SPECAL ISSUE

Awareness, Readiness, Commitment and Perception about the Pedagogical Relevance of CBE in Jimma University

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ABSTRACT

Jimma University has been practicing Community Based Education(CBE) for decades and is as such referred to as a National Pioneer in Community Based of Higher Education, the main objective of which is to achieve educational relevance to community needs by exposing students to the real world so that they develop team spirit through participation in integrated training, research and service delivery. This study was thus initiated by Jimma University as part of its commitment to improve the execution of CBE, its unique innovative educational approach. The main aim of this study unit was to investigate the state of the pedagogical implementation awareness, readiness, commitment and relevance of CBE in which this report is one of its elements,. To this effect, data were collected via questionnaire and administered to sample students (randomly selected from the class of 2012) and to purposely chosen academic staff members, in-depth interview was held with college/institute deans, CBE coordinators and higher officials of the university, and document review was conducted to see aspects of curricula in terms of the incorporation of key pedagogical features. The study revealed the existence of positive awareness, readiness and commitment from students (rated 72.3% between good and excellent incuisive), staff (rated 88.9% for average and above average) and officers (almost everyone) but yet to be improved to take it to a higher level. It also shows that the pedagogical relevance of CBE is unquestionable and to be encouraged. On the other hand, there are some limitations related to the level of acknowledgement of CBE in the curricula of the various programs of the university assumed to contain 20% of the components. Hence, the University is expected to revise its curricula of all programs in such a way that emphasis on the philosophy (CBE) shall be given due consideration.

***Key words**: CBE, learning agents, awareness, readiness, commitment, relevance*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Higher education should primarily aim to assist societal/community development although the approaches and strategies adopted to realize this goal can vary with variations in context and are liable to change due a host of factors (Council on Higher Education, 2006). To this effect, universities have the responsibility of producing competent personnel through appropriate training modes to equip trainees with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes (Staton, 2008 as cited in Badat 2009). In other words, universities can infuse with their training schemes and research activities issues of the community in which they operate. This kind of education, which uses the community as a learning environment, is called Community Based Education/CBE-a teaching-learning strategy that integrates community services with instruction aiming to enhance learning experience, instill civic responsibility and strength communities (http://www.cas.usf.edu.service).

CBE is believed to play a pivotal role in the University's endeavors to address critical community needs and contribute a meaningful share to development efforts of the country. Generally, community based education occupies a key position in the educational programs and research schemes of Jimma University.

Jimma University has been practicing this innovative educational approach for decades and is as such referred to as a National Pioneer in Community Based Higher Education the main objective of which is to achieve educational relevance to community needs by exposing students to the real world so that they develop team spirit through participation in integrated training, research and service delivery (Mekonen, 2000). Thus, as stated in its mission statement regarding CBE, Jimma University aspires to train high caliber professionals at undergraduate and graduate levels through its innovative CBE program strategic components of which are Community Based Training Program/CBTP, Team Training Program/TTP, Development Team Training Program/DTTP and Student Research Project/SRP (JU, 2005). The first strategy (CBTP) involves consecutive outreach practices whereby students go out to the community to identify, prioritize, plan, intervene and evaluate the community problems scientifically applying their campus level knowledge and developing skills, confidence and integrity. In this program, undergraduate students go to the field of the community for (n-1) times where n is the number of years for graduation for that specific program. That means, a five years program is required to go out for four times, once in a year. The next two (DTTP & TTP) are meant to solve community problems in a team of variety professional students at their senior level aiming to accomplish developmental work at higher level. It is done once throughout the training period for eight weeks or more emphasis given to a team spirit, team planning and team work. TTP is the oldest version still going on comprising different health professional while DTTP is the new revised version, assumed to accommodate all variety of students from different professions put together in one piece for one goal, currently exercised by the post graduate program students only (JU Task Force, 2003). The third one (SRP) is independent graduating student senior research work a requirement for final graduation emphasis given to solve societal problems in which both undergraduate and post graduate senior students should work on (JIHS, 1988; Site survey, 2005).

As CBE is believed to be part of the components of the curriculums of Jimma University, students awareness, attitude, readiness and commitment are ones among the many essential learning elements pedagogically. In this endeavor, challenges against such elements of learning are also challenges against the philosophy and hence against educational quality that gives attention to societal problems especially in the country like Ethiopia running like a hell for poverty reduction. Thus, the initiation researchers to worry about attitude, awareness, readiness, commitment of the learning agents and relevance of the activities going on at hand is to follow. This in return initiates researchers to conduct a scientific study to evaluate the quality of the learning activities, identify the challenges and flexibility of the schedule, and improve the system of successful implementation. The living experience being part of the learning agents, it has been the hear say that problems like lack of awareness level of the three parties: students, supervisors and officers (leaders and coordinators); supervision problem of assigned teachers along with evaluating their students in the field, the incentive complaint related to the hardship encountered in the field, the resource intensive nature of the programs, the community fatigue along with the community mobilization to keep up the sustainability of the service given during the intervention, and the like are said to be the drawbacks yet to be confirmed scientifically for a better improvement (Mekonen, 2009).

The purpose of this study is therefore to contribute to the large thematic study project of CBE designed by the University in identifying the status of awareness, readiness and commitment levels of important agents attached with CBE programs (like students, teachers, officers at different levels) and the relevance of the programs as perceived by these agents.

Statement of the Problem

As articulated in various documents, training professionals with knowledge, skills and attitudes which meet international standards, and ensuring that research is directly linked with societal needs, and development schemes are among the core values of Jimma University that pertain to CBE. Therefore, CBTP, TTP, DTTP and SRP activities are not viewed as casual experiences but as compulsory undertakings integral to the University's education, training and research programs. In line with the importance attached to it, the execution of CBE is carefully managed and is done through concerted efforts. CBTP, TTP, DTTP and SRP activities are hence accomplished according to specific schedules, based on defined financial and logistic provisions and through planned supervision and follow-up. As a quality assurance mechanism, program evaluation also takes place at the end of the implementation of each CBE course. As CBE is a joint venture, the evaluation is done by supervisors, students and other stakeholders. This being the case, however, despite the commitment of the university to ensure quality in CBE implementation, little is known about the state of affairs (strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities) (Tegegne, et al, 2000). End-of-program evaluations seem to be too inadequate to give a complete picture of how the program is undergoing. In other words, comprehensive research studies on the various aspects of CBE are almost nonexistent. Thus, conducting a comprehensive study on the nature of CBE execution, i.e. the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities appears mandatory. This research, as one component of large scale CBE research project sponsored by the Jimma University, attempted to examine the pedagogical

practice of CBE in line with awareness, readiness, commitment and relevance of the program perceived by learning agents attached to it (Asefa, et al, 2000 & Tadesse, 2001). Specifically, it attempted to answer the following basic questions:

- What is the status of awareness, readiness, commitment level and perception of different agents attached to CBE; like students, teachers, officers (coordinators and top officials) and supportive staff by large?
- How do students, instructors, deans, college/institute CBE coordinators and the top university officials view the pedagogical relevance of CBE?

Research Objectives

Main Objective

The main intent of this study is to assess the state of the awareness, readiness and commitment level of the learning units of CBE programs and the relevance of CBE at Jimma University as perceived by very close agents.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study tried to:

- examine the awareness level of the various CBE actors (supervisors, college deans, college/institute CBE coordinators, and the top university leadership) with regard to CBE philosophy, implementation strategies and other related aspects;
- point out how students, instructors, deans, college/institute CBE coordinators and the top university officials perceive the pedagogical relevance of CBE;

Significance of the Study

The study can be significant in that the findings can help:

- To improve the quality of education relevant to community problems
- Jimma University to act upon critical problems in the implementation of the pedagogy of CBE and improve the strategies for a better achievement
- JU design a system of promoting the philosophy into different related sectors and agents
- To attract other interested organizations (Governmental & None Governmental Organizations) to be partners and work together for societal development at large

Definitions of Terms

- **Community based training program (CBTP)** refers to an integrated program which is run in phases (each phase with specifically defined objectives) from entry to graduation. In each phase, students are assigned as a team to semi-urban or urban communities with 10,000 to15, 000 residents.
- **Development Team Training Program (DTTP)** is a multidisciplinary, development-oriented program meant for graduate students. Master's and doctoral students from different disciplines are teamed up and assigned to local communities

to engage in development and service activities supervised by instructors from the respective disciplines.

