ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Secondary School Teacher Education in Ethiopia: Practices and Challenges

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education introduced a new teacher education program for secondary schools, Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT), in 2011. This study explores the practices and major challenges hindering the implementation of the program. A total of 557 participants (trainees, instructors, program coordinators, department heads and the dean) were surveyed. Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed to gather pertinent data. The findings indicate that experienced trainers are not involved in the teacher training; the lecturers and tutors are not working up to the expected level. Despite the conviction among researchers and teacher educators that training environment has powerful impact for successful training, it is not found to be good in this program. With regard to challenges of the program, class absenteeism and lack of interest in and commitment to the program were identified as the most serious problem from the part of teachers and trainees. Moreover, trainees' misconceptions on teacher-training are reported and they assume the program as short term training and has additional benefits. Institutional challenges such as loose coordination system, lack of concern for the program by the University and MoE officials and failure to treat trainees like other students in the regular program were identified. Finally, this has prompted some rethinking on the selection of trainees, assignment of trainers to the program and revisiting training environment that would improve the implementation of the program. Moreover, teacher training institutions are recommended to devise mechanisms to enhance the commitment and motivation of instructors and trainees. The Ministry of Education and University are urged to revisit the management system of the program.

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INTRODUCTİON

In vast body of literature, it is revealed that having well trained and experienced school teachers have a positive effect on students learning. Teachers are also believed to be the driving force of the changes that can be carried out to improve the quality of education. Supporting this, Barber and Mourshed (2007) and Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) argued that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The impact of any educational system (Doyran, 2012; Harris & Sass, 2006, Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse; 2008)can only be as powerful and effective as the teachers who actually perform this profession. The lives of all learners are shaped by the teachers. A teacher can create positive change in the classroom and in the lives of students and can shape the future of the country.

More strongly, Darling-Hammond (2006) opined, among all educational resources, teachers' abilities are especially crucial contributors to students' learning.Teachers are the most important in-school factor influencing the quality of pupils' learning. Up to three quarters of school effects on pupil outcomes can be explained by teacher effects (Bokdam, Ende& Broek, 2014; Walker, Cruz-Zuniga& Adefeso-Olateju, 2014). It is in teachers hands, in their craft, in their professionalism, (Tezanos, 2005), that are found many of the answers to the demands for quality education. Similarly, (Mahendra & Baxter,   2011; Ko, Sammons& Bakkum, 2013; Lemke et al., 2012; Little, Goe & Bell, 2009), one of the most important things school systems can do to promote student achievement is to ensure that students have effective teachers.

This can be materialized by having trained teacher professionals who passed through rigorous teacher education. Teacher education refers to (Ogunyinka, Okeke &

Adedoyin, 2015; Thompson & Power, 2015)professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work, in accordance with the need of a given society at any point in time. Kárpáti(2009) and UNESCO (2011) stated the purpose of teacher training is to equip individuals with the personal and professional skills needed in schools and other learning contexts.

Pre-service and in-service teacher training form a continuum of professional development and may take place over a number of years, in a range of different settings and with differing purposes. As noted by Craig, Kraft and Plessis (1998) and Thompson and Power (2015), initial teacher training is more important as it lays the foundations for motivation and ensures that new teachers are competent before entering the classroom. Beginning teachers vitally need initial preparation in the subject matter they will teach, some basic strategies for how to teach that subject matter, some instructional materials in an appropriate language for learning, knowledge of how to use these materials and some basic classroom skills concerning managing students and the learning environment.

