrated as contents in the curriculum of the College. Teachers in the College haven’t been applying the core dimensions of MCE in the right way although they exert it to some extent to consider in their education when they offer a certain course.

It means that only to a certain extent teachers make use of multicultural issues in their class. This might be different from department to department. For example, in the curriculum and instruction, in the area of

language, and/or in the area of that concerned the society (environmental science) this could be the concept but if we look into other curriculum systems, especially in the pure sciences, there is no such kind of cultural views because the curriculum is constructed on the basis of the cultural aspect of that Western society. Nevertheless, teachers are relatively acting to offer their courses for multicultural students according to their socio-cultural backgrounds focusing culturally sensitive issues to help them respect and tolerate each other so that they can be successful in their learning. Informatively, some teachers have developed passion to harmonize and assist students with diversity in the classroom using their own personal experiences, technical skills, and knowledge they gained from some education and through reading different multicultural and multilingual materials. MCE as an experience of the individuals in the society designed to help the society to work well harmoniously and respectfully (Özturgut, 2011). Meaning, the results further analyze the extent of motivation and encouragement of College teachers to engage responsibly and happily on the dimensions of MCE is somehow appreciable.

Most academic staffs believe that the degree of inspiration of teachers to have involved on the learners' diversity and the practice of MCE dimensions in a classroom as well as in all environment of the College has become relatively increasing. However, the findings do not substantiate the readiness and dedication of the College to effectively guide teachers towards well-intentioned motivation and initiation in the implementation of MCE. This is not adequately supported by the research findings. In this line, what has precisely indicated in the literature in the field of education is that "success or failure of MCE depends on the effective preparation of teachers and administrators" (Smith, 2009). Overall, when we see the rate at which teachers applied in MCE is low because it is obvious that they have been implementing education system in unequal manner for all regardless of diversities in the culture, in the economic, and religious backgrounds is still unsatisfactory. Some teachers associate this with the failure of the ETP of Ethiopia and they comment that a more general emphasis has given on paper for MCE. The investigation of this study verified that there is still lack of proper management and loosely established link between the policy at national level and the actual practice of MCE on the ground. The policy-practice gap is realized because appropriate decision has not made primarily by College administrators, academic commission or staff, curriculum designers, and other stakeholders as to minimize the prevailing problems. In this, Vaughn (2007) elucidates "defining MC and putting it from theory into practice are two crucial points on official agendas." At this point, it is observed that there has been considerable break in education policy with respect to the way the issues of MCE are managed at Hawassa CE. In a rare case, some College teachers strongly asserted that the ETP is a well-crafted and comprehensive educational document that gives significant emphasis to the practice of MC and MCE (Multicultural Education Curriculum). However, the challenge lies in the implementation process, as the policy itself is not lacking in any aspect. It is a complete framework for education. The issue of a perceived disconnect between the conceptual framework and the practical aspect of the education system does not originate from the policy itself, but rather from its actual application/ enactment on the ground.

The findings evidently show that the ETP of Ethiopia did not open a room for the involvement of teachers in the Colleges of Education during the time of curriculum development. That is what is missing in the field of education as nothing can be fruitful in the absence of teachers' active engagement to practice basic dimensions of MCE in the classroom. As a staunch reaction, when the fundamental principles of MCE and theories of education policy are coincidentally translated into practice in the class, cultural pluralism would be the corner stone for strengthening national unity, stabilizing political stability, and building peace and security with the intent of sustaining economic growth. On this occasion, Fullinwider (2001) adds that unconditionally initiated and high level responsibilities of teachers are very crucial in creating classrooms where learners practice and learn based on their core themes of MC. Significantly, the outcome of the study insightfully brings about that teachers in classroom teaching-learning process are interested in using active learning methods to accommodate multicultural behavior of their learners. The study more soundly declares

the involved teachers have academically become happy and smart enough to teach diversified classrooms because dealing with MC is not by itself a problem, rather it is a good opportunity to help learners provide equal learning access in the course of instruction and construction. Most of the teachers are professionally ready to be committed and some of them have been endeavoring on applying co-operative teaching-learning strategies to address the specific needs of culturally diverse students as a principal dimension of MCE.