- **Student Research Project (SRP)** is a project that enhances students' problem solving and research skills. It engages final year students (undergraduate and graduate) in undertaking community based, problem-oriented, scientifically and ethically acceptable, feasible and action-oriented research.
- **Team Training Program (TTP)** is discipline-specific. In the final years of their studies, students from health disciplines are assigned in teams to nearby health facilities for a period of 8-10 months. They work as a team in solving community problems applying and sharing with one another their professional knowledge and skills. TTP also helps trainees to learn from practical experiences and real life situations.
- **Learning agents** refers to students, instructors and related officers (from department heads high up to the president) of Jimma University (JU) [see section 2.1 for the detail].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design, site and population

The study generated a cross-sectional survey that employed mixed methods approach, which uses the mixture of qualitative and quantitative techniques in the research process (Creswell, 2003), for two basic reasons: to achieve a fuller understanding of a given issue (CBE pedagogy in this case) and to triangulate/cross-check one set of findings against the other (Kumar, 1996). The study is conducted in JU whereby the study units are the JU CBE learning agents: students, teachers, department heads, coordinators, deans, top officers and related high officers of the other three universities.

Sampling Techniques

The selection of the above sources of data was done based on some underlying assumptions. Jimma University student respondents were taken from the year III class of 2012, because, it was believed that their involvement in CBE activities from first year of entry till graduation had given them ample experience so that they were better sources of information. Moreover, department heads, CBE coordinators, deans of colleges/institutes and higher university officials of Jimma University were chosen on grounds of their active involvement in CBE management and supervision, and by the same token, academic staff members of this university participated in the study for it was thought that their experience as instructors at Jimma University, no matter how short, could equip them with some awareness about and experience in CBE.

Different methods of sampling were used to select respondents for the study. An extreme case sampling technique was used to select instructors who participated in the study. This technique was used to capture the maximum amount of variability of CBE related experiences among academic staff members. Three instructors, i.e. one recent employee, one senior instructor and the head were selected from each department (making a total

sample size of 116 teachers). On the other hand, all college/institute deans, college/institute CBE coordinators and top university officials were selected through availability sampling technique. Finally, while an attempt was made to analyze most of the curricula endorsed by the University's Senate at different times, the sample size for student respondents (taken from 40 departments which yielded 780 possible pair-wise comparisons between departments) was computed to achieve a 95% confidence interval (CI), with an alpha level of $0.05/780=6.4*10^{-5}$, and a prevalence of 50%, that is, proportion of students who are satisfied with the execution of CBE courses is assumed to determine the sample size generally calculated as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{d^2} p(1-p) = \frac{Z^2}{4d^2} = \frac{3.83^2}{4 * 0.05^2} \approx 1467$$

However, since the population is finite, the final sample size was:

$$n_f = \frac{n_o}{1 + \frac{n_o}{N}} = \frac{1467}{1 + \frac{1467}{3517}} \approx 1036$$

The final sample size was distributed proportionally to the population of prospective graduates of each department among the 3rd year class of the 2012 academic year (see Appendix E). According to the data 899 (86.8%) students responded out of the above sample (n=1036). The missing were those who were not around during the time of data collection and some unknown reasons.

Data Collection Instruments and Administration

Three types of instruments were developed of which the first was two types of questionnaires one for academic staff members and one for students, and the second type was interview guideline used for relevant top officials of the universities. The third type of the instruments was curriculum document analysis through formulated check-list (just on the issue of CBE inclusion) in which the curricula of all the programs were assessed. They all were administered in English language. The questionnaires that consisted of closed and open-ended items were distributed to the sample students and staff members through the college CBE coordinators and the researchers themselves. Secondly, interview was held by the researchers themselves face to face with the top officers. Finally, curriculum documents were surveyed by the researchers through well designed analysis checklist helped to make the document review systematic and focused.

The data collection instruments were employed to elicit data to address the variables, like inclusion of CBE acknowledging as a philosophy in the curricula of the various programs, awareness of CBE activities and conceptual understanding and perceived relevance of CBE. To obtain genuine and reliable information, data collectors were briefed about the purpose of the study and on the contents of the questionnaire before the commencement of data collection.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data were entered using Epi-Data and was exported for further cleaning and analysis into SPSS version 16.0. Tables were used to present quantitative data in the form of frequency distribution and percentages. Descriptive statistics were used for clear understanding of the quantitative data. On the other hand, qualitative data were analyzed qualitatively and described in the form of narration based on the thematic convergence.

Ethical Issues

The project was officially endorsed by the steering committee of the University top officials. Through the University ownership and endorsement, the consent of the respondents was approached politely.

RESULTS

Students' Perception

Out of 1036 sampled students selected from a total of 2012 third year student population, 86.8% (899) expressed their perception about CBE activities. The non-responses were due to the fact that the questionnaire was distributed right after the final examination when final year students were busy preparing for their graduation. Out of these senior students, 85.9% (772) reflected their experience of taking orientation on every CBE (CBTP) phases and the majority of them (81.1%) gave an affirmative answer while few of them (6%) of them did not remember it.

As to the students satisfaction with the higher officials effort in supporting the overall CBE activities, 41.5% of the respondents expressed negative reflection rating the endeavor as 'poor' and 'very poor' while the rest responded positively rating it as 'good', 'very good' and 'excellent'. Most students (72.3%) also rated the readiness and commitment of fellow students engaged in CBE activities positively, while readiness and commitments of their supervisors was rated 59.8% [see Table-1].

Table 1: Overall Support, Readiness and Commitment of Students and Teachers

Items		Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent	Total
Overall support	No.	128	238	380	98	37	881
	%	14.5	27.0	43.1	11.1	4.2	100.0
Readiness & commitment of students	No.	73	170	396	179	62	880
	%	8.3	19.3	45.0	20.3	7.0	100.0
Readiness & commitment of teachers	No.	122	231	372	124	27	876
	%	13.9	26.4	42.5	14.2	3.1	100.0

Students were also asked to rate the relevance of CBE in enhancing the seven competencies listed as in the table below using the parameters: *strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, & neutral*. Accordingly, many of the competencies like improving problem solving skills (71%), research skills (75%), communication skills 72.8%) and working with the community (75.5%) were rated positively (strongly agree and agree), by about 70% and above of the respondents while the other two, enhancing knowledge (66.4%) and linkage (62.7%) were rated next by more than 60% (on average) of the students who said that CBE is relevant in enhancing the above learning activities.

Table 2: Relevance of CBE as Rated by Students

Items		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Enhances knowledge	No.	87	98	110	398	184	877
	%	9.9	11.2	12.5	45.4	21.0	100.0
Improves problem solving skill	No.	80	83	91	359	264	877
	%	9.1	9.5	10.4	40.9	30.1	100.0
Improves research skill	No.	60	74	85	368	290	877
	%	6.8	8.4	9.7	42.0	33.1	100.0
Enhances communication skill	No.	56	70	112	345	293	876
	%	6.4	8.0	12.8	39.4	33.4	100.0
Team spirit	No.	68	56	75	336	342	877
	%	7.8	6.4	8.6	38.3	39.0	100.0
Advances the skill of working with local community	No.	71	64	80	309	353	877
	%	8.1	7.3	9.1	35.2	40.3	100.0
Links theory with practice	No.	103	100	124	313	237	877
	%	11.7	11.4	14.1	35.7	27.0	100.0

Responses of Academic Staff

Like that of the students, staff respondents were also asked to reflect whether or not they had had any sort of awareness raising training about CBE. And out of 116 staff respondents, 45.7% reported that they had received awareness-raising training about CBE mainly in the form of regular orientations before engaging in supervision. On the other hand, 54.3% of them claimed that they had never received orientation at all. The average frequency of awareness training taken by the 34 teachers who confessed that they had received the training is found to be 2 times (st. dev. = 1.3). These staff respondents were asked to rate the awareness, readiness and commitment level of their colleagues and students towards CBE activities based on the parameters, 'very high', 'high', 'average', 'low' and 'none'. Accordingly, 88.9% of them rated their colleagues' awareness as average and above average, i.e. 56.1% rated 'high' and 'very high'. Similarly, 77.4% of the teacher respondents said that the staff readiness for CBE was at least average, while 40% said that it was high or very high. The commitment of the staff was also rated by 73% for average and above and by 31.3% for high and very high. In the same manner, these staff

respondents rated their students' awareness and commitment level 81.8% for at least average in which 38.3% of them were high or very high. Students' readiness for CBE was perceived by 75.7% of the staff as average and above (28.7% of them rated high or very high). The commitment level of students was also rated 69.6% of the staff respondents as being average and above average while 27% of them rated it as high or very high. In all cases, taking the parameters average and above average as positive levels, students' and academic staff members' awareness, readiness and commitment levels were positively rated by the staff respondents involved in the study.