To be successful in teacher training efforts, firstly physical infrastructure of the institute has to be suitable and adequate foreffectively implementing the program. As indicated by Lakshmi, Rama and Hendrikz, (2007), Osborne (2013) and Saxena (2013), the teaching-learning material, ICT facilities,a mixture of wirelessand wired technology, libraries and laboratoriesnecessary for the programneed to be available andutilized on a regular basis. Secondly, support systems for trainees are essential elements in teacher

training. As pointed by Campos (2005) and Lakshmi, Rama and Hendrikz (2007), the institution must have a well structured, organized, proactive guidance and counseling unit which is accessible to all trainees. Moreover, the training environment is one of the most determinant factors for the success of teacher education programs. According to UNESCO (2012), training environment is broadly grouped as those that focus on the physical conditions, psychosocial environment and/or organizational climate of classrooms, institutions and other learning spaces.

Since the time teacher education emerged as an identifiable activity, there have been few periods when it was not being critiqued, studied, rethought, reformed, and, often, excoriated. Such programs are continually reformed in response to the growing body of evidence that is addressing quality instruction (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Jones& Ryan, 2014). Likewise, the Ethiopian teacher training system couldn't escape from reforms and passed through various changes since the 1994 Education and Training Policy.According to Tekeste (2006), the landscape of Ethiopian education has changed dramatically since 1994. It can be safely said that, (Ministry of Education, 2002) before 1994 there was never as such a clear policy by which to evaluate and accordingly shape the direction of education and training in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has recently seen unprecedented interest and commitment in teachers as the most important factor influencing quality education. As a result, Ethiopia launched a new teacher education program, Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT), in 2011. In the new program, the selection criteria and the training of secondary school teachers is changed. Primarily, they join universities and graduate in applied departments. Then,

those who are interested in the profession and can satisfy the requirement of MoE will be selected for the teaching profession (Adugna, 2012).After trainees have finished one year training, they will be awarded a certificate named "Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching".

This new teacher education program (PGDT) in Ethiopia was launched five years ago. As one of the public universities, Bahir Dar University has been offering the program for the last five years, since 2011. The College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences has been intensively working in preparing teachers. From the researchers' experience as a trainer and head of the registrar of the College, the PGDT program went through numerous problems and turbulence. The program has been challenged by problems emanated from various sources. Moreover, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the problems of the current teachers training program at Bahir Dar University have not been studied. Hence, this research was mainly aimed at exploring the practices and major challenges of the current teacher training program (PGDT) at Bahir Dar University and suggesting implications for better reform

Research Questions
The following basic research questions were raised;
1. How is the new teacher training program being implemented at Bahir Dar University?
2. How is the training environment in the new teacher training program?
   - Classroom condition
   - Trainees and instructors relationship
   - Learning resources and support system
3. What are the major challenges to the new teacher education program?

Materials and Methods

The researcher employed descriptive survey design as appropriate one in assessing the practice and identifying the major challenges of the teacher training program. As supported by Kothari (2004), descriptive research is relevant in describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting current conditions of a particular individual or group. In this study, mixed research method was emplyed. Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004) suggested that, combining quantitative and qualitative methods sounds like a good idea. Using multiple approaches can capitalize on the strengths of each approach and offset their different weaknesses. Creswell (2003) also asserted that, mixed methods design is useful to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Accordingly, this research combines both methods in identifying the major challenges of the program.

Population and Participants

The target population of this study is all 968 PGDT trainees participating in Regular and summer programs in 2014/15 academic year, all 52 instructors involved in the training, department heads, dean and the coordinator of the program. In this study Regular (Bega) refers to the the PGDT program which is undertaken from October up to June, whereas Summer program meant July-Augustin the Ethipian season. To select representative samples of trainees from summer and Regular modalities, proportional stratified random sampling technique was used. From 231 Regular program 102 participants and from 737 summer program 367 participants were selected for the study. Generally, a total of 469 teacher-trainees participated in the study.

In relation to the selection of interview and focus group discusion (FGD) participants, purposive sampling technique was employed. Accordingly, four department heads, the dean and PGDT coordinator were also selected for an in-depth interview. As the university is applying a lecture-tutor approach in the PGDT program, five instructors (two lecturers and three tutors) were selected purposively. Moreover, 18 trainees for FGD, 9 from each program, were also selected purposively.Generally, a total of 545 participants were involved in this study.

