

**A MODEL FOR INDIGENIZING THE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULA FOR THE  
GAMO ETHNIC GROUP IN ETHIOPIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

Student number: **47016787**

I declare that A model for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the fathers and forefathers to whom I am indebted, and who demonstrated vigilance in preserving the Gamo ethnic culture both in the rural and the city settings despite the onslaught from the dominant Amhara ethnic culture and the modern education system.

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## ABSTRACT

African curricular reforms indicate major inherent structural defects because only the contents of the curriculum were changed. As a result, the Western cultural influences embedded in the curriculum foundations are transmitted to the students, causing the curricular material to be irrelevant and unrelated to their culture and philosophy. The focus of this study was on making the basic education curricula relevant to the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group of Ethiopia. The main aim of the study was to critically analyse how the indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policies and curricula, and in the implementation of the curricula at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, and to produce a model suited to indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group. To this end, the study employed a critical perspective to investigate the problem. The approach and design consists of a qualitative multiple case study. The country's constitutions, policies and strategies were treated as one case, while two cases, one from the Gamo Gofa Zone and another from the Addis Ababa City Administration, were treated similarly, so as to study the basic education curriculum planning and implementation process. The findings of the field study disclosed that the indigenization from the ethnic group's perspective has some strength, but major deficiencies. In order to keep the strengths up and avoid the weaknesses, a stand-alone indigenization approach, which calls for rooting the curriculum on indigenous foundations, theories, principles and ideas derived from the culture, and a blending approach, which allows for intercultural dialogue, were suggested as feasible. The researcher believes that this approach is an alternative that could contribute towards ensuring the relevance of the basic education curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group. A model which will assist in materialising the curriculum indigenization from the Gamo ethnic group's perspective was suggested. The salient features of the constitutional, policy and strategy provisions were outdone by their favour for a standardization approach. They will have to be revisited, either in favour of indigenization, or the standardization thesis, since these paradigms are opposite poles.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

APA:	Action on Podoconiosis Association
CSA:	The Central Statistical Agency
EDRI:	The Ethiopian Development Research Institute
EPRDF:	The Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE:	The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FSS:	The Forum for Social Studies
IFLA:	The International Federation and Library Associations
IFPRI:	The International Food Policy Research Institute
MOE:	The Ministry of Education
TGE:	The Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UNESCO:	The United Nations Education and Science Commission
UNFPA:	The United Nations Population Fund

## LIST OF KEY TERMS

Basic education, culturally-relevant pedagogy, enculturate, relevant education, relevant and functional curriculum, socio-cultural context, Gamo ethnic group, indigenizing the foundations, marginalised groups, cultural revalidation.

## GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

*Arera* – skimmed milk drunk by the Gamo people, which became a source of insult

*Assera* – a hand-woven cloth worn below the waist

*Besso* – barley flour which is either used on its own, or by mixing it with *borde*

*Bitene* – type of *halaqa* in some *deres*

*Borde* – a traditional drink of the Gamo people brewed from wheat flour

*Bulaa* – a food item extracted by squeezing the stem of *enset*

*Buluko* – a hand-woven shawl made by the Gamo people, heavier than the *gabi*

*Buqurata* – a Gamo term for traditional heritages

*Catressa* – an armband of rhinoceros horn, worn by individuals who own many cattle

*Debo* – community work performed in a group by the Gamo people

*Demutsa* – type of *halaqa* in some *deres*

*Derg* – the military junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-1991

*Dere* – the Gamo community during the pre-conquest era, equivalent to a kingdom

*Ditsa* – a traditional musical instrument of the Gamo people resembling the guitar

*Dunguza* – colourful hand-woven material which specifically represents the Gamo culture

*Enset* – the fruit of a tree, resembling the banana, used for preparing the staple food of the Gamo people

*Equb* – a local saving scheme

*Ertsiban* – a traditional self-help scheme used widely among the Gamo people

*Fetela* – the staple food of the Gamo people made of maize flour

*Gabi* – a heavy hand-woven shawl made by the Gamo people

*Gamotso dona* – the vernacular language of the Gamo ethnic group

*Gebexa or hircho* – a kind of traditional game, widely played by the Gamo people

*Gena play* – a traditional game of hockey, played widely by the Amhara ethnic group

*Gimo* – a bracelet made of rhinoceros horn, worn by individuals who own many cattle

*Gome* – the transgression of a traditional rule, which is thought to lead to misfortune