Table 3: Awareness, Readiness and Commitment of Colleagues and Students as Viewed by Staff Members

Items		very high	high	average	low	none	Total
Awareness level of colleagues	No.	27	38	38	12	1	116
	%	23.3	32.8	32.8	10.3	.9	100.0
Readiness level of colleagues	No.	12	34	43	23	3	115
	%	10.4	29.6	37.4	20.0	2.6	100.0
Commitment level of colleagues	No.	14	22	48	27	4	115
	%	12.2	19.1	41.7	23.5	3.5	100.0
Awareness level of students	No.	10	34	50	20	1	115
	%	8.7	29.6	43.5	17.4	.9	100.0
Readiness level of students	No.	7	26	54	27	1	115
	%	6.1	22.6	47.0	23.5	.9	100.0
Commitment level of students	No.	8	23	49	32	3	115
	%	7.0	20.0	42.6	27.8	2.6	100.0

Furthermore, out of 111 staff respondents, 49.5% reported that they had taken orientations about CBE after recruitment while 42.3% of them expressed that had not taken any of such orientations; 8.1% could not remember whether they had taken this kind of training or not. Staff respondents were also asked to rate their experience on the relevance of CBE in enhancing the listed competencies given to them [Table-4] using the parameters: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree* and *neutral*. In this regard, 67% of them believed that CBE enhances knowledge of subject matter, 82.6% said it improves problem solving skills, 80.9% pointed out that it improves research skills, 81.7% expressed the view that it improves communication skills, 84.3% noted as it enhances team spirit, 82.6% asserted that it advances skills of working with the community and 67.9% claimed that it links

theory with practice. As can be seen from the table, more than 80% of the staff believed that CBE is relevant to enhance five of these seven competencies. Here, even the other two were rated relevant (positively rated) by more than 67% of the respondents.

Table 4: CBE Relevance as Viewed by Staff

Items		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	Total
CBE enhances knowledge of subject matter	No.	14	5	19	41	36	115
	%	12.2	4.3	16.5	35.7	31.3	100.0
CBE improves problem solving skill	No.	12	3	5	45	50	115
	%	10.4	2.6	4.3	39.1	43.5	100.0
CBE improves research skill	No.	11	5	6	46	47	115
	%	9.6	4.3	5.2	40.0	40.9	100.0
CBE improves communication skill	No.	11	3	7	46	48	115
	%	9.6	2.6	6.1	40.0	41.7	100.0
CBE enhances team spirit	No.	10	3	5	42	55	115
	%	8.7	2.6	4.3	36.5	47.8	100.0
CBE advances skills of working with the community	No.	11	2	7	35	60	115
	%	9.6	1.7	6.1	30.4	52.2	100.0
CBE links theory with practice	No.	12	10	15	31	47	115
	%	10.4	8.7	13.0	27.0	40.9	100.0

CBE Philosophy in Curricula

The extent to which CBE is understood as a philosophy could be indicated by much far it is mentioned/narrated in the curriculum design of each program of the university, say, in the background, rationale, graduate profile and the like. Concerning this, three parameters were used to categorize the curriculum document so that it could indicate the college's, department's or program's understanding and concern of CBE, i.e. awareness of the philosophy and positioning it in its appropriate places. These parameters were: **extensively**, when the three CBE strategies: CBTP, SRP, DTTP/TTP are explained widely in a curriculum's three relevant sections: background, rationale and graduate profile; and **briefly,** as a second parameter when CBE is mentioned briefly only as a philosophy in any of the three sections of the document. The third parameter is not at all mentioned. As a

result, the majority (more than 82%) of the 87 curricula documents did not mention the philosophy at all-in any of the three sections of the document: neither the background (82.8%), nor rationale (87.4%), nor graduate profile (88.5%).

Table 5: Extent of CBE Philosophy Mentioned in the Curricula

Items		extensively	briefly	not at all	Total
CBE philosophy mentioned in the background	No.	3	12	72	87
	%	3.4	13.8	82.8	100.0
CBE philosophy mentioned in the rationale	No.	2	9	76	87
	%	2.3	10.3	87.4	100.0
CBE philosophy mentioned in the graduate profile	No.	1	9	77	87
	%	1.1	10.3	88.5	100.0

Interview Results

Responses of college/institute level officials to the interview

All the expected officials were found voluntary to respond the interviewees in which 7 werer college/institute deans, 7 College level CBE coordinators, one university level CBE director, three presidents and one senior director for research and CBE coordination office and one director for school of graduate studies of Jimma. From these respondents, the service year at their official position were 2-6 years (mean=3.2) for the deans, 1-7 (mean=3) years for CBE coordinators and 2-4 years for the top officers (mean=3.3). In other words, their service years at the university level were 8-20 years (average=12.6) for the deans, 6-20 years (average=12) for coordinators and 20-23 years (mean=20) for the top officials.

Table 6: Background of Interviewees

Position & Office title	Position Title	Number			Remarks
		Male	Female	Total	
College/Institute	Dean/director	7		7	
College/Institute	CBE Coordinator	7		7	
Top officers	Presidents	3		3	
Top officers	Senior director	1		1	
Top officers	Director for sch. of gard.	1		1	
Top officers	CBE director	1		1	
Total		**20**		**20**	

These interviewees, assumed to be key informants about CBE, were asked questions designed for this purpose. Accordingly, the following reflections were. The first question was meant to identify whether the respondents had awareness about the CBE guideline consisting of seven core principles, followed by the second questioning concerning how their awareness and whether there was any sort of training or not meant for raising awareness about CBE. To these questions, the majority of the informants confirmed that they know the philosophy adequately and come across the CBE guideline through different ways, like through reading it (since they have to lead, coordinate, monitor and supervise the activities) and through attending regular orientation sessions conducted for both staff and students. Some said that they got awareness through brief guidance of senior colleagues/supervisors during field activities. Since almost all of them are deans and coordinators, one way or another, they were involved in developing the newly revised guideline which is ready to be endorsed by the University Senate. Pertaining to this issue, though these officials are very well aware of the philosophy, all of them confirmed that there were not any type of formal training for both new employed staff and even the management units. Here, very few officials reported that they were not sure whether CBE has a guideline at all (about three of them).Besides, few of the informants reported that they were actually students of JU who had the opportunity to undergo CBE training in their undergraduate studies.

The next question was on how they understand the conceptual and practical differences between CBE and other forms of practical professional trainings, for example, internship, practical attachment, and the like in terms of their objectives, implementation, relevance and advantages. Regarding this point, almost every one of them reflected that there is indeed a difference between CBE and professional practices. Accordingly, the objective of CBE is mainly to introduce students to the real world and enable them to see and learn from its realities based on community problem identification, design the means of solving it and intervene. On the other hand, practical attachments are meant complementary trainings to develop skills to support particular professional courses designed in the

curriculum for the same purpose and it is not necessarily out in the community. Rather, it is to acquire the necessary skills in that specific professional area. So, the colleges know perfectly the two are different and no confusion was reported as encountered between the two during implementation. The officials could explain that CBE helps students to see beyond their field of specialization and is a means of integrating theoretical knowledge acquired in the professional area courses with real community problems.