Data collection tools

In this study, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, FGDs and document review were utilized. Questionnaires were used to collect date from trainees and instructors. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher and two different types of questionnaires were distributed to trainees and trainers. The questionnaires are likert type and consist of items related to trainee, trainer and institution related challenges. The alternatives were coded as;Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5). The questionnirs also included open-ended questions under each theme.

In-depth interviews were also held with the department heads, dean, coordinator and lecturers and tutors of the program. Moreover, Focus Group Discussions were also conducted with trainees. Two FGDs were held with trainees selected from each programs. Relevant documents from the registrar and MoE were also duly reviewed. Permission was obtained from the university officials to conduct interviews and dispatch questionnaires. All the interviews and FGDs were audio-taped based on the consent of the respondents and transcribed. Participants of the questionnaires were assured anonymity and those interviewed were promised individual confidentiality as agreed during the initial FGD and pre-interview discussion.

Data analysis techniques

In relation to quantitative methods, the primary data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies. Moreover, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected through in-depth interview and FGDs. The tape recordings of an in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussions were initially transcribed. After transcribing, the core concepts were categorized containing broad themes like trainee related, trainer related and institutional challenges. The qualitative data was presented using direct quotes from respondents, summarizing and paraphrasing. Finally, the major findings under each theme and sub-theme were analyzed by organizing, summarizing and interpreting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Practices in the Program
The Assignment of Trainers to the Program

Although, there is a conviction that assigning qualified and experienced instructors is a key for effective implementation of the program, it is not being carried out based on the requirements. The main problem is attributed to the MoE due to its inconsistencies and failure to send trainees on due date. In the framework it is stated that, regular program trainees should join the program in September but in reality not. For instance, in 2014/15 most of instructors were assigned in the regular program assuming that there would not be Regular PGDT program. All of a sudden MoE send trainees in January at a time when all instructors were undertaking their regular tasks. Therefore, to manage this situation, instructors even with no related field and experience were assigned. There was no room to search for veteran instructors.

Moreover, the willingness of experienced instructors to involve in the PGDT program is the major challenges. Though experience is given a paramount importance in the PGDT program, most of the instructors are not interested to participate in the training. As the program is entangled with numerous problems and frequent grievances from trainees, instructors with high profile and experience do not show their interest to train PGDT students. The office was compelled to assign novice instructors with little or no experience for some courses.

The Lecture-tutor practice in the PGDT program

With the aim of producing qualified and competent teachers, College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences designed a strategy called a lecture-tutor approach. When the College endorses this approach as a relevant strategy, the best experiences of oversee universities were taken. The approach is based on the assumption that instead of exclusively offering course by a single instructor, a pair of instructors can provide a lively experience to the trainees. Hence, the PGDT program being offered at Bahir Dar University is based on the lecture-tutor approach.

In this approach the lecturer and tutor have different but complementary roles. The lecturer is expected to be assistant professor and above and with a long teaching experience. He acts as a leader in the course and has a coordinating role for tutors. The lecturer offers a weekly lecture on major points of the course. The lecture is delivered in a hall composed of trainees from five or six departments together. He is assumed to arrange regular meetings (on weekly basis), discuss on key issues, design activities and assessments, and organize focus areas (contents) with tutors. Moreover, the lecturer is responsible to

follow up what the tutors do in the classroom.

On the other hand, the tutors play invaluable role in the course provision. Tutors are expected to attend the weekly lectures. Based on the contents covered in the lecture and real life experiences, the tutors design activities which actively engage trainees. In the tutorial session, active learning methods are employed dominantly and the learning experiences of trainees should have direct linkage with their future teaching. The tutor provides real school experiences through carefully set tasks. In consultation with the lecturer and other tutors, the tutor conducts continuous assessments (quizzes, assignments, projects) and exams.