The study informs that being eager and conscious to properly consume participatory methods of teaching in every occasion of learning is mandatory for a teacher as he or she has, in turn, become mentally satisfied and desirable by accommodating cultural differences in a single class to promote learning pace of every learner. Strengthening this, Banks (2010) establishes that equity pedagogy as teaching strategy and classroom environment helps students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and create and perpetuate, a just, humane, and democratic society. In the findings, teachers of the College see that equity pedagogy has smoothly and formally practicing in regular classroom as a fundamental principle of MCE so as to approach and aid students with distinctive behavior of learning. Diligently, teachers acknowledge the classroom teaching learning process and generating of equal instructional opportunities for all learners regardless of their diversity in many respects. Active learning or modern teaching strategies and readiness to work with team spirit as collaborative learning approaches have employed by most of the teachers to consider equity pedagogy among students during classroom lesson. Although a promising effort has made, however, there are challenges in some regards to justly provide and access educational opportunities for all students with cultural diversities and individual differences. The preferred evidence for this fact is that the result gained claims that there exists a clear gap in the appropriation of an equity pedagogy method of teaching. There is a consideration of insufficient use of active learning methods and little association between the selection of teaching methods and classroom instructional contents to efficiently harmonize MCE dimensions.

Teachers are ideally well-equipped, have deserved relevant information, knowledge, and skill, and become aware to apply the core dimensions of MCE in their classroom as to empower school culture and social structures. Things are going more or less satisfactorily as teachers are conceptually informed to construct new knowledge base by their own effort towards MCE. Of course, it is mandatory to see an extended trend of cultural celebration and festivity in the College among various ethnic groups to build common understanding. Concurrently, Pedersen (2007) suggests that the major components of multicultural competence (awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes), and a recent addition, critical thinking should be integrated across curricula so that students should have the knowledge and the skills to recognize otherness. But, still teachers claim that they lack necessary skills to effectively run MC, in which the current status of the College teachers to scale-up MCE field of study requires supplementary knowledge, attitude, and skill development training. Accordingly, it is true that transformative teaching requires acquired knowledge and skills towards the cultural other. It also stimulates critical thinking as it is a combination between awareness of the self and of the other and the ability to acquire knowledge about the other being as bias-free (Pedersen, 2007).

Relatedly, even though the finding confirms that academic staffs have not taken special training in the field of MCE, they are engaged to contextualize the basic elements of their respective courses by focusing on local realities from diverse students' background. The idea has direct or indirect tie with MCE, explaining the major components of MC in view of content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structures within the wider philosophical scope of educational systems (Banks, 2010). All things considered, the findings obtained from the study thus explain self-commitment and self-motivation in instructional process are key ingredients to help involve teachers and have been serving as vehicle for the promotion and facilitation of teaching diversified classrooms as well as skillfully manage culturally pluralistic society in their natural environment. This means, the findings display

that cultural differences reflected in the learning behavior of students from various socio-economic backgrounds in the College as well as anywhere in the world at large, are inevitably natural condition for pluralistic societies. It is so clear that cultural celebration in connection with the basic dimensions of MCE will enable every learner to see him/her cultural, social, and education identity in relation to others' socio-economic backgrounds so as to consciously understand cultural diversity and the benefit of MCE (Banks, 2010). On the way, a majority of the academic staffs concur that students are enjoying cultural celebrities as to promote MC and MCE in the compound of the College though the study reports that it is found to be low.

There is thus a complaint in which the issues of diversity and elements of MCE in the College are not exercised well and celebrated as needed. To increase a decrease in celebrating cultural festivities in the College, it is better to recognize, respect, acknowledge, accommodate and value differences in all aspects of students learning. The situation here may be changed by using one of the most circulated definitions of multicultural competence as "the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures or with different social and economic backgrounds" (Vaughn, 2007). On this account, to re-adjust and balance the defects being observed in the celebration of cultural pluralism and social interactions among learners would skillfully be administered as one of the prime concerns. Day-to-day habit of instructional process and sensitive cultural elements should be re-focused once again as a counter part of isolation, discrimination, segregation, and marginalizing of individuals (students) due to their diverse identity is denying humanity. The issue of MCE should be among the priorities of education policy as they are crucial elements and critical agendas for EIs where students can develop understanding about a varied socio-economic aspect of their colleagues. In this, MCE, as the common term used to describe the type of pluralist education where its advocates are seeking for all children receiving an education, pre-K through College (Jay & Jones, 2005).