Apparently, what is to be noted is that both CBE and other practical trainings are planned to help students to integrate theory and practice. Both are useful for developing skills through practice. They are actually relevant and similar in developing skills and practice. But, there is a conceptual difference between the two in that attachments are linked and become part of the specific professional courses taken in the class, while CBE is mainly concerned with applying all the knowledge from the totality of the courses to solve community problems, giving emphasis to scientific investigation processes. Internship is too subject-specific while CBE is more inclusive. As noted by most interviewees, CBE particularly helps students to identify problems and design mechanisms of solving identified problems using scientific methods of research and intervention through steps of identifying problems of the community, prioritizing it, developing proposal or action plan and solving these problems through intervention.

As to the follow up question forwarded to check whether there is confusion between the two during implementation, the deans in particular confirmed that there is no such thing in the colleges and both are done separately and independently. They said that they cannot confuse the two simply because the objective of CBE is to introduce students to the outer world (the target community) to see the challenges from the practical situations in relation to their new knowledge and experience while professional practice (practicum, internship, practical attachment) is not necessarily geared towards identifying and solving community problems. Rather, it aims to help students to acquire the necessary skills in the specific course(s) and is sector-based. If CBE is practicum, it will limit students in terms of the chance to see the outer world. CBE shall not be limited to specific courses like practicum so that our students could see the culture of a particular community and what is going on in this the community. Thus, the two are implemented differently since it is known that they are two different things. The following is one of the responses given by a college dean to justify the above claim:

> *CBE focuses on identifying community problems and devising methods of solving these problems using scientific methods of research and intervention. It is about identifying problems of the community, prioritizing, developing proposal and solving them through intervention method. Other forms of practical professional training such as internship are more subject-specific. The attachments focus on how a particular profession is implemented practically. In our college CBE is not confused with other practical trainings and its implementation is different from internship. CBE is more inclusive while other professional practice training is too specific. CBE helps to understand their community to work with the community.*

The other question forwarded to the interviewees was whether they think CBE makes a difference in JU educational system unlike other universities in terms of the profile of graduates if so in what ways.

Regarding this issue, almost all respondents were certain that CBE makes a difference in making JU graduates more competent than other university graduates as observed in the real working areas as evidenced by the findings of the recent tracer study carried out under the coordination of the University. Here, only very few respondents had doubts with regards whether our graduates actually make differences in the work environment after graduation although they recognized CBE as a unique philosophy and practice of JU. The following examples manifest how respondents reflected their views positively supporting their ideas with substantial reasons.

One college dean, for example, said that in JU, CBE definitely makes a difference in using scientific knowledge to solve community problems. He further said:

> *In our college, we encourage students to use their subject knowledge like mathematics and other sciences in solving community problems. Especially, in DTTP it is becoming more realistic in applying the subjects in identifying and solving community problems. For example, students investigate practical problems of high schools in teaching sciences and our students tried to organize the laboratories and assist in utilizing them". He added, "Drinking water problem investigation is another example whereby students protect the reservoir after a serious of laboratory investigation of its contamination level assisted by the community and other organizations mobilized*.

As graduates were witnessed, the colleagues are much better in DTTP currently. For instance, students are currently constructing micro hydro power to the community who are very far from the main grid and in remote place under this program of CBE. He believed that Jimma University students are better than students of other universities; even one can compare ours worldwide. He further asserted that the website of JU is evidence that our students are currently exemplary. Another respondent of the same status also said:

> *Yes, CBE definitely makes a difference in our educational system. It contributes a lot to our graduates; we have come to know informally that our graduates feel at home immediately while they get employed right in the middle any community they are assigned in. We have the information that NGO's prefer our graduates than the others because of CBE extra training we give them. Though we teachers sometimes feel that we repeat the same thing now and then, still students are new and always benefit from it. Graduates of JU are better than others. The tracer study conducted through JU sponsorship showed that some students consider their assignment to the various communities after graduation as a transfer due to adequate exposure to community realities via CBE.*

Again, another dean reflected positively saying:

> *Yes, it makes a difference even based on the evidence from the tracer study* (By this, the interviewee meant the tracer study JU carried out recently) *JU. It is always good to have a sense of theory and practice that is directed to solve community problems. For example, in law, it is prohibited to exercise polygamy while it is going on in the community and this experience is needed for the graduate to relate the regulation on paper and the reality out in the community which would help during the actual practice after graduation. There is a real benefit here to balance what is on paper and the real practice going on in the community.*

In a similar manner a respondent of the same category said:

> *I think CBE makes a difference in JU educational system. I personally consider CBE very relevant and has multifaceted advantage to our students and community at large. CBE consists of learning activities that use the community extensively as a learning environment by involving students, teaching staff, the community, as well as different sectors and agencies to be actively engaged throughout the educational process. Experience sharing between students and the community takes place, technology transfer, and students get familiarized with the environment. Students provide training to farmers (e.g., health, use of intensive farming system, preparation of seed and planting of crops; preparation of compost; treating of animals etc.) as well as necessary inputs (seeds, seedlings, live animals/chicken etc.).*

As we know the CBE activity follows a problem solving approach, which includes site selecting, developing investigation tools, gathering of data, processing and analyzing of information, listing and prioritizing problems, drawing plan of action, carrying out intervention, follow-up and evaluation by involving all stakeholders. In CBE students are exposed to real community life experiences. So the students are well aware of the real world and thus are ready to cope with the changing environment. To add more positive responses from the CBE coordinators at college and university levels, one for example said that CBE is a different approach being implemented in Jimma University in which encouraging results have been observed. The tracer study the university conducted and employs feedbacks show that JU graduates are working harmoniously with their communities after graduation.

One respondent in this category sarcastically laughed at the question of making a difference and said:

> *Of course it makes a difference. Students get a chance to interact with the society. Apart from professional exercise in solving community problems, it enables students to develop their leadership and communication skill. Another group also said y*es, *it makes a difference because students write proposals, conduct research and identify community problems, know how to solve these problems using scientific method. This makes them good professionals when they graduate. That is, CBE will make a difference in JU educational system.*

This has been studied and confirmed by a tracer study last year. And also availability of senior staff who commit towards will make a difference.

On the other hand, the following of the doubtful reflections were forwarded though they still have positive senses about the identity of the CBE philosophy. Accordingly, one of the deans said that of course one could differentiate JU graduates from others by looking at their transcripts. But, he did not hide his wonder how better our students are in terms of performance as the implementation of CBE at JU is far below expectation. He felt that the program is running just for the sake of maintaining JU's philosophy, not for realizing its intended goals. Another one also said in support of this idea that this is true in principle but, during implementation it needs more effort in order to achieve the anticipated targets.

In a similar manner, a coordinator said:

Of course, one could differentiate JU graduate from others by looking at their graduate profile. However, I doubt the possibility of differentiating our students from other universities' graduates when it comes to their performance. If you consider the implementation of CBE, it is far below what is written on paper. Firstly, as the CBE activities are resource intensive, it is becoming beyond the capacity of JU, for instance, in terms of supplying vehicles and other logistics. Besides, there are problems related to supervisors, community fatigue, etc. that contributed to the ineffective implementation of CBE.

Another one said:

Well, theoretically, CBE is an appreciable philosophy. If well planned and carefully implemented, it can help produce better personnel. But, practically students look reluctant at first but through orientation and support, they feel confident in expressing the value of CBE and carrying out CBE activities. They witness that they learned something practical through CBE. Though there are some practical problems after graduation, I believe it is useful.

These key informant officers were also asked to reflect their views on how they evaluate the awareness, readiness and commitment levels of their respective staff or colleagues and students pertaining to CBE activities. Accordingly, many of the deans and the coordinators confirmed that one can say there is awareness, readiness and commitment for CBE activities from most of the staff members specially the senior ones and almost every student is excited to participate in CBE activities though they may lack deep understanding about it. The following detailed responses convey the specific expressions of the respondents with important points here and there viable for improvement.