However, in practice the lecture-tutor approach is being poorly implemented. In relation to the academic rank of lecturers among departments, there is no consistency. In some department, the criteria are fulfilled in assigning assistant professor and above as a lecturer. But in most of the courses, such criteria are not taken and the assignment of lecturers is based on the context of the departments. It is also found that there is role confusion and both the lecturer and tutors are not fully aware of their responsibilities in the program. There is no guideline on the specific tasks of lecturers and tutors and serious orientation was not given to them. The lecturers are not playing a coordinating role in the program. There is no clear communication between the lecturer and tutors offering similar courses. As a result, tutors work differently based on personal interest not based on the lecture. The tutors are not attending the weekly lecture sessions.

The Assessment Practice in the PGDT program

With regard to the practice of assessment in the program, the lecturer (leader) is expected to coordinate tutors and monitor the implementation of continuous assessment. Both the lecturer and tutors are assumed to set assessment tasks together. Tutors have responsibilities to undertake assessments out of 60% (50% in some courses). In this program, the most repeatedly assessment tools were individual and group assignments, presentations, quizzes and mid-exam. For most of the courses, final exams are set by lecturers. Both assessments (continuous assessments and final exam) are sum up and the final grade is determined by the tutors.

Moreover, the lecturer and tutors are not setting assessment tools together up to the expected level, tutors offering similar course are not communicating and employing different assessments based on their personal interest, constructive feedback on assessments are not being provided to trainees. Besides, trainees take different assessments for similar courses and tutors provide assignment at end of the blocks. One summer FGD participant resentfully spoke that;

> Most tutors offer assignments and tasks at the end of the courses that resulted trouble and confusion among trainees. Instead of conducting assessments at the very beginning of the courses, some instructors rush worrying us by providing assignment at the termination of the course. To be frank their assessments don't measure our competency and knowledge of the courses. They are undertaking assessment for the sake of assessment not well thought and planned assessments.

Particularly the assessment practice in the Regular program is full of flaws. Trainees are located in Agriculture campus which is 7 Kms far from the main campus of the College. In this campus there is no library service and special support system to these trainees. Teacher trainees can't access relevant reference books to work on assessments. Important materials are available in the main campus. Hence, the assessment practice and overall learning is hugely hindered by trainees' campus location. One of the Regular participants in the FGD said that;

> *I personally like continuous assessment if appropriately applied. Tutors provide us with a series of assignments and tasks as a requirement for the course. Unfortunately we are in Agriculture campus where there are no education related reference books and internet access. To accomplish the assignments we simply use the handouts and fabricate in our dormitory.*

The Training Environment of the PGDT Program

In vast literatures, good training environment is characterized by the convenience of the classrooms (light, ventilation, sitting arrangement, location), the instructor-trainee relationship, the availability of learning resources (reference books, internet access, computer access) and support systems by the institution (guidance and counseling unit, recreation centers, cafe). In this study, the training environment refers to the convenience of classrooms, trainees-trainers' relationship, adequacy of learning resources and support system to trainees. In this study, it was recognized that the training environment among the Regular and summer program is different.

The Classroom Condition

As the Regular program is based on lecture-tutor approach lecture halls are necessary. With in small lecture hall since trainees from five departments sit together, there has been suffocation among trainees. Rather than focusing on the lecture, trainees browse Facebook and do their own personal tasks. For tutorial sessions classrooms were found to be better. There are sufficient open spaces and classrooms are convenient to apply diverse kinds of learning methods. Similarly in summer, the classrooms were not found to be convenient for training. Classrooms are not with sufficient light, there are sound disturbances outside the classes. These rooms were dormitories formerly and now served as classrooms for PGDT program. One respondent said "we are in container classrooms". Therefore, open and relaxed classrooms, well-situated to teacher training are not available.