The respondents in the study undoubtedly view the physical, educational, and social environment of Hawassa CE is very conducive, inclusive and attractive to practice the dimensions of MCE and gender-responsive pedagogy. Briefly, it is elaborated that gender responsive pedagogy is about "teaching and learning process that pays attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys" (Banks & Banks, 2010). Hence, the outcome of this study reflects teachers' role and ultimate engagement to translate the philosophical principles of MCE into effect and apply gender-responsive teaching methodology in the College could not be substituted by someone else. It, therefore, calls for teachers to take an all-encompassing gender approach in the process of lesson planning, teaching, and classroom management and performance evaluation. The Colleges' learning and working environment is found to be fine for both male and female students coming from various cultural, religious, linguistic, economic, social, and educational backgrounds. In other way, some individual-teachers felt that the room opened and focus given for the effective conduction of gender-responsive teaching in connection with the implementation of MCE still needs further re-consideration. Interestingly, the study reveals that, in most cases, classroom instructional interactions as well as external conditions of the College are freer from social injustice, stereotyping, prejudices, discrimination, and illogical beliefs.

While, on the other side, it is implied that there might be a sort of inconvenience in some amount as things by any means cannot be fully bias-free and completely perfect. In this regard, the College should wisely try to newly plan and put strategies into effect to accommodate and value cultural diversity and the major components of MCE. The finding of the study exhibits that an insignificant number of teachers in the College are involving having ability, skill, and knowledge on how to conduct basic as well as problem solving study on MC and dimensions of MCE. As to this, Belay & Abdinisir (2015) describe scientific research as systematic, orderly, disciplined, and planned composed of series of steps that eventually lead to solving the problem at hand. On the contrary, the large quantity of academic staffs are not doing conventional and action research

studies in the field of MCE in relation to their subject-matter they are offering for learners in their work place. When seen critically, the degree of involvement and level of engagement of teachers to carry out any research investigation in this new discipline can only be concluded as either little or bare. Due to the deficiency of research study, students' cultural diversities and differences as common pressing demands and the practice of MCE dimensions at Hawassa CE are so bounded by such a problem, badly impacting the intended goals to achieve. Based on this analysis, it can be inferred that the success or failure of students' academic performance and institutional effectiveness is not primarily determined by the presence or absence of diversity among learners.

The key issue identified is the lack of professional commitment, initiative, and adequate provision of knowledge and skills development training among College teachers and seminary stakeholders. Notably, the results clearly testify that modular curriculum preparation lacked its purpose to regulate and focus on the practice of MC and MCE on the ground. The reason is that the preparation of multicultural curriculum materials does not treat much the multicultural issue and incorporate the element of MCE contextually and sufficiently. This is an implication of the prevalence of deep-rooted problem and challenge realized in this sensitive and vast field of education, which has seriously affecting the effectiveness of teaching diversified groups. Furthermore, when one examines their languages and the flow of overall concepts, it can be judged that they are produced hasty and ideas are redundantly repeated because they are direct extracts of the web-sites. Some major parts of their contents do not coincide with Ethiopian situation. This is a great question to be answered and highly demanding so that the educational materials should be refined carefully through active engagement of academic staff and the College directors in order to enhance MCE dimensions. This statement is evidenced by the finding that the College is not responsibly acting to modify and assign teachers to make shape for those haphazardly prepared multicultural curriculum materials to respond to the wide spread interests of diverse students.