One of the deans said:

To my understanding, the college staff members are all aware of the philosophy and they also know it is part of their duty. I feel everybody is ready to work, and I see no challenge from the staff against the implementation except the dissatisfaction with the incentive matters. To the level of internalizing the philosophy, they are all happy to be part of JU staff. I did not see any negative

> *impression from the staff so far. Here, periodic appraisal is necessary in a sort of dialogue, fixing a forum regularly which will make everyone internalize CBE. In general, the staff is committed except the incentive reservation, and the community fatigue worries the staff, too. Many of us propose changing the sites periodically because of apparent community fatigue. Similarly, regular orientation about CBE is given to the students before they go out to the field, so this is the indication for awareness. As to the commitment of students, it depends and is difficult to generalize. Practically, students prefer to duplicate what has been done previously, year after year in which we are responsible partially. We have to guide them to try and create new things in each year which will protect the community from frustration.*

In addition, another one said that he thought there was no difficulties regarding teachers' awareness of CBE courses, since regular orientations had been given to the staff so far. In fact, there was a clear gap of awareness and readiness among newly employed non-JU graduate staff members. The commitment level of the instructors in discharging supervisory responsibilities is better in the case of SRP (final year student research project) than CBTP. Similarly, there were many students who were interested in and committed to passing through CBE courses very seriously while there was also a significant number of students who did not attend properly. With regard to the awareness, there was no problem because regular orientations were given during CBTP phases.

Another respondent said that the usual assignment was two supervisors for one group expecting them to go to the field together although they do not practice it. According to this respondent, this was not a good sign of commitment, though they gave reasons related to handling class of other courses offered in the campus. "We sometimes deduct the perdiem for the days they do not go out for which the staffs are disappointed for this which is likely to create negative repercussion. So the level of commitment of the staff varies from people to people," was what this interviewee remarked. According to this respondent, regarding to awareness, there was no question since regular orientations were given and senior staffs were always involved even along with the new employees to share their experiences. The same scenario is there for students. Hence, there were students who were interested in learning new things from the community and doing things with interest while there were some others who did not care at all, totally dependent on other members of the group they were assigned in which was usually known during symposium time when attention was given to individuals' effort evaluation.

In a similar manner, a respondent said that by and large, the staff had a general understanding of CBE as a philosophy of the University. Even those who never attended induction programs had the concept and the experience through time. Of course, we cannot deny that there could be few irresponsible and misbehaving staff during supervision. Since they felt that CBE was not worthwhile and they simply aid it for the profession sake (without any interest) which was not genuine, but simply for the perdiem and the work load. I feel that if there were no perdiem and credit load for the field work, many of the staff would not be committed to it. So the incentive is the solution to get the staff involved in CBE activities. Similarly, student readiness and commitment levels differed from year to year whereby the first year students seemed to have more energetic commitment than the seniors- the readiness decreases when the class year increases. Of course, all students

passed through consecutive orientations from year to year regularly except the question of level of their awareness and understanding about CBE. The truth is CBE is useful for our students after graduation while they compete for employment. Due to this, students generally take CBE seriously.

Others reflected that the majority of the staff had good awareness, which they were able to develop either during their study period at JU or during their involvement in the program as supervisors. However, they still had doubt that some teachers had the required awareness in order to rightly supervise the CBE activities variable mainly because of year of employment/experience as teaching staff in the college.

On the contrary, some said the commitment was poor. This may be because the University by itself did not have the required commitment in order to realize the goals of CBE activities. Let alone the teachers, even the students lacked the required commitment to learn from CBE. There was a persistent attitude among the students that CBE evaluation was not as strict as the evaluation of other courses and the grades are just 'A', or a minimum of 'B' under the worst scenario. In the same line, students' awareness, readiness and commitment was labeled poor by both the dean and coordinators of BECO which was a concern to the University. On the contrary, JUCAVM assumed that students were well aware, ready and committed to exercise CBE. This was further elaborated by a dean who said:

> *I think there is misconception among the majority of students about CBE. Most of them appreciate its presence in the curriculum as a source of good mark (with less effort) rather than its educative nature (in terms of knowledge, skill and attitude). I also feel that levels of awareness, readiness and commitment also vary among students (year and type of the training program he/she is enrolled).*

Another doubtful respondent to this issue also said*:*

> *Although I have doubt on their readiness and commitment, I am quite sure that all are aware about CBE activities. Pertaining commitment, many staff members are actively participating in CBE course although some are not active on field supervision. Every student generally takes CBE courses. They pass the consecutive orientations from year to year regularly. But still there is a question about some students' commitment (esp. senior students).*

Moreover, CBE coordinators also reflected more or less the same views saying that the majority of them had good awareness, which they were able to develop either during their study period at JU or during their involvement in CBE program as supervisors. However, there was still doubt whether some teachers had the required awareness concerning CBE and its objectives. Though the readiness was in general good, he still saw some gap on many of university staffs.

Concerning awareness, some coordinators said that senior staff members had better awareness than junior or newly employed staff members. There was no training for the new employed staff at college level. The induction program given by the University is not enough. Regular training and awareness creation is necessary at college level. But, this is

not practical now, so he thought that there was a gap of awareness among junior or newly employed staff members. Regarding commitment, all staff members were actively participating in CBE activities although there were sometimes complaints about payment delays. Commitment level is high for all staff members. On the other hand a commitment level of students varied from department to department. For example, mathematics and physics students were least committed because they believed that their subject area courses were not related to CBE. They think that CBE doesn't play a much significant role in their future professional life. But, some students (e.g. biology students) gave the most commitment because they think that CBE is related to their future life in terms of helping them to write proposals and conduct research. Some respondents directly said that when they gave orientation to students, some students were found not interested in CBE activities and the groups they were assigned in. They suggested different groupings. For example, mathematics and physics students would like to be grouped with engineering students.

A respondent in this category believed that all are aware but had doubt about their readiness and commitment. As it was said earlier, supervisors did not go to the fields and supervise students with the required level of devotion. Reports from post graduate students showed that even DTTP supervisors, supposed to have long experience and high level of expertise, did not supervise their students properly. One respondents reported that his office once wrote a letter reminding these supervisors of the need for consistent discharge of supervisory responsibility, and tried to push them individually to fulfill their duties. Although they were expected to orient their supervisees and create a first impression on the first day of the DTTP program, none of them appeared. This shows that the commitment level of these instructors in discharging supervisory responsibilities was low. In one DTTP experience it was learned that students were highly motivated to carry out DTTP activities. They were eager, enthusiastic, highly committed and sought help and support from various bodies including the university to accomplish their DTTP project. But, in CBTP, there was a question about some students' commitment. They needed strong orientation on CBE and how it should be implemented.

Another respondent felt that there was a good degree of awareness though awareness and readiness to act practically might not be the same. There was no problem regarding awareness. However, in CBTP supervision, instructors were not fully committed. The supervision was not taken seriously. Supervisors spent less time than expected in the field. There seemed to be a lack of belief in the necessity of strict supervision. The supervisors left much of the work to students and tend to make students accountable for any failure. Students joined the university with some awareness of CBE. Practically, they were given orientations here on how to carry out CBE activities. But when they were in the field, they still faced problems during data collection. If the supervisors were not present, it was likely that some of the students might make their own superficial data. Supervisors need to be serious since some students lacked commitment.

Others also said that there was more or less good attitude and commitment but it needed to be strengthened. Another one said that most of the teachers/supervisors were committed but very few needed follow ups to strengthen it since there were staff members that did not exert his/her effort to realize the objectives of CBE. One new coordinator said that it was difficult for him/ her to judge this issue.

Responses of Top Officials

All the above issues about CBE were also forwarded to the concerned top management unit such as the University President, the two Vice Presidents, the Senior Director for Research, PGP and CBE Office and Director for School of Graduates. The responses to the issues raised were more or less similar to the aforementioned views such that the top management unit was very much aware of the philosophy, ready to support the CBE activities very strongly with a very high commitment in such a way that no compromise would challenge against the philosophy except for constructive ideas and comments to improve the quality of its strategies and implementation. The following discussion demonstrates the awareness, readiness and commitment levels of the respondents as per the respective issues raised during the interview.