Trainees and Instructors Interaction and Relationship

Teacher trainees and instructors' interaction and relationship was found to be good. FGD participants, the coordinator and department heads contentedly indicate that there is good relationship between trainees and trainers. A couple of years ago there was hostile relationship. Most of the instructors were not interested to train PGDT students. In previous programs, there were repeated upheavals from trainees. Now this is noticeably changed and there is a friendly attachment between the two. In the FGDs, trainees were found to be comfortable with instructors

Although good relationship is established between instructors and trainees, the frequency of their contact is poor in Regular PGDT program. As the trainees' campus is 7 kms far from the office of instructors, trainees are not getting proper support from their tutors. The contact

between the two is limited with in the classroom due to distance. Whereas in summer program, trainees are assigned in the main campus where instructors are available to support trainees. As a result, PGDT students and instructors' relationship and interaction was found to be better

Learning Resources and Support System in the PGDT Program
Concerning the learning resources, in the summer program there are relatively better reference books. In the library, there is adequate Psychology and Curriculum related as well as Subject area reference books. Though, there are no computer rooms reserved to summer trainees, they have better access to internet. Whereas in Regular program, it is safe to say there are hardly any learning resources i.e. no reference materials, internet and computer access. With respect to support system of the university to the PGDT program, it is found to be badly poor. In PGDT program there is no guidance and counseling system

specifically assigned to these trainees. Recreation centers and students cafeteria were other problems raised by participants.

Major Challenges of the Program
Trainers and Trainee Related Challenges
Challenges in the PGDT program are broadly treated in terms of challenges stem from teacher-trainees, trainers and the institution (university, coordination office, college and Ministry of Education). As the nature of challenges for summer and Regular programs are different, this section treats these challenges independently. As depicted below, the mean results of each of the items were computed. Hence, to see the degree of severity of each problem, 3 (the mean) is used as a reference point. If the mean is below 3, the result shows the less seriousness of the problem. Whereas, if the mean result is found to be above 3, it indicates the problem is serious.

Table 1. Mean Results of Trainers and Trainees Related challenges

Challenges	N		Mean	
	Summer	Regular	Summer	Regular
Missing of classes by instructors	363	87	2.80	3.31
Low motivation from the part of trainees	361	85	3.07	3.25
Trainees disappointment on the accommodation	352	84	2.96	2.89
Teachers showing low interest	358	84	2.89	3.04
Teachers' low commitment and devotion	355	85	2.78	3.15
Low interest of teacher trainees	357	83	3.33	3.23
Disciplinary problems of teacher trainees	358	85	2.42	2.38
Low trainees' engagement in the classroom tasks	360	82	2.74	2.84
Shortage of time to work on assignments and projects	355	83	3.28	2.57
Low support of instructors to trainees	358	85	2.87	3.12
Trainees are less serious to work	358	84	3.05	2.86
Teachers poor relationship with the trainees	357	85	2.83	3.06
Poor attendance of trainees	361	85	2.74	2.78
Poor relationship among teacher trainees	356	85	2.43	2.49
Teaching methods not different from 1st degree	356	85	2.92	3.01

Accordingly, as can be observed from Table 1 above (as rated by teacher-

trainees), for summer PGDT program, low

interest and motivation of teacher trainees and shortage of time to work on assignments and projects were rated as most serious problems. Whereas, for Regular program, the first five serious challenges were; missing of classes by instructors, low interest and motivation of students, low support of trainers to teacher trainees and low interest of instructors.

In addition to the above quantitative data, interview and focus group discussions were conducted. The findings revealed that, trainees misconceived this training program. They join the program assuming that the training is a kind of short term training and believe there is additional benefit by being part of the training. Teacher trainees are misinformed that in this PGDT program, there is no grading and probability to be expelled if they can't qualify. What makes matters even worse is there is no serious orientation from the concerned officials to clear these confusions.