*Gondale* – the traditional shield of the Gamo people

*Gote* – the administrative unit below *kebele*

*Guche* – a mourning ceremony performed by the Gamo people in honour of a hero

*Halaqa* – an initiation into the position of political leadership in *dere*

*Herra Sayinsi* – Environmental Science

*Hororso* – a ceremonial staff carried by individuals initiated to be *halaqas*

*Jigge* – community work performed in groups by the Gamo people

*Kashka* – the staple food of the Gamo people, widely eaten in Addis Ababa city

*Kawo* – the ritual leader of *deres* in the Gamo ethnic group during the pre-conquest era

*Kebele* – the administrative unit lower than *woreda*

*Kurkuffa* – a kind of traditional food of the Gamo people

*Kuta* – a lighter shawl, between the *gabi* and the *netella*

*Lazantse* – the intermediary in wedding negotiations

*Mara* – a kind of *borde*, which is a mixture of *zaka* with barley flour, called *besso*

*Mesqel* – A New Year's festival among the members of the Gamo ethnic group

*Netella* – a light hand-woven shawl worn with the dresses by the women

*Qamis* – light-weight hand-woven material, used for making dresses for women

*Qinche* – porridge made of barley, yeast, and butter

*Qoro* – a reserved grass-field where cattle are tended during the *mesqel* celebrations

*Shendera* – porridge made of flour, yeast, milk, and butter

*Susule* – a traditional flute of the Gamo people

*Tibeb* – fine hand-woven embroidery designs prepared by the Gamo people

*Tsambaro* – a ceremonial staff carried by the individuals initiated to be *halaqas*

*Tsoyle* – a unique farm implement used by the Gamo people for tilling the land

*Uketsa* – a hard-baked kind of food consumed by the Gamo people

*Umbursa* or *hirtse* – an acrobatic action performed by the Gamo people during  
mourning

*Unchaa* – a food item extracted from *enset*

*Wereda* – the administrative unit below the Zone

*Zaka* – a kind of *borde* which is not mixed with barley flour

*Zaye* – a traditional trumpet of the Gamo people

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# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION INTO THE STUDY

### ***1.1 INTRODUCTION***

This study was conceived due to a deep search to ensure the relevance and functionality of the basic education curricula in countries where the curricula are founded on the dominant and mainstream culture, be it the Western or dominant local culture, and at the same time ignoring the socio-cultural and structural context of the marginalized cultural groups.

The lack of relevance and non-responsiveness of mainstream approaches and curricula imported from Europe, to the local context and to the learners' socio-cultural circumstances became evident. This led developing countries to prefer locally-designed curricula evolving the issue of indigenous education to imported curricula (UNESCO, 2009). At present a strong debate is ongoing in Ethiopia about the relevance and quality of basic education. The debate also has an international character because, according to UNESCO (2009), relevant education is being considered as one of the three pillars of quality education, the others being greater equity of access and outcome, and the proper observance of individual rights.

In Ethiopia at present the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the Implementation Strategy document, known as the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP IV is being implemented) underpin the education system in the country. The responsibility of developing and implementing the curricula, and choosing the language of instruction for the primary schools is the responsibility vested on the Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* Education bureaus. Therefore, in this respect, the Gamo ethnic group has been chosen for the study due to its being conducive to research, and to its distinctiveness from other ethnic groups in Addis

Ababa. This researcher is a descendant from the ethnic group to be studied, and speaks the language fluently. This gave him an advantage to observe school activities and interactions between students and teachers in the classroom without any barrier. And whenever necessary, the interviews were conducted in the local vernacular.

More than eighty ethnic groups were listed in the 2007 census in the country. Out of these ethnic groups only ten have a population of one million or more. Gamo is the tenth of these ethnic groups with a population of 1 107 163 (one million one hundred and seven thousand one hundred and sixty three). This number accounts for 1.5% of the total population of the country (CSA, 2008).

The Gamo ethnic group resides within the Gamo Gofa Administrative Zone, which is situated in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS), and the Addis Ababa City Administration. Most of the regional states in Ethiopia are named after the largest ethnic groups, such as Oromo, Amhara, Somalie, Tigray, and Affar. However, the SNNPRS houses more than forty-six ethnic groups that all hold important positions within the region. Some of the most prominent ones include Welaita, Silte, Sidama, Kembata, Kefficho, Hadiya, Guragie, Gedo, and Gamo (Habtu, 2003; CSA, EDRI & IFPRI, 2010).

Addis Ababa, which is the capital city of Ethiopia, houses different ethnic groups. Here the Gamo ethnic group, unlike the other ethnic groups, is settled together in different