

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**The Inclusion of Community-Based Education in to Jimma University's Curricula: An Exploratory Investigation**

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**Abstract**

*Community-Based Education (CBE) is not a new idea. It has been nearly 30 years since CBE was introduced in to Jimma University's education system. It was introduced as a means of achieving educational relevance to community needs and consequently of implementing a community-oriented education program. However, no comprehensive and systematic study has been undertaken so far as to look in to the extent to which CBE courses are included in the university's curricula and uniformly implemented as per the guidelines and principles. This study therefore attempts to investigate the extent to which CBE courses are included in the curricula and implemented as per the guidelines. Data were collected using two methods namely document analysis and interview. Document analysis was used to investigate the extent to which CBE courses are included in the curricula and major pedagogical components addressed on CBE course syllabi. Accordingly, undergraduate and postgraduate curricula used for regular programs were reviewed using checklist. And interview was used to collect data from the University's Academic Vice President, Research, postgraduate and CBE senior director, Post Graduate Director, Deans and Community- Based education coordinators. The result of the study shows that CBE courses are included in all the curricula reviewed. The study further shows that the inclusion of CBTP course does not appear uniform in terms of the allocation of credit hours, course coding and format of course syllabus. Furthermore, in some programs the syllabi of CBE courses do not contain all important pedagogical components and this entails that CBE course syllabi are not well designed. Hence, it is recommended that CBE directors, coordinators and department heads should plan and work together so as to make certain that CBE course syllabi are well designed and adequately, and uniformly included in the university's curricula with the goal of ensuring proper implementation of the program .*

**Key Words:** *Community-Based Education, Curriculum, syllabus design, inclusion*

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Background of the Study**

Community-Based Education (CBE) is not a new idea. The recognition of the importance of community based training as Community development problem-solving mechanism has been documented since 1940s (Trostle, 1986; WHO, 1987).

CBE is conceptualized in various ways and implemented in different higher Education institutions in different ways. CBE can refer to a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage, and natural environments (EPA, 1998). In this way, community based education is often positioned as an alternative to more traditional forms of learning in which students may read about people, places, or events they have never experienced or to concepts that can only be understood abstractly. This means that in community based education, students, teachers, the community and representatives of different sectors should actively engage in curriculum development and its implementation (WHO, 1987; EPA, 1998).

The broad concept of CBE has been designed to give students opportunities to interact with people from a wide range of social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds (Seefeldt, 2000). CBE is a participatory learning process that includes formal (school-based) and non-formal (out-of school) education to facilitate widespread participation in re-orienting values towards community development and providing skills and knowledge for the entire population (Asefa, 2000). That means, on one the hand the program aims at promoting a synthesis of students' skills, knowledge, capabilities and attitudes directed towards priority needs by going beyond cognitive capacities and encompasses the social and emotional aspects of learning for specific populations. On the other hand, in community-based activities, the community provides a learning environment for education that is relevant to community needs.

CBE is also promoted as a way of developing stronger relationships between universities and the local communities, also increasing the community's investment in, understanding of, and supporting the educational institutions and the learning experiences it provides (EPA, 1998). The concept of CBE therefore goes beyond cognitive capacities and encompasses the social and emotional aspects of learning. The relationships that students create with adults are the overarching premise of community-based education. The emotional and social development of students come from the collaborative efforts of educational institutions and communities (as cited in O'Neil, 1997).

It has been nearly 30 years since CBE was introduced in JUs education system. This did happen in the former Jimma Institute of Health before it was amalgamated with Jimma College of Agriculture and form Jimma University in 1999(JU, 2010) as a way of enhancing the quality of its education and training via ensuring the relevance of the university's training programs .

The university's CBE implementation guideline clearly positioned CBE as a means of achieving educational relevance to community needs and consequently of implementing a community-oriented education program. It consists of learning activities that utilize the

community extensively as a learning environment. It is therefore, a win-win learning process where students use the community as a learning environment at the same time rendering services to the community through problem identification, prioritization, implementation and evaluation of the interventions in relation to the benefits reached to community and students in the learning process (JU, 2010, 2013)

The ultimate purpose of including CBE in to JUs curricula is to produce competent professionals who are responsive to the felt needs of the community through a developmental approach that contributes to improve the livelihood of society by involving the community and stakeholders in community development. It also aims at producing professionals who are socially accountable and ensures lifelong learning in the community through training, research and services in the community.

In order to achieve these objectives, the university has devised three major categories of courses and included them in the curricula as implementation strategies. These are:

- a. Community Based Training Program (CBTP), which is implemented in all undergraduate programs of the university in  $n-1$  formula where  $n$  represents the duration of the program in years.
- b. Team Training Program (TTP), whose implementation is limited to undergraduate programs of college of public health and medical sciences
- c. Developmental Team Training Program (DTTP), which is implemented at post graduate level including terminal degree programs and
- d. Students Research Project (SRP), which is undertaken at final year of each training program (JU, 2013; Asefa, 2000).