Moreover, many trainees join this program after intensively searching for other jobs due to low wages for teachers and the lack of fringe benefits. Becoming a teacher is their lowest preference and they use it as a stay. This attitude lessens their interest in the teacher training. They search for better jobs while they are attending the training. Still some trainees are employed in other sectors and disturb the whole system and are bad models.Lack of trainees' interest and commitment in the program is another challenge in the program. In the Regular program as revealed in the FGDs and interviews, the problem is attributed to no incentive mechanism to trainees. Even though they graduated from universities and have certificate, nevertheless they don't earn additional benefit by being part

of this training. Moreover, they believe courses they have taken in their applied degree are adequate to be a teacher

In summer PGDT program, lack of interest and commitment is mainly resulted from their belief this teacher training is less worthwhile for their teaching profession. They believe that most of the courses are taken at the Diploma level. As most of them were teachers before this PGDT program, they think that they are complete teachers and feel wasting their time in the program.

Some instructors instead of being part of the solution and molding trainees in the appropriate way, they add problems. Many of them don't show the interest to involve in the PGDT program and they only agree to be a trainer because they earn more. They missed classes repeatedly but no administrative measure was taken. This problem is worse in subject area courses. Moreover, trainers focus on theory rather than practical applications and dominantly use lecture method. Failure to provide timely and constructive feedback for assessments and submit trainees' grade on time to the registrar office is another headache to the program. On account of this, teacher trainees are not getting registered and graduation is not endorsed on time. For instance, in 2014/15 academic year trainees were taking courses without being registered. They were not able to know their academic status.

Institutional Challenges in the Program

From the responses, challenges stemming from the institution (university, coordination office, Ministry of Education and College) were found to be more serious than problems from trainers and trainees. Also, most of the institutional problems were found to be more serious (above mean = 3) in Regular program than in summer.

Table 2. Mean Results of Institutional Challenges

Challenges	N		Mean	
	Summer	Regular	Summer	Regular
Tight block system (schedule)	330	77	2.80	2.73
Lack of orientation to teacher trainees	355	86	3.15	3.72
Weak communication of the coordination office to trainees	352	84	3.47	4.10
Low concern of the Ministry o Education to the program	357	84	3.40	3.13
Inconvenient class schedule	354	85	3.14	3.09
lack of study centers and facilities (Library, computer)	360	84	2.72	4.00
Unavailability of counseling unit to support students	353	85	3.22	3.86
Shortage of time to work on assignments and projects	356	85	3.27	2.62
Lack of organized learning materials	360	84	3.33	3.69
Inconvenient location of the classrooms	356	84	2.74	3.27
Lack of facilities (e.g. recreation center, clinic)	356	84	2.97	3.58
Problem of instructors responsiveness to trainee's concern	351	85	2.99	3.31
Lack of supportive books in the library	356	85	2.65	3.98
Lack of monitoring and support system	359	84	3.19	3.80
Low priority given to PGDT program by the University	359	85	3.26	3.78

As can be seen in Table 2 above, the most serious problems in the Regular program were poor communication between the coordination office and trainees, lack of study centers and facilities (library, computer), lack of supportive books in the library, lack of monitoring and support system. Moreover, unavailability of counseling service to trainees, low concern of the university to this program and lack of orientations to trainees were other constraints in the program. All the aforementioned challenges were rated as serious problems. In summer training program, weak communication between the coordination office and trainees, lower priority given to PGDT by University and MoE officials, unavailability of counseling center, lack of organized learning materials are hindering the summer PGDT program.

According to the FGDs with studetns, the most challenging factor for the Regular program was found to be the campus where trainees were assigned. Teacher trainees are assigned at a distant place, 7 Kilometers away from the College of Education and Behavioral Science campus. In this campus, there are no enough classrooms, no library, no support system, very small halls for lecture session. The university doesn't seem to be concerned to the program and does not treat teacher trainees like the regular students.