And also, the College has no well-defined instructional strategic plan to control over academic activities with respect to the practice of MC and dimensions of MCE. As a result, nothing has been delegated to teachers from academic commission of the College to direct them design their own instructional planning in view of their students' diverse socio-cultural aspects. Against to this, literature in the field supports that multicultural teacher education needs to include but extend beyond particular courses to more expanded venues that provide opportunities for collaboration and critical reflection in action over time (Jennings & Smith, 2002). On account of the reluctant behavior of the College leadership, the possibility of creating knowledge formation, incentive provision, attitude reformation, and research conduction for teachers to arouse their emotion to sufficiently promote the fundamental principles of MCE as designed in the ETP remains questionable and bare state. On the contrary, however, the review study displays when teachers and administrators understand the learning needs of students and recognize how these needs can be different than the needs of the students from the dominant culture, and then the actual learning occurs (Özturgut, 2011). On the way, lack of awareness, professional commitment, skilled man-power, research investigation, insufficiency of educational resources, clear-cut planning and well-defined objectives on how to manipulate dimensions of MCE are some of the major damaging effects. It is conclusive that the government of Ethiopia in its education policy and curriculum design incorporated the issues of MC and MCE in general terms, but the implementing strategies are missing. Sensually, there is a need for the stakeholders from top-to-bottom and vice-versa to work very hardly for the effectiveness of MCE and related issues.

In a multicultural country, ensuring equal access and opportunities for learning goes beyond the mere provision of educational facilities. It requires active acknowledgement, respect, recognition, accommodation, and valuing of all the differences and diversities present in various aspects of society. This inclusive approach is vital in actively engaging and providing equitable learning opportunities for all members of the community.

Visibly, a greater number of teacher-respondents have reacted with a high level of concern as the role of MCE is notably pivotal for country's national integration, peacemaking, political stability, sense of friendship, and bringing the spirit of tolerance. That is, if implemented appropriately, MCE plays a key role in strengthening unity, securing peace and stability in the whole walks of pluralistic society. In this study, however, it is proved that the involvement and endeavor of teachers and stakeholders at different levels of educational system to actualize the basic perspectives of MCE is not satisfactory. If the fundamental dimensions of MCE and cultural pluralism are unresponsively ignored to implement, the fate of the country may be exposed to disintegration and dismantling in a greater degree ethnically, politically, economically, socially, and culturally. As a testimony, Banks discusses that those "multicultural-oriented education policies and curricula may not be fruitful on the ground if the teacher educators, as the key actors, lack self-commitment, skills, and dispositions to offer courses in diversified classrooms" (Banks, 2010).

## 5. Conclusions and Implications

The main goal of this qualitative case study was to deeply investigate the engagement of academic staffs towards the practice of fundamental dimensions of MCE in Hawassa CE. It was, therefore, based on the research findings and the related review literatures, the following conclusions and their implications were drawn.

The findings brought up an understanding about the efficient implementation of MCE as one of the fundamental discipline in a diverse country like Ethiopia can provide equal learning chance and equitable educational access for all students from various diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. Apparently, it is related with the literature in that "the value of multi-ethnic teaching is usually proportionate with the democratic practices of the country" (Mansikka & Holm, 2011). The study confirmed that the proper use of those five core dimensions of MCE in a multicultural classroom context maximizes teachers' confidence to understand social justice, equality, equity, tolerance, and unity in diversity as democratic values in education and inculcate them into the minds of each and every learner. Assuredly, Banks declared that "among the multicultural teaching's strengths is its stress on practices like justice, equality and democracy" (Banks, 2015).

This can, however, be effectuated in the teaching-learning atmosphere if and only if teachers play a principal role to do with other stakeholders by incorporating MCE dimensions into their classroom lesson frequently to address students' diverse needs of learning. Of course, it is witnessed in the study that the intention of teachers was very strong to have eagerly involved on employing some relevant active learning methods for the practicability of MCE. This would not be meaningful unless the core MCE dimensions hold strong position in the class and there is smooth communication between deans of the College and academic staff to link it with the interests of the learners. In the statement of Banks (2010), it has critically justified that "what students learn should properly be selected and incorporated in the education policy of a country to reflect the cultures of the different societies, communities, and groups."