CBE is a means of training graduates who will be responsive to the society's needs. This implies that all CBE strategies should be designed in such a way that they related what students are taught in the class room to what is going on in the real life environment. Hence, as far as possible it should take place in an environment that closely resembles students will work after graduation.

Furthermore, in CBE the balance between varieties of educational setting is encouraged to assist students develop key desired skill to the acceptable level. This is achieved when the prospective occupational tasks of the graduates are clearly stated in the program in the form of graduate profile, and the selection of curriculum contents, activities and assessment techniques are geared towards the growth of these profiles (FULOP, 1983; WHO, 1987).

Syllabus in general and CBE course syllabi in particular should be well designed so as to properly guide students both in and outside class room. A sound syllabus can serve as a highly effective facilitator of student learning (Grunert, 1997; Pastorino, 1999), something that many faculties and institutions may not fully consider (Woolcock, 2000).

In a literature we can find three major roles that syllabi might serve and the corresponding implications for syllabus content. These important functions include (a) serving as a contract, (b) serving as a permanent record, and (c) serving as an aid to student learning.

As a contract the syllabus serves to set forth what is expected during the term of the contract—typically a semester—and to guide the behaviors of both parties. More specifically, the syllabus should delineate the responsibilities of students and of the instructor for various tasks, including attendance, assignments, examinations, and other requirements (Matejka & Kurke, 1994).

Instructors are held accountable for their performance through processes such as annual reviews, merit pay reviews, and promotion and tenure reviews (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). As part of the review process, course syllabi are often used to communicate information about the instructor's teaching ability (Hutchings, 1996; Kahn, 1993; Malik, 1996; Seldin, 2000). In addition, as a permanent record a syllabus can serve to document what is covered in a course; at what level, scope and depth; and credit. When students wish to transfer credits from one institution to another institution or to substitute one course for another, the course syllabus may be used to help determine whether or not the request is appropriate.

A syllabus is also expected to serve as a tool for supporting students learning. A well-designed syllabus can provide information that assists students to become more effective learners in areas that go beyond the scope of our own courses. In addition, a sound syllabus is designed in such a way that it focuses on the students and the need to be effective learners (Grunert, 1997). Such a syllabus will provide several pieces of useful information for students, in addition to the contractual and documentary material previously mentioned.

A well designed syllabus should consist of all components that provide adequate information for the learners (Altman, 1999). Ideally, a syllabus may include the instructor's plan for the course, a statement of the course's general purpose, the instructor's orientation to the content, suggestions for students on how to approach the course content strategically, and course goals (Markie, 1994).

The syllabus should clearly communicate specific activities the learners should carry out, what the learners are expected to achieve after successful accomplishment of the activities, how to undertake the activities, assessment modalities and required learning resources (Davids, 1993; Grunert, 1997 ). Furthermore, there should be a strong alignment between these components of course syllabi and this can be achieved when graduate profiles are considered as foundation for the formulation of all these various components. More specifically, Davis (1993) suggests that, in the syllabus, the instructor should:

1. Explain the rationale for the sequence of topics,
2. Define the format for class presentations and activities,
3. Specify the materials students need for the class,
4. Describe all student assignments and requirements,
5. Explain how work will be graded and its weight,
6. Explain student responsibilities and the reason(s) for course policies,
7. Describe how students with special needs may arrange to receive appropriate accommodations,
8. Specify the course calendar including specific opportunities that permit student feedback and other important dates,

9. Describe the time commitments successful students are likely to make,
10. List additional sources students can use to supplement required sources, and
11. Provide a section where students write in names and phone numbers of others in the class

Although many of the syllabus components suggested above may seem standard or obvious to many instructors, Rubin (as cited in Diamond, 1989) found that, in practice, course syllabi frequently lack one or more of these components.

The effectiveness of CBE demands active engagement of students in real, authentic and attractive environment. Teachers are expected to make use of various active learning methods and create attractive learning environment in which students learn with high motivation and interest. Hence, the role of teachers is limited mainly to facilitation of students learning. In addition, every activity of students should be related to program goals and objectives and these activities should be introduced very early in the training program and must continue throughout the training program (WHO, 1987; Asefa, 2000).