The PGDT program being offered at Bahir Dar University is based on the lecture-tutor approach. In the study, it was found that, poor communication between the lecturer and tutor is creating numerous problems in the program. Both the lecturer and tutor are not working together in designing the learning contents, classroom activities, tasks and various assessments. It is also found that there is role confusion and both

the lecturer and tutors are not fully aware of their responsibilities. Loose coordination system of the program was another challenge hindering this training program.

Ministry of Education was found to be source of the trouble to the PGDT program due to irregular assignment of teacher trainees. In some time trainees are sent in summer, on the other time in Regular. Even in Regular, as respondents bitterly explained, there is no consistency. This is creating serious management problems to the university. Since trainees are being assigned at a time when the regular students settled and all dormitories occupied, the university is obliged to locate trainees at the outskirts of the town. The sudden decisions made by MoE are creating trouble for the program.

DISCUSSION
In the study of Mukeredzi, Mthiyane and Bertram (2015), it is noted that promoting acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies through education is necessary for the performance of chosen roles that contribute to national economic and social development. This requires an education system staffed with teachers who are well equipped to effectively discharge their roles. To this end, teachers need to pass through formal professional study and acquiring the requisite pedagogies, knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competences to engage in the activities of classroom practice. This study assesses the practices and challenges of teacher education program at Bahir Dar Univeristy and suggests implications for better implementation. Drawing upon participants' experiences, the results of the study were discussed below.

In every teacher training, university trainers play a key role (Tardif, 2001). Trainers must be experienced to enable trainees to have required teaching competencies. In this regard, most trainers in this training program were found to be less experienced and in some cases novice trainers. Still some trainers have never been in teacher education programs so far and assigned due to scarcity of trainers in the program. This is contradictory to requirements of trainers in this PGDT program as stated in MoE framework (2009). According to the framework, teacher trainers need to have a certificate of training in teaching, minimum of three years of effective teaching experience in secondary school or five years teaching experience in teachers' college.

The lecture-tutor approachis not being implemented up to the expectation. There is no strong orientation and guideline on the specific duties and responsibilities of the lecturer and tutors. As a result, there has been role confusion and miscommunications between the two. With respect to assessment practice, the most repeatedly utilized tools were individual and group assignment, presentations and mid-exam. This is in contradiction with contemporary assessment reform and the MoE framework (2009) that states a range of continuous assessment tools need to be employed in the training programs. Moreover, the lecturers and tutors are not working together in designing assessment activities.

Establishing an environment conducive to learning is integral part of successful teacher training programs. In this PGDT program, the classrooms in the Regular are small for lecture sessions resulting discomfort among trainees. Similarly, summer classrooms are inconvenient for training as they were student dormitories, not purposely constructed for training. Trainees' relationship with their instructors was found to be good in both cases. With respect to learning resources, in Regular program due to far distance trainees don't

have access to library, internet, computer and other resources. This contradicts with what is suggested by Osborne (2013) and Saxena (2013). They indicated that internet service, computer, libraries and laboratories necessary for implementing the program need to be available and utilized on a regular basis.

The support system to PGDT trainees was found to be overwhelmingly poor. As stated in the work of Campos (2005), the institution must have a well structured, organized, proactive guidance and counseling unit and socializing activities which are accessible to all teacher trainees. However, in this PGDT program there is no guidance and counseling system specifically assigned to these trainees. In addition to this, there is little or no infrastructure and facilities for social, cultural and leisure time activities for the teacher trainees.

In this teacher education program several challenges were identified. Instructors are found to be sources of problems that hinder the implementation of the training. The findings indicate that, most of the instructors involving in this training program are less interested and motivated. Even though, the training is believed to be practical, instructors hugely focus on theory. Again, trainers in the PGDT program lack innovativeness in selecting appropriate learning methods and employ dominantly teacher-centered methods. This is contradictory to contemporary educational reform, constructivism (Gordon, 2009; Sjøberg, 2007), where learners are assumed to be active creators of their knowledge rather than passive recipients.