Regarding their knowledge of CBE guidelines and its principles and how the knowledge was obtained, all of them reflected that they have come to know CBE guidelines and its principles on the way of trying to adopt the previous health oriented CBE documents into other colleges making them suit as per the particular nature of professional areas consisted there. That was when trying to incorporate CBE in the particular programs, modifying the specific activities to be implemented without destroying the major strategies. The other point that they all reflected commonly was that by virtue of their position, they had the opportunity to read the documents in order to give guideline, overall supervision, and monitor and evaluate the activities under their commands in general. Like the college officials, they confessed that there was not any formal training except the regular orientations done from time to time whereby many of them had supervision experience as regular teachers. The following are sample responses of these top level respondents.

- *Yes, when I was at the college of agriculture, we were trying to adopt CBE, which was initially a program at the Institute of Health of JU, to our postgraduate programs. Then, I had a chance to see the CBE guideline which had some core components. We were trying to incorporate the guideline to our own programs. Recently, a guideline has been established and documented. Like the guidelines of other programs, the new CBE guideline is now part of the University's documents. What I experienced then was not a formal training on the philosophy and implementation of CBE. It was only a plan to adopt CBE to our postgraduate programs, and in this way, I had accessed that document.*

- *I got the understanding of CBE by reading documents, through the advantage of my current position. Initially, I got the concept from experience of the main campus when we were trying to implement CBE in Agriculture College. But I had no any formal training*

- *Yes, it has two guidelines. The first one is the one which was prepared by College of public Health and medical sciences during the inception of CBE and the second one is the one which is prepared at university level (draft) but not endorsed by the university senate. It was when I was a dean of JUCAVM, we took the initiative to implement CBE in the college for the first time by*

adapting the questionnaire. And we as ad-hoc committee had to read the manual to adapt and implement CBE in our college.

- *I know that it exists but do not ask me to list the seven principles. When I was student in this university I had the opportunity to be familiar with different guidelines of CBE and its principles via orientation and practical exercise. After that as a teacher I have been working as a supervisor of CBTP and DTTP. Furthermore, I was a coordinator of CBE office and as a result of all these exposures I was able to get acquainted with CBE documents and practical implementations.*

- *I have come to know about CBE by reading the old manual during the first CBTP field attachment in which there was continuous meetings and workshops. I had sequences of orientation while I go out for supervision and there was no any formal training about CBE as far as I know.*

The next issue was how the top officials understand the conceptual differences between the philosophy and other professional practices like practicum. Here, all agreed and justified that the two are diametrically different: one very wide with community concern worried about the outer world universally and the other is limited to certain courses liable to integrate skills with particular theory. The details are presented below:

- *That is an important question. Other universities assume that they have CBE because they implement such practical trainings like internship and practical attachment. In practical attachment and internship, students are assigned for a short time to organizations related to their fields of study. They accomplish the requirements of the training in the specific disciplines and return to their institutes. They are not exposed to the wider community as such. CBE is different from that. It brings the students to the real world. Students are assigned to communities in teams to teach the community and to learn from the community. They identify problems and try to solve these problems with the involvement of the community. CBE is broader in scope and purpose. It increases students' skills of problem solving and it revolves around problem solving. It helps students to work as a team and develop team spirit, be aware of community issues, develop research skills (They develop research instruments, collect data, analyze data and write reports). They have more than one CBE involvements and CBE is not a one go activity. They mobilize and coordinate the community towards development goals and are really involved in development activities like DTTP. So far, I haven't heard confusions between CBE and other forms practical trainings in terms of understanding the concepts and their implementation in our university. Most of the staff members understand these concepts and their implementation. But on the other hand, practical attachments are pure professional not related to the community, as such, it does not go to its source and narrow to a certain professional area.*

- *There is a difference between CBE and practical attachments. CBE focuses on community problem identification and trying to solve them through action plan based on scientific procedures while the other is purely dependent on particular professional areas/courses. But we can put one into the other,*

likely, practicum into CBE, like they are doing it in technology programs at higher levels of CBTP. This is done to avoid time constraints to accomplish all courses in time.

- *CBE is very comprehensive with compared to other professional attachments. It is cyclic in the sense that it begins with CBTP-I and ends with student research project. In addition it focuses on problem identification followed by intervention to alleviate societal problems identified during CBTP-I. Furthermore, CBE promotes interaction among students, students and teachers. When we come to its advantage, it helps students to develop team spirit. Furthermore it promotes sense of belongingness to societal problems at it exposes students to society. It also reduces professional biasness/arrogance as students from various disciplines work together. Beyond any other thing it enhances students' problem solving skill as the problem involves intervention. But on the other hand, professional attachment is so specific to a certain course or courses, so that there is a clear demarcation between the two.*

- *CBE focuses on problem identification and problem solving in its broader sense. It also helps students develop interpersonal skill, networking skill and resource mobilization skill apart from what specific skills they develop as a result of other professional attachments. CBE creates an opportunity for the students to have an exposure to the larger community, to look in to what is going on in the community, community problem and solve it using theoretical knowledge they have learned in the classroom. Furthermore, CBE tells students what the community expecting of the students as would be professionals. But other professional attachment activities are very specific and focus on very specific area related to their courses no community relation.*

- *There is a significant difference between the two that CBE is very much integrated with overall learning knowledge integrating teaching and service geared to community relevance. It is more of social relevance and application focused. Practicum is rather course and specific theory oriented. They are totally independent on their type and implementation, very little similarity*.

  There is indeed a difference between CBE and practical attachments. CBE focuses on community problem identification and trying to solve them through action plan based on scientific procedures while the other is purely dependent on particular professional areas/courses. But we can put one into the other, likely, practicum into CBE, like they are doing it in technology programs at higher levels of CBTP. This is done to avoid time constraints to accomplish all courses in time.

Again, the top officials all agreed that CBE, the JU philosophy, definitely makes a difference in the educational system as observed from the performance of JU graduates in the real working areas inside the society which is supported by the recent tracer study made by the University. The summaries of their reflections are depicted below.

- *Yes, perfectly it makes a difference. It contributes to community development. It is also a source of JU's reputation. Formerly, there were some doubts about the significance of CBE. But, recently, there are requests from far away areas and other universities for our CBE services. The tracer study we conducted last year also indicates that our graduates are preferred by employees. Our former graduates also witness that they benefitted from CBE. In fact, although our CBE is important to this extent, it has some limitations in its implementation and we are working for its improvement.*

- *Yes CBE makes a difference, from our information in the tracer study done recently. It actually creates confidence in our graduates when going out to the real world and we are unique because of it.*

- *Yes, the result of tracer study can be taken as a strong evidence for this. The findings of the study showed that it assists students develop the required competencies. It helps students develop generic skills such as problem solving skill, team spirit, communication skill (because of rigorous presentation students have to do to communicate the report of CBE courses). It also makes students to feel sense of belongingness for societal problems. It also assists students develop research skills as problems for students research project emanates from CBTP courses. The research leads towards the gap of the community and has very much closer interaction within the community.*

- *We say CBE makes a difference since we try it in all of our programs which makes us unique even worldwide; no one has tried such venture in the global scenario. This means in our case CBE has wide application and so we have marked differences. It added value to our students when they go out in the real world. It increases their communication skills, makes them self confident, community problem oriented. So we claim our students are different by virtue of even exposure only. JU is unique in making CBE in all fields and programs.*

- *Yes, CBE is bringing change between our graduates and graduates of other universities. I can say this from two perspectives. One is since I participated on this program as students I have practical experience on its impact. When I was doing my MSc and PhD I did not face any significant challenge as compared to my colleges. This is due to the reason that when I was doing CBE I have developed skills such as proposal writing, developing instruments, collecting data and report writing.*
  The second one is from my observation of other students of our university. For Example, If you go to Black Lions University the majority of those students in specialty training program and teachers are graduates of our university. This according to my observation can be attributed to CBE program. The University's graduate tracer study conducted last year also revealed that CBE is relevant in terms of developing interpersonal skill, problem solving skill etc. Moreover CBE is in line with the to days student centered pedagogy and this is why other universities are attracted towards CBE and trying to adapt and adopt it. For example, Haramaya and Hawassa universities are trying to exercise CBE in one or another.