### **Statement of the Problem**

CBE is the oldest program in JU as it has been implemented in the university since 1983 with the ultimate objective of contributing to the university's effort in training competent graduates who can effectively and efficiently solve practical societal problems. Implementation strategies are devised and informed policies and guidelines are developed to ensure uniform and smooth implementation of the program in all curricula of the university. However, no comprehensive and systematic study has been undertaken so far so as to look in to the extent to which CBE courses are included in the university's curricula and uniformly implemented as per the guidelines and principles. Such a study plays pivotal role in identifying best practices and challenges with ultimate purpose of expanding and capitalizing on the best practices and provide invaluable input for decision makers so as to eliminate the challenges. This study therefore attempts to investigate the extent to which CBE courses are included in to the curricula and implemented as per the guideline. This study aims at exploring the extent to which CBE courses are adequately and uniformly included in to Jimma university's curricula. The assessment considers the guidelines prepared by the university to incorporate CBE courses in to all its undergraduate and postgraduate programs. It further tries to explore the design of CBE syllabi across all the programs of the university. The study is further guided by the following basic research questions.

- A. How adequately and uniformly are CBE courses included in the university's curricula?
- B. To what extent are important components present in CBE course syllabi in order to facilitate students learning?

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

### **Design**

A cross-sectional research design was employed to investigate the extent of inclusion of CBE courses in to the university's curricula.

### **Sources of data**

In order to investigate the extent to which CBE courses are included in the university's curricula, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Academic Vice President, Research, postgraduate and community based Education Senior Director, Post Graduate Director, Deans and Community- Based education coordinators were the secondary sources of data, whereas the university's curricula document obtained from academic programs and quality assurance office of the university were used as primary sources of data.

### **Sampling**

A total of 53 post graduate and 34 undergraduate programs curricula were reviewed. All post graduate and undergraduate curricula available in the office of Academic Programs and Quality Assurance Office of the university during the study were included in the review. In addition, the Vice President for Academic, Research, and student Affairs, Research, Postgraduate and Community based Education senior director, Post Graduate Director, Deans and Community- Based education coordinators were purposively selected for interview.

### **Methods of data collection**

Data were collected using two methods namely document analysis and interview. Document analysis was used as a main method of data collection. A checklist consisting of closed ended questions was used to extract data from curricula documents. It was used to collect data from the university's curricula to investigate the extent to which CBE courses are included in the curricula, and major pedagogical components are present in CBE course syllabi. Accordingly, undergraduate and postgraduate curricula used for regular programs were reviewed using checklist. Interview was used to augment data collected through document analysis. Accordingly Academic Vice President, Research, Postgraduate and Community-Based Education senior director, Post Graduate Director, Deans and Community- Based education coordinators were interviewed. The major components of the interview were mechanisms in place in the university to ensure the adequate inclusion of CBE courses, adequacy of credit hours allotted to CBE courses, schedule of CBE courses and the status of CBE in the newly modularized curricula.

### **Data analysis Methods**

A checklist consisting of close ended questions was used to collect data from curricula documents. Hence data obtained through the checklist was described using frequency and percentage. In addition, qualitative data collected through interview were categorized thematically and analyzed verbatim as a supplementary to data collected through document analysis.

## **RESULTS**

The study aims at investigating the extent to which CBE courses were included in to the university's curricula and the level to which the different curricula addresses important pedagogical components. Furthermore, review of the existing curricula and key informant interview were used to collect relevant data. Accordingly, the results and analysis obtained via the two methods are presented here under.

### **Profile Curricula Reviewed**

In this section the various profiles of the reviewed curricula are presented. Accordingly, number of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula reviewed, program duration and year in which the reviewed curricula are endorsed are described. In Table 1 profile of the reviewed curricula is presented in terms of their level and mode of delivery.

**Table 1:**

Number of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programs Reviewed

Programs		Colleges															
		JIT		CPHMS		BECO		CAVM		CSSL		CNS		IEPDS		TOTAL	
Program level		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	N	%
	Undergraduate	7	87.5	8	57.1	4	57.1	6	33.3	20	87	7	46.7	1	50	53	60.9
	Graduate	1	12.5	6	42.9	3	42.9	12	66.7	3	13	8	53.3	1	50	34	39.1
	Total	8	100	14	100	7	100	18	100	23	100	15	100	2	100	87	100
Program Mode	Regular	5	62.5	14	100	7	100	13	72.2	12	52.2	14	93.3	0	0	65	74.7
	Summer	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	27.8	9	39.1	1	6.7	2	100	17	19.5
	Evening	3	37.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8.7	0	0	0	0	5	5.7
	Total	8	100.0	14	100	7	100	18	100	23	100	15	100	2	100	87	100



As can be seen from the Table 1, 53(60.9%) undergraduate and 34(39.1%) postgraduate programs are reviewed to look into the extent to which CBE courses are included in the various curricula in the university. The same table shows that 65(74.7%), 17(19.5) and 5(5.7%) of the curricula are regular, summer and evening programs respectively. Furthermore, the majority of the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula reviewed are from College of Social Science and Law and College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. This is due to the fact that compared to the others CSSL and CPHMS have more number of undergraduate and postgraduate programs respectively. Above all, this data demonstrate that the majority of the programs are considered for review. Moreover, colleges and various mode of delivery are represented so as to enhance the representativeness of the sample and validity of the findings as well.