It is also revealed that teacher trainees are posing several challenges to the program. Most of the trainees are found to be less interested and committed in this program.

Absenteeism was another major problem observed from the trainees. Similar findings were indicated from the research works of Koye and Yonas (2013) on the practices and challenges of PGDT program at Haramaya University. This training program is also misconceived by trainees in that they expect additional benefit from their enrolment in this program. Besides, most of the trainees believe that the program is less worthwhile for their teaching career.

Another major challenge is emanated from the institution. In relation to the coordination office and the college, the PGDT program is hindered by poor communication between the lecturer and tutor, trainees and the office and lack of serious orientation to trainees. This finding corroborated what is noted in Young et al (2001) that poor coordination between teacher education and the faculty is one of the hindrances in educating teacher trainees. Besides, the program is not well supervised and there is lack of monitoring and support system to trainees. The University also seems to place low priority to this training program. This is manifested by lack of study centers and facilities (library, computer) and unavailability of counseling service to trainees unlike the regular students. Similar problems were revealed from Tadesse and Meaza (2007) study at Jimma University. Equally important problems are also observed from the Ministry of Education. As Koye and Yonas (2013) found, teacher trainees are assigned to the university late. Incentive mechanism is not designed to encourage these teacher trainees.

CONCLUSION
From the aformentioned findings it can be concluded that, the PGDT curriculum

framework is not strictly adhered in the recruitment of trainees, the assignment of trainers to the program and assessment practices. Despite the conviction that training environment has powerful impact for successful teacher training, it is not found to be good in this training program. Moreover, from trainees up to the Ministry of Education, different bodies shareresponsibility for the problems in the implementation of the program. Instructors and trainees were found to be less interested and committed to the program. Instructors focus more on theory than practical applications and lack creativity in applying active learning methods. Loose coordination and communication system and lack of monitoring and support were major problems. Furthermore, MoE doesn't give serious attention to this program and posed considerable problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER PRACTICE

It is important to recognize that the practice of the current teacher training program requires drastic reform. Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were forwarded for better practice.

 In assigning trainers for the program strong system has to be established and it has to be done based on the requirements as explicated in the national PGDT framework. Experienced and competent teacher trainers should actively participate. As the College is striving to be a center of excellence in education, due emphasis in all aspects should be given especially in designating appropriate and merit based training system.

 The coordinating office should have a strong follow up and monitoring system, including making unannounced visits to inspect instructors' presence, classrooms, assessment systems and grade submission. The office has to work hand in hand with trainees and instructors. Trainers should be well informed on various issues in the program through short meetings, direct contacts and email. Clear communication between the coordination office and instructors as well as trainees has to be established.

 For effective implementation of the lecture-tutor approach, the College has to prepare guideline. It is also recommended to enhance the skills of lecturers and tutors though practical trainings, consultative workshops and orientation sessions.

 The national PGDT framework and researchers in teacher education suggests the application of diverse assessments in teacher training. Assessment techniques in line with school practices and trainees' future teaching career need to be designed. The lecturers and tutors in the program are also recommended to execute their expected roles.

 Ministry of Education is recommended to send trainees on time and communicate issues as early as possible. Teacher training has to be given a paramount place by MoE and it has to be well recognized that, teacher training need to be greatly valued.

 The university itself has to take a serious responsibility for this program and follow each activity. The university is urged to treat these trainees as regular students. Regular trainees must be assigned in a campus where they can read various books, practice in a laboratory, meet their

instructors, and access different resources like internet and computer.

 Teachers are expected to attend classes regularly, provide feedbacks for assessments notify trainees' grade and submit to the registrar, and accomplish the role of academic advising. Teachers need to be innovative in applying active learning methods rather than the traditional talk and chalk. Moreover, trainees must be well oriented that, this is a nation building process and molding the future generation is the greatest of all professions. Teacher-trainees should be kept on task continuously and should be oriented that this is a preparation for a career and not for a happy-go-lucky type of life.

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