With regard to evaluating the awareness, readiness and commitment of the staff and students, these top management members varied in their ideas by saying that the above important issues to implement CBE differ from college to college, from senior to new employees and from students to students etc. The details of their views narrated below show the variations.

- *To my understanding, the staff members are generally aware of the philosophy and they also know it is part of their duty. In fact the new staff members are less aware than the senior staff. The senior ones understand CBE to the level of internalizing the philosophy and the practice because of their involvement in supervising CBE activities. But the new employees need orientation and induction and we have to work critically on this requirement. In general, the instructors are committed although there are few individuals who lack real commitment to face the challenges associated with CBE supervision.*

  Students also have general awareness about CBE even before they come to Jimma University. They hear that there is something that makes JU unique. That is CBE. Not only JU students, but also students in other universities know that JU has CBE. But, our students' awareness of CBE is general in its nature in the beginning. It is during orientations that they gain a clear understanding of the philosophy, the purpose and activities of CBE. Students are happy to engage in CBE activities. They actually like CBE. They feel that it is a means of changing the learning atmosphere.

- *The staff awareness is not sufficient since there was no induction for new employees in which we started currently, this year, which must be continued. The readiness and commitment of staff differs as from the tracer study, showing going decreasing for the reason we do not know.*

  There is no problem for the awareness of students since there is regular orientation. They rather appreciate it as from the tracer study document, may be the grades high probability for passing initiated them and for going out to the new field areas may excite them. So they have good readiness and commitment since they want to see the outer world.

- *Like that of students, awareness, commitment and readiness level of instructors varies among colleges and instructors. For instance in college of Public health and medical sciences senior instructors supervise CBTP but in JUCAVM juniors supervise. This could be due to difference in the level of awareness, commitment and readiness. Moreover some instructors supervise the program strictly and some do not; even there are instructors who do not go to the field for supervision at all. I blame colleges for this as it is due to weak follow up. This can also be taken as an indication for variation in the level of awareness.*

  The level of awareness, commitment and readiness of students seem to vary across colleges. To me all these things are in a better position in College of Public Health and Medical Sciences as it is well organized and students are

well oriented. In general, whenever the frequency of n-1 increases it seems the level of awareness of staff increases. Some students think sometimes that CBTP is for grade compensation.

- *When we look in to the awareness level of teachers except newly recruited teachers majority of the instructors seem to be aware about CBE. However, those who trained in other universities and recruited in the university needs extensive orientation. The commitment and readiness level of teachers is also increasing with compared to the previous years. This is due to the reason that the perdiem and workload for CBE supervision is improved.*
  During its start there was resistance from the students however currently it is improved as students are testing its relevance and advantages. The readiness and commitment of students also seem to be improved, when you attend CBE symposium you observe sense of competition among students and this may indicate that the readiness and commitment is improving
- *In general, there is awareness problem specially, from the new employees graduated from other universities having no exposure to our philosophy. So we have to give regular and continuous trainings for every university community, it must be conceptual training. There could be two types of CBE supporters. One, those with deep conceptual know how and the second without simply dogmatic who cannot win in a very serious debates protecting CBE. Beyond this we need to be sure the CBE coordinators are very much aware of the concept of CBE so that they can explain about it in detail to convince others or even participate in the training settings. Currently CBE conceptually is floating, we have to be ready conceptually and need to work hard, we have to establish CBE training center by its own, like wise CBE resource center. The same is true for students too, we need to give them strong training before they go out to the field, supported by video show from previous experiences.*

DISCUSSION

Since one of the three strategies of CBE is CBTP which requires undergraduate students to go out to the field, i.e. in the community about 50 km radius from the University students go outreach in to the community phase by phase in (n-1) times where n is the number of duration of training to graduate in the program admitted, say for example, two phases for those colleges which run a three-year undergraduate training. That means, there will be CBTP-I and CBTP-II for such students whereby the first one is usually scheduled at the end of first year and the second year, sometime within the second semester of the second year. In these field exercises, so many challenges such as preparation for the field work, logistics, transportation, learning facilities, material support for the field activities, supervisors follow up, officials support and close supervision, community fatigue, awareness and readiness of all attached learning agents, etc are expected (JIHS, 1988; JU, 2013).

Out of all the above challenges, awareness and readiness of the CBE actors like students, supervisors and supportive staff are then the major elements to reinforce all the activities

going on in the field for the success of the program. In the revised version of CBE Guideline of JU (2003), we see many weaknesses such as the two important parties in the new faculties were not well-aware of the concept of CBE and were observed reluctant to internalize the practice, poor commitment to CBE, weak plan of action of the CBE offices at University level at large, the time allocation of CBE in the curriculum of the program low below 20%, manifestation of declining commitment and participation of actual teaching and learning activities by higher officials and the like which is expected to improve now through time and hence appropriate to raise the issue.

For this, it is a regular exercise that students and supervisors are supposed to be oriented in every phase just as a spring board to start the field activity. This is where the two important agents, the students and supervisors are expected to initiate and update their awareness level about the philosophy (CBE) at large and CBTP specifically. As narrated in the revised JU CBE guideline (2003), the awareness level should at list start in understanding the seven guiding principles to implement community oriented education set up universally which are:

- *Community Based Activities should be introduced very early in the educational process,*
- *It must continue throughout the curriculum,*
- *It should relate to planned educational goals and objectives. Both students and teachers must have a clear understanding of the purposes of the activities and expected results,*
- *It must be viewed not as peripheral or casual experiences but a standard, integral, and continuing part of the educational process,*
- *It should get an appropriate time length in the curriculum; a minimum of 20% of the study time,*
- *During CBE, students' work should be real work that is related to their educational needs, and also forming part of the requirements for obtaining a diploma or degree,*
- *CBE should follow the problem solving steps: site selection, (identify community), developing investigation tools, gathering data, processing and analysis of information, listing and prioritizing problems, drawing plan of action, carry out intervention, evaluation by involving students, teachers, the community, government and non-government development sectors (stakeholders) in a concerted manner. This is the litmus test for CBE.*

Consequently, it is mandatory that the status of the awareness and readiness level be evaluated periodically so that interventions could be implemented for improvement which is one of the objectives of this study. According to this study, therefore, we have confirmation of taking orientations regularly from 86% of the students involved in this study in which the rest either did not remember it or most probably did not attend it due to various reasons. On the other hand, from the supervisors side, it is a fatal exercise to find that only 45.7% have received the awareness training mainly orientation which needs very deep specific study by itself on why it is so while regular staff orientations are going on from phase to phase, year after year. Is it due to negligence of the staff which results in absence from the orientation programs? Is the orientation program not sufficient to create the expected awareness level? Is something wrong with the awareness system of the

leading CBE officials? Are there some other reasons? This is in agreement with the 60% students' rating their supervisors readiness and commitment positively and implicates there is a lot to be improved towards increasing the motivation of the staff. Similarly, the 82% positive ratings of staff respondents in favor of students' awareness, readiness and commitment is also encouraging and yet we have to be ready to make it strong qualitatively. This is to say that the level of motivation indicates that students orientation and influence on their interest towards the philosophy is better than that of the staff, supporting the suggestion for deep study in this line to pass on to intervention for improvement.

These two parties are expected to manifest not only acceptable level of awareness, readiness and commitment towards CBE but also they are expected to show their level of understanding on the relevance of this philosophy in enhancing competencies like problem solving skills, research and communication skills, working in and with the community rated positively by 70% of the students and by 80% of the staff respondents.

Curriculum is one area in which the awareness, readiness and commitment regarding the philosophy could be manifested. As a principle of CBE, from its inception, 20% of the curriculum of any program of JU is supposed to have the CBE courses; consecutive CBTPs, SRP and DTTP which were revealed in revised version of JU CBE guideline (2003) that this has not been materialized as official convention by then. From this inception, it is plausible to investigate how far the curriculum documents explain or promote the philosophy either in its background, rationale or graduate profile and the like, which indirectly indicate the awareness, readiness and commitment of each program and program designers or curriculum developing units/teams. In this regard, it is a disaster that 82% out of a total of 87 curriculum documents did not mention the philosophy in any of the above three sections at all which implies that care is not taken to integrate it within the curriculum design though the awareness is there. This is one of the areas in which the University should work hard uniformly improving the stronghold of its philosophy to be recognized at least by its major documents like curricula **(Curriculum documents of all programs in JU)**.