In Table 2 profiles of the reviewed curricula in terms of duration of the program and colleges is presented.

**Table 2:**

Duration of the Various Programs for Which the Curricula Are Reviewed

Programs	Colleges																
	JIT		CPHMS		BECO		CAVM		CSSL		CNS		IEPDS		TOTAL		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1	1	16.7	5	35.7	3	42.9	7	38.9	1	4.5	5	33.3	1	50	23	27.4	
2	0	0	2	14.3	4	57.1	10	55.6	10	45.5	7	46.7	1	50	34	40.5	
3	0	0	5	35.7	0	0	0	0	3	13.6	0	0	0	0	8	9.5	
4	5	83.3	1	7.1	0	0	0	0	3	13.6	3	20	0	0	12	14.3	
5	0	0	1	7.1	0	0	1	5.6	3	13.6	0	0	0	0	5	6.0	
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9.1	0	0	0	0	2	2.4	
7	6	100	14	100	7	100	18	100	22	100	15	100	2	100	84	100	
<b>Total</b>	1	16.7	5	35.7	3	42.9	7	38.9	1	4.5	5	33.3	1	50	23	27.4	

When we come to the duration of the program, the majority of the curricula reviewed 34(40.5%) are three years program followed by 23(27%) that are two year program. This is due to the fact that the majority of the undergraduate programs except in the College of public Health and Medical Sciences and Institute of Technology are three year programs and all post graduate Masters Programs except specialty trainings which are two year programs (see Table 2).

**Table 3:**

Year in which the Analyzed Curricula are Endorsed

	College														
	CPHMS		BECO		CAVM		CSSL		CNS		IEPDS		Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2001	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	1.4
2005	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
2007	0	0	1	14.3	1	5.6	1	5.6	0	0	0	0	0	3	4.3
2008	5	50	0	0	6	33.3	7	38.9	1	7.1	0	0	19	27.5	
2009	1	10	4	57.1	8	44.4	0	0	6	42.9	1	50	20	29	
2010	3	30	2	28.6	2	11.1	5	27.8	1	7.1	0	0	13	18.8	
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	27.8	4	28.6	0	0	9	13	
2012	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	14.3	0	0	3	4.3	
<b>Total</b>	10	100	7	100	18	100	18	100	14	100	2	100	69	100	

As depicted in Table 3 the majority of the programs reviewed are the ones which were endorsed in 2008 and 2009. 19(27.5%) and 20(29%) were endorsed in 2008 and 2009 respectively. This is due to the fact that except few, the majority of the undergraduate programs were harmonized at national level during these years and endorsed by the university senate the same years. This implies that greater parts of the programs analyzed are the ones which were recently reviewed.

**The extent to which philosophy of CBE is reflected in the different components of the curricula**

This section presents the extent to which CBE philosophy is addressed in the different components of the university's curricula. Particularly, it presents the extent to which the philosophy is reflected in the background, rationale and graduate profile of the curricula.

**Table 4:** The Extent to Which CBE Philosophy is Addressed in the Different Components of the Curricula

		College															
		JIT		CPHMS		BECO		CAVM		CSSL		CNS		IEPDS		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Background</b>	Extensive	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	0	0	2	13.3	0	0	3	3.4
	Briefly	3	37.5	1	7.1	0	0	1	5.6	1	4.3	5	33.3	1	50	12	13.8
	None	5	62.5	13	92.9	7	100	16	88.9	22	95.7	8	53.3	1	50	72	82.8
	<b>Total</b>	8	100	14	100	7	100	18	100	23	100	15	100	2	100	87	100
<b>Rationale</b>	Extensive	0	0	1	7.1	0	0	0	0	1	4.3	0	0	0	0	2	2.3
	Briefly	4	50	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	1	4.3	2	13.3	1	50	9	10.3
	None	4	50	13	92.9	7	100	17	94.4	21	91.3	13	86.7	1	50	76	87.4
	<b>Total</b>	8	100	14	100	7	100	18	100	23	100	15	100	2	100	87	100
<b>Graduate Profile</b>	Extensive	1	12.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.1
	Briefly	0	0	0	0	1	14.3	3	16.7	0	0	4	26.7	1	50	9	10.3
	None	7	87.5	14	100	6	85.7	15	83.3	23	100	11	73.3	1	50	77	88.5
	<b>Total</b>	8	100	14	100	7	100	18	100	23	100	15	100	2	100	87	100