Insightfully, it was learnt that the one who teaches in the College with multicultural nature must be equipped with the relevant knowledge formation, skill training, and incentive provisions to promote learning in equality for students in a classroom situation with their unique characteristics. The role and heartedly commitment of teachers is inevitably important so that the provision of maximum potentials and continuous efforts can be considered. To increase the degree of effectiveness of MCE dimensions, all teachers should have in-depth awareness (ability to understand difference), ability to identify the existing deep-rooted problems, and professional dedication to conduct problem solving research investigation, particularly on MC as pressing issues. In principle, it is sure that the College leadership is expected to have a considerable awareness,

multidimensional perspective, and extended consciousness to encourage teachers in updating skills, widening their views, and furnishing with practical knowledge to efficiently experience MC and MCE.

Nonetheless, the findings depicted that the College did not have sufficient understanding and quality of overlooking to initiate and raise-up the interests of teachers towards the implementation of MCE. As a result, the academic staffs and management of the College were facing with some sort of challenges as lack of consideration, context-based strategic plans and educational materials to effectively define the core dimensions of MCE in terms of the national importance. It was scholarly argued that teachers should be provided by necessary “skill training (both verbal and non-verbal communication is fundamental when interacting with people from cultures different from our own) and produce relevant curriculum materials to practice MCE” (Pedersen, 2007). To this end, teachers should critically advance their knowledge (learning specific information about different cultures, the self and the individuals who are different from the self), be competent enough to intervene to increase knowledge about, and the manifestation of respect and recognition of cultural values that are different from the self’s cultural values (Pedersen, 2007).

It is so natural and greatly perceived that there must be a striving coordination among stakeholders to work together in order to achieve the intended goals of MCE as a nation, a region as well as a College. Side-by-side, the College should responsibly and closely supervise the overall academic activity and progress of both teachers and students so as to well-come and secure democratic and cultural values or benefits in educational process. This is because the ultimate goal of MCE is to attain self-transformation, transformation of educational setting, and societal transformation in consideration with pedagogical, sociological, and psychological advantages among culturally, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse students (Banks & Banks, 2014).

Confidently, it is opinionated that accommodating individual differences and diversities of learners in educational setting as well as in the society, contributes much more for developing common understanding. Valuing cultural diversity and handling ethnic identities in terms of their unique learning pace and demand can be a basic force that may help to build self-sufficient country. This might play great role in paving the way for sustainable development through the meaningful exercise of democratic principles and participation in socio-economic affairs in line with stabilizing nation-wide peace and security. It is acknowledged that MCE serves as a means of developing “sense of belongingness in the curriculum and that students’ culture has a contribution on the development of the society” (Banks, 2010).

Up on this, it was recognized in the study that MCE is tremendously contributing for the creation of fertile ground in realizing tolerance and national consensus among various diverse students or societies either by calming-down the feeling of fundamentalism and/or balancing a sense of superiority and inferiority complexes. The implication here is that the situation can therefore allow learners to largely widen their mental horizon in viewing the physical world by which they live together, help learn each other, ensure equity, reduce prejudices, and gain mutual benefits. That which is accepted as an explanation because it is strongly positioned that there is no option for a pluralist society as well as EIs with a diverse learning environment rather effectively implementing MCE. Accordingly, Banks (1997) and Hanley (2006) explain that “knowledge construction as one of the basic dimensions is a primary aspect of MCE because teachers can effectively teach multicultural so that students must reconstruct their world view.”

Although that is the case, the actual implementation of MCE lacked relevance as expected because of poor managerial skill and absence of a comprehensive strategic planning in the College. In spite of the fact, teachers are working with the spirit of tenacity and concern of respecting, accepting, and valuing the learners’ diversity relatively depending upon the basic dimensions of MCE (content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering of school cultures and social structures)

(Banks, 2010). In this study, what was brought into reality is that all administrative organ and academic staff were not significantly experiencing MCE in the College, as MCE has emerging as a new discipline in the field of education more recently. It was, therefore, identified as a new challenging area of study and not meaningfully adapted in the context of Hawassa CE.

In conclusion, to minimize the gap and implement MCE dimensionson the ground, truly professional commitment and self-motivation of teachers, purposely prepared curriculum materials, and well- planned instructional strategy are critically required. Therefore, the researchers recommended that the provision of awareness creation, skill development training, relevant research studies, and new forum for discussion, and opportunities to increase and improve an overall instructional process of MCE in the College should be organized considerably.

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