Though many students (41.5%) showed negative reflection on the support of higher officials to the CBE activities, it is wise to see the reflection of these concerned higher officials which was obtained through in-depth interview as depicted in the result section. It is obvious that let alone the philosophy any form of academic program could not be successful without dedicated support of the leading management units and personalities. Like the students and teachers, these top officials could also be affected by the awareness, readiness and commitment levels they possessed so far towards all academic activities in general and CBE in particular. According to the survey done through interview, therefore, the top university officials, like the presidents (including the vices), concerned senior directors, directors, college deans and CBE coordinators have acceptable awareness and readiness levels to lead and support the philosophy which is the basis for all its field works and other practical activities.

As it is indicated from the result, these agents of the university leadership are reinforced to see the CBE documents just to meet their responsibilities of their official positions which cannot guarantee their dedication unless they have the experience of consecutive

orientations and field supervisions which enables them to successfully lead the program comprising a variety of level of capabilities of the supervisors and coordinators. This is due to the fact that the CBE documents like guidelines and others are supposed to be designed, revised and endorsed mainly through top officials' involvement. As a rule, this shall not be exercised by virtue of their position which could result in a failure in the end. In addition, the fact that the philosophy is not sufficiently narrated in the curriculum document of every program is partly the responsibility of these top officials who have the authority of endorsing it at the senate level.

In the previous years, though the revised guideline (2003) clearly puts it

> "… *Community Based Education should not be confused with such terminologies 'Practical education, Professional Practice, Field Practice, or Problem Based Learning' since these lack the litmus markers of CBE. The Special Features of Community Based Education: Community centered, the spiral nature of CBE activities that start from first year to the end, the problem solving steps, (the litmus test for CBE), its participatory nature, and learner-centeredness are its hallmark…";*

events were observed that there were confusions between the exercises of CBE activities and professional practices tending to mix the two and consider them as one entity which was due to lack of understanding of the philosophy and/or to compensate the over flow of the total credit hour loads of courses of a program by merging them.

But currently, it is in a very good situation in that almost all the top officials involved in this study were well aware of the difference between the two, clearly explaining that CBE is a very wide community oriented activity such that students pass on through the seven principles which include instrument development, data collection, analysis, community problem identification and prioritization, action planning to alleviate selected problems, intervention as per the action plan and at the end monitoring and evaluating so that students develop their knowledge and skills in problem solving approach of scientific research process. This is done with experiencing the real world. On the other hand, professional practices concentrated on specific professional courses, of course both meant to develop students' practical skills but in different dimension and directions. This by itself is a very promising level of understanding CBE with clear indication of its principles and goals manifested by responsible leaders.

This conceptual change among officials is further supported by their reflections that the graduates of JU for sure making the difference when going out in the real world in line with their graduate profiles compared to many other university graduates, which is verified by based on the tracer study conducted very recently. Despite all these positive reflections towards CBE input to our graduates, the concern of very few respondents having doubts in being sure that there is really a difference is a very good point of departure to suggest further deep study in this specific issue which will help for a better improvement.

Beyond their own awareness and commitment for implementing the philosophy, leadership units and coordinators are also responsible to evaluate and know the awareness and commitment levels of the major agents, i.e. the students and supervisors so that they could

run, facilitate, monitor and supervise the CBE programs accordingly. Though the study shows that the awareness level of both parties is assumed positive in most cases, it revealed a variety of reflection in such a way that many of them agreed that the students awareness varied from class year to class year and from college to college but better than their full commitment which is questionable at large. In a similar way, senior supervisors are better than the newly employed ones in their awareness and commitment, agreed by many of the reflections except the problem of incentives coming on and off. This variety of ideas among concerned officials in understanding the awareness, readiness and commitment of students and supervisors under their custody is likely to happen that there was no regular monitoring and evaluation system which must be conducted at the end of each cohort/program CBE cycle.

We need thus to redesign our strategies in this line in the direction of knowing the level of awareness, readiness and commitment of the two agents mentioned above and then properly plan to upgrade and improve them accordingly. In addition, the observation that the understanding of the philosophy among officials specially coordinators which varied to some extent entails that the top management units have to think very seriously when we assign CBE coordinators which will be wise to give the responsibility to those who were experienced, committed and volunteers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As it is conveyed in the result, awareness is the primary issue to initiate readiness and bring up commitment for internalizing and implementing the philosophy of CBE in which the study showed no formal training has been given so far except the regular orientation offered for both supervisors and students which is not sufficient by itself to promote and implement it. Though the awareness, readiness and commitment level of staff and students is not discouraging in which most senior staff are ready in this line and students are regularly forced to do so since the activities are part of their requirement of their courses and should satisfy the requirement for graduation; it is mandatory that all the university community like not only students and staff but also supportive staff and top level leaders need to conceptualize the philosophy up to the level of promoting and advocacy for it to be followed by successful implementation. For this, continuous and regular trainings are necessary conditions to enhance the philosophy either through formal trainings and/or regular orientations and/or workshops or in combination of this. One has to be certified for taking this special trainings of CBE designed in such a way that all the necessary components like the concept of CBE, socialization, legal aspects, community respects, scientific research making, planning and intervening, first aid, introduction to different areas for community development like health, agriculture, education, community mobilization and cooperative works, science and rural technology, program evaluation system and the like. This means a special package or modules must be designed tailored according to the specific programs and the trainees need, say, for students, teachers to be supervisor, supportive staff, top management units, even the community leaders and concerned administration bodies. These training packages could be newly designed like formal training or redesigned/revised design like for the orientations.

The result indicates that few variations on understanding CBE were observed on the side of the coordinators implying the need for critical thinking while assigning these posts, to make it at least senior and experienced staff ready to commit himself/herself in the organization and coordination of the implementation. A checklist must be designed for this post, to be part of the appointment criteria when announced. The certificate for passing the training, the experience of several supervisions and the attitude and the level of commitment one has shall be the major ones in this issue.

Besides, we need to set the evaluation package to rate the level of awareness and commitment of the learning agents, students and supervisors if not the supportive staff. This is because from what we have seen the study, many of the concerned staff were not able to exactly demarcate the awareness, readiness and commitment levels of the acting elements of CBE activities.

Designing awarding system for the best performing team or group of students including their supervisors and coordinators within the college and university widens competition like it is done for SRP. This again is due to the fact that many of the issues that supervisors are reluctant are due to lack of enhancing encouragement from the system.

In principle CBE should consist 20% of a curriculum of any program which fully not materialized. Nevertheless, the study revealed that curriculum documents did not even sufficiently discussed CBE in their appropriate places like in background, rationale, profiles and the like so at least these major academic documents shall acknowledge and promote the philosophy. Thus, we suggest setting a system on how to include/promote CBE in these areas identifying the sections in which programs shall consist when curriculums are designed or timely revised and design a sort of checking mechanisms when finally endorsed by college and the senate levels.

Furthermore, a very large amount of respondents be it students, staff or officers confidentially confirmed that CBE has undeniable relevance pedagogically to enhance quality of education in line with identifying and solving community problems through scientific approach producing competent graduates with knowledge and skill of implementing scientific research works. It also develops students' communication skill and increases the level of understanding societal problems by creating the link and working together with the community. As from the finding from all the CBE learning activity learning agents, it could be assumed that CBE for sure makes a difference. That is, the JU graduates could clearly be differentiated from others. Of course this is supported by the tracer study conducted before this study [JU, 2013]. Thus, this promising quality of the philosophy which is the asset of the University need to be honored and improved for a more better standard. Finally, as the philosophy is innovative by its nature, it is liable for constructive change and improvement from time to time and hence we get ready for **flexibility**.

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