Table 4 depicts the extent to which CBE philosophy is addressed in the different components of the curricula. Accordingly, the majority 72 (82.8%) of the curricula have nothing about CBE philosophy in their background part and it is extensively described in the background of only 3(3.4%) of the curricula. The three curricula with extensive description of CBE philosophy in their background part belong to College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (CAVM) and College of Natural Science (CNS). Similarly, 76(87.4%) of the curricula have nothing about CBE philosophy in their rationale part while only 2(2.3%) and 9(10.3%) of the curricula have extensively and briefly addressed CBE philosophy in their rationale. The two curricula that extensively addressed CBE philosophy in their rationale part are found in College of Public Health and Medical Sciences (CPHMS) and College of Social Science and Law (CSSL). Coming to graduate profile, the majority (77, 87%) of the curricula do not try to link graduate profile of the graduates with the CBE philosophy at all whereas 9(10.3%) and 1(1.1%) of the curricula have tried to address CBE philosophy in their graduate profile in briefly and extensive respectively. In short this result tells us that majority of the university's curricula do not reflect CBE philosophy.

#### **Design of CBE courses in different Curricula**

This section presents how CBE courses are designed. Particularly, this section attempts to examine Credit hours allocated to CBE courses, distribution of the courses over years and semesters and the extent to which CBE course syllabi consists of all important pedagogical elements.

Table 5:

Credit hours Allocated to CBE Courses

		Credit hours								Total	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	15	30		
CBE courses	CBTP I	N	0	6	35	1	1	0	0	0	43
		%	0	14	81.4	2.3	2.3	0	0	0	100
	CBTP II	N	0	7	33	2	0	0	0	0	42
		%	0	16.7	78.6	4.8	0	0	0	0	100
	CBTP III	N	0	1	8	1	2	0	0	0	12
		%	0	8.3	66.7	8.3	16.7	0	0	0	100
	CBTP IV	N	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		%	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
	DTTP	N	0	2	25	2	0	0	0	0	29
		%	0	6.9	86.2	6.9	0	0	0	0	100
	TTP	N	0	0	1	5	0	4	0	0	10
		%	0	0	10	50	0	40	0	0	100
	SRP	N	1	7	36	0	0	15	3	0	62
		%	1.6	11.3	58.1	0	0	24.2	4.8	0	100
Other	N	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	3	10	
	%	0	30	30	0	0	0	10	30	100	
<b>Total</b>	N	1	26	142	11	3	19	4	3	209	
	%	.5	12.4	67.9	5.3	1.4	9.1	1.9	1.4	100	



As can be seen from Table 5 above in 35(81.4%) of the curricula CBTP I is given with 3 credit hour while in 6(14.0%), 1(2.3%) and 1(2.3%) of the curricula the same course is offered with 2, 4 and 5 credit hour respectively. In the same manner in most 33 (78.6%) of the curricula CBTP II is given with 3 credit hour while in 7(16.7%) and 2(4.8%) of the programs it is being offered with 2 and 4 credit hour respectively. Like CBTP I and II most CBTP III course is offered with 3 credit hour. Coming to DTTP which is given at postgraduate level in the majority of the programs 25(86.2%) it is given with 3 credit hours though there are programs in which it is offered with 2 and 3 credit hour. TTP which is unique to CPHMS is offered with 4 and 6 credit hours in most of the programs though there is a program in which it is offered with 2 credit hours. SRP which is believed to be the final phase of CBE is offered with 3 credit hour in the most 36(50.8%) of the programs. However, there are still programs in which it is offered with 1, 2 and 6 credit hour. In short this result tells us that allocation of credit hour for CBE courses over years and semesters are not consistent across colleges and programs.

### **Distribution of CBE courses**

The different CBE courses are logically designed to be offered in different semesters and years. The distribution is expected to be uniform across colleges and programs. Table 6 depicts the distribution of CBE courses over years and semesters

**Table 6:**  
Distribution of CBE Courses over Years and Semesters

		CBE Course								
		CBTP I	CBTP II	CBTP III	DTTP	TTP	SRP	Other	Total	
Year in which it is offered	Semester offered	No	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		%	0	0	0	12.5	0	0	0	2.2
		No	33	3	0	7	0	0	1	44
		%	100	100	0	87.5	0	0	100	97.8
	Semester offered	No	5	6	0	13	0	3	2	29
		%	62.5	18.8	0	86.7	0	18.8	100	37.7
		No	3	26	1	2	3	13	0	48
		%	37.5	81.3	100	13.3	100	81.3	0	62.3
	Semester offered	No	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	6
		%	100	20	0	0	50	8.3	50	14.3
		No	0	4	8	0	1	22	1	36
		%	0	80	100	0	50	91.7	50	85.7

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Semester offered	No	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
	%	0	0	0	0	40	9.1	0	13
Semester offered	No	0	0	2	0	3	10	5	20
	%	0	0	100	0	60	90.9	100	87
Semester offered	No	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
	%	0	0	0	0	0	37.5	0	33.3
Semester offered	No	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
	%	0	0	0	0	100	62.5	0	66.7
Semester offered	No	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	%	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
Semester offered	No	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	100

Another point considered during the analysis of the curricula is course break down of CBE courses and years & semesters in which they are offered. Accordingly, as it is shown in Table 6, CBTP I is offered in the second semester of first year in 33 undergraduate programs and in 8 programs it is given in the first semester of second year and first semester of first year. Coming to CBTP II, in the majority 26 (81.3) of the programs it is offered in the second semester of year two while in some programs it is offered in the first semester of second year and second semester of third year. DTTP is offered in the first semester of second year in the majority 13(86.7%) of the programs though there are programs in which it is offered in the second semester of the first year. SRP, which is the last course of CBE is offered in the third year of second semester in most of the programs. This course is usually given in the second semester of the final year of every program though there are programs in which development of proposal begins on the first semester of final year. From this result it is not difficult to understand that the distribution of CBE courses over years and semesters are not consistent across colleges and programs in the university.

### **The Extent to which Important Pedagogical Elements are Included in CBE Courses**

Table 7 presents the extent to which major pedagogical elements, namely; course description, learning objectives, outline of the content, delivery method and assessment techniques are addressed in the different CBE courses.

**Table 7:**

The Extent to Which CBE Course Syllabi Consists of All Important Pedagogical Elements

		CBE Courses									
			CBTP I	CBTP II	CBTP III	CBTP IV	CBTP V	DTTP	TTP	SRP	Other
Course description	Yes	N	19	18	10	1	0	21	7	24	4
		%	44.2	42.9	83.3	100.0	0	72.4	58.3	36.4	40
	No	N	24	24	2	0	0	8	5	42	6
		%	55.8	57.1	16.7	.0	0	27.6	41.7	63.6	60
Learning objective	Yes	N	16	15	9	1	0	15	6	11	3
		%	37.2	35.7	75	100	0	51.7	50	16.7	30
	No	N	27	27	3	0	0	14	6	55	7
		%	62.8	64.3	25	.0	0	48.3	50	83.3	70
Content outline	Yes	N	11	10	7	1	0	8	5	9	3
		%	25.6	23.8	58.3	100	0	27.6	41.7	13.6	30
	No	N	32	32	5	0	0	21	7	57	7
		%	74.4	76.2	41.7	.0	0	72.4	58.3	86.4	70
Delivery method	Yes	N	9	8	8	1	0	9	5	9	2

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		%	20.9	19	66.7	100	0	31.0	41.7	13.6	20.0
	No	N	34	34	4	0	0	20	7	57	8
		%	79.1	81.0	33.3	0	0	69.0	58.3	86.4	80
Assessment method	Yes	N	9	8	8	1	0	10	5	10	2
		%	20.9	19	66.7	100	0	34.5	41.7	15.2	20
	No	N	34	34	4	0	0	19	7	56	8
		%	79.1	81	33.3	0	0	65.5	58.3	84.8	80
References	Yes	N	4	4	4	0	0	1	2	5	2
		%	9.3	9.5	33.3	0	0	3.4	16.7	7.6	20
	No	N	39	38	8	1	0	28	10	61	8
		%	90.7	90.5	66.7	100	0	96.6	83.3	92.4	80

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In addition to the inclusion of CBE in to the curricula, it was also attempted to investigate the extent to which each CBE course syllabus contains all major contents of course syllabus. Accordingly, as it can be seen from Table 7, in 24(55.8%), 27(62.3%), 32(74.4%), 34(79.1%), 34(79.1%) and 39(90.7%) of the programs the syllabus of CBTP I has no course description, learning objectives, content outline, delivery method, assessment methods and references respectively. Coming to CBTP II course syllabus it is only in 18(42.9%), 16(37.2%), 11(25.6%), 9 (20.9%), 9(20.9%) and 4(9.3%) that it has course description, learning objectives, content outline, delivery method, assessment methods and references respectively. Like previous CBE courses CBTP III course syllabus has no major components in significant number of the curricula of the university. For instance it has course objectives, methods of teaching and assessment in only 9(75%), 8(66.7%) and 4(33.3%) of the curricula respectively. The same table shows that DTTP course syllabus similarly has course description, learning objectives, content outline, delivery method, assessment methods and references in only 21(72.4%), 15(57.1%), 8(27.6%), 9(31%), 10(34.5%), 1(3.4%) of the curricula respectively. TTP course syllabus has also no course description, learning objectives, content outline, delivery method, assessment methods and references in 5(41.7%), 6(50%), 7(58.3%), 7(53.8%), 7(53.8%) and 10(83.3%) of the curricula respectively. Finally, SRP course syllabus has no course description, learning objectives, content outline, delivery method, assessment methods and references in 24(36.4%), 11(16.7%), 9(13.6%), 10(15.2%), 5(7.6%) of the curricula respectively. This result in short tells us that the Syllabi of CBE courses do not contain all important components and hence they are not well designed.

### **Interview result**

In addition to document analysis the researchers did interview with Deans, CBE coordinators, Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs of the university. Accordingly data obtained from the interviewees are categorized and presented themes of the process of endorsement of curricula in the university, schedule of CBE courses, adequacy of CBE Cr. Hrs allocated to CBE courses and the position of CBE courses in the newly modularized curricula.

### **The Process of Endorsement of Curricula in the University**

In the first place the interviewees were asked whether or not all curricula in the university and colleges as well are endorsed at college level. Accordingly all of the respondents have the view that curricula are endorsed at college level before approved by the senate. One of the CBE coordinators for instance stated that the curricula are endorsed at college level and adequate evaluation is done to make sure that CBE courses are appropriately included.

One of the deans in the same vein reported:

*Yes, the curricula are systematically endorsed by the college- the design is developed by the departments then it passes to the higher level. At college level, we make sure that CBE courses are properly accommodated uniformly with the same credit hours allotted universally.....(Interview # 1).*

From the above responses of the interview, one can understand that the interviewees have the view that all curricula are endorsed at college level. However, the endorsement at the university level seems titular as the finding from the analysis of curricula shows the absence of uniformity among the programs with regard to the inclusion of CBE courses and the design of the syllabi.

The interviewees were further asked the extent to which common courses including CBE were commonly designed at college level. Accordingly the respondents reported that CBE courses were commonly designed at college level. For instance one of the interviewees stated:

*.....yes, they are commonly designed. Therefore, CBE courses are the same across departments in credit hours, supervisor work load and procedure of supervision....(Interview # 3).*

When we compare these findings with that of the document analysis, it seems that the two contradicts. Though the respondents have the opinion that CBE courses are commonly designed at college level, the result of the curricula review showed that the design of the course syllabi and allocation of Crhrs are not uniform across the programs.

#### **Schedule of CBE courses**

The interviewees were also asked to reflect on the schedule of CBE courses. In view of that, the respondents explained that CBE courses have centrally approved schedule and implemented accordingly. One of the respondents for instance reported:

*.....Yes, I can tell you. DTTP is offered in September at the end of first year and at the beginning of second year. CBTP I is given in July to August end of the first year, meaning after the final exams for the second semester of year I. CBTP II is given at the beginning of the second semester of second year. And SRP is done throughout the second semester of the final year; the third year....(Interview # 2).*

#### **Another dean replied:**

*CBTP I for 1<sup>st</sup> year students at the end of first year second semester examination mostly in June. CBTP II for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in the middle of the second semester of 2<sup>nd</sup> year. DTTP is assumed to be offered right after the end of the first year of postgraduate programs which fluctuates between May and September. SRP is for all senior students, a requirement for graduation, offered usually at the second semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year for undergraduate students. Currently, the modularization movement seems to change the trend in which it is not yet resolved (Interview # 4).*

In addition there were also respondents who tried to reflect on the flexibility of schedule of CBE courses. One of the deans for instance stated:

*.....Coming to SRP, it is rather very flexible than others. Students are encouraged to select and submit their titles at the end of second year and start the proposals in summer,*



*collect data if possible and start analysis by third year first semester which is not actually a hard rule. In any way, they are supposed to complete their SRP by the middle of second semester of third year which gives them relaxed time for their final examination. This is a new proposal devised to avoid the tight schedule we used to encounter previously at the end of year III (To begin being practiced this year) (Interview # 7).*

From the participants response one can understand that CBE courses are uniformly scheduled throughout colleges though there are flexibilities on some areas due to logistics and others. This result may indicate that even though there are some variations on the curricula reviewed regarding the schedule of CBE courses, the actual implementation seems to be uniform across most of the programs in the university.

### **Adequacy of Credit Hours allotted for CBE courses**

Participants were also asked to explain whether or not CrHrs allotted for CBE courses are adequate. Accordingly all respondents have the understanding that CrHrs allotted for CBE courses are fair and appropriate.

### **The position of CBE courses in the modularized Curricula**

“What is the position of CBE in the new modularized curricula?” Was the last question presented to the interviews. Accordingly from the reflection of the respondents it could be understood that the participants have blurred insight about the inclusion of CBE in to the newly modularized curricula.

One of the interviewee for instance stated:

*As to CBE and the current modularization issue there is still confusion between merging the course together and thinking as a block. Currently, I heard that the top officials of JU are thinking to design CBE courses separately as it was the case before. Let's wait and see (Interview # 1).*

There were also interviewees who have the understanding that CBE courses are not included in the new modularized curricula of the university. One participant for instance responded that

*In curriculum harmonization, CBE is not included because other universities do not have CBE of the kind we have. It is debatable; yet, JU is committed to include CBE although the issue of merging courses CBE or following the former trend remains unsettled (Interview # 4).*

From the participants response thus one can understand that the officials at different levels of the university have no adequate and uniform understanding regarding the inclusion of CBE courses in to the newly harmonized modular curricula.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

- CBE courses were included in all regular and evening undergraduate programs. In summer program CBE courses are included in to undergraduate programs of College of Public Health and Medical Sciences only.
- In the inclusion of CBTP course the n-1 formula was maintained in all the programs of the university except Jimma Institute of Technology where n-2 is observed
- DTTP was included in all postgraduate programs except clinical specialty programs
- The allocation of credit hours to CBE courses was not uniform across colleges and programs
- Course coding of CBE courses was not uniform across programs. In some programs, for instance, the coding of DTTP course starts with DTTP where as in few cases it starts with the first three letter of the department for which the course is offered.
- The distribution of CBE courses over years and semesters were inconsistent across colleges and programs in the university
- The Syllabi of CBE courses did not contain all important pedagogical components and hence they were not well designed to offer adequate guidance for teachers and students during its implementation
- Officials at different level of the university had different views regarding the way in which CBE courses were planned to be included in to the newly modularized curricula. Some of them had no any idea about it.

### **DISCUSSION**

In the CBE guideline of the university it is clearly stated that CBE should be included in to all programs in the university regardless of the type disciplines and mode of training (JU, 2013). Contrary to this, the finding of this study revealed that there are programs in which these courses are missing and this would make the graduates of various training modalities (regular, summer, evening, distance) of the university to have different experiences and competencies.

In addition, the guideline states that the CBE courses should be uniformly included in all programs in the university based on n-1 formula. Furthermore, in the guideline it is stated that CBE is spiral by nature; the activities begin from year one to the end and it involves all problem solving steps (JU, 2013). To this end, the missing of any of the CBE course might make the program incomplete and deny students the opportunity to exercise the entire problem solving steps and this would impede the overall contribution of CBE courses in producing graduates who can understand and solve immediate and practical societal problems.

The allocation of credit hour to all CBE courses are decided at university level as the amount and types of activities in each courses are supposed to be similar despite differences in the target community across programs (JU, 2013). However, the finding of this study reveals that CBTP courses are being offered with different credit hours. In some programs CBTP courses are offered with 2 credit hours. This might have the indication

that where these courses are offered with less than 3 credit hours, all important activities are not adequately exercised and the course objectives might not be achieved to the desired level.

In order to maintain uniformity in the distribution of CBE courses over years and semesters, the coding of CBE courses are made centrally by CBE office of the university. Moreover, uniformity in coding of CBE courses has course management advantages. However, absence of uniformity might lead to inconsistency in the certification of the graduates.

A well written course syllabus serves as guideline to the learners and a learning contract between the learners and teachers (Altman 1999; Markie, 1994). In addition it helps students acquaints with the structure of the course, define students' responsibilities for success and determine their readiness for the course. It tells students what to do, when and why they should work on the activities (Grunnert, 1997; Davids, 1993; Wilkerson & McKnight, 1978). This entails that any type of course in any type of program needs to have well prepared course syllabus that consists of major components such as course description, objectives, contents, assessment techniques, learning resources and references. However, review of the syllabi of CBE courses pointed out that the syllabi do not properly describe all important pedagogical components and this would make the course insensible to the students. In addition, it would impede students' readiness, motivation and independent learning. For instance if the students are not well informed about the purpose and relevance of the course they might not be encouraged to accomplish the learning tasks they are supposed to perform to achieve the course objectives. This might in turn impedes the achievement of the intended learning objectives.

## **CONCLUSION**

Though CBE courses are included in all programs in the university (except distance programs and some summer courses) the courses are not uniformly incorporated in to the curricula as per CBE guideline of the university. In addition all important components of course syllabi are not adequately described in CBE course syllabi. This might implies that Colleges and departments are not well communicated about the principles and overall frame work of CBE courses in the university. Furthermore, it might also have the implication that strong mechanism is not in place to monitor the inclusion and implementation of CBE courses in all programs in the university.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- \* The CBE director office of the university should periodically arrange advocacy and awareness raising workshops to deans, department heads, CBE coordinators and instructors so as to assist them internalize the philosophy and guiding principles and implementation strategies of CBE.

- \* CBE coordinators at college level should check out the proper inclusion of CBE courses when new programs are endorsed by academic commission of their respective colleges. In additions, they should make sure that CBE courses consist of all pedagogical elements before endorsement at college level.
- \* In the departments where CBE course are not designed and included as per the university's guideline, CBE office at university and college level should urge them in order to improve the syllabi.
- \* Though the CBE and Academic Programs and Quality Assurance offices of the university proposed the possible ways of including CBE courses in the newly modularized curricula, the university senate could not yet discuss and settle the matter. Hence, the senate should quickly clear up the matter to avoid the messy situation that would encounter the university regarding the implementation of CBE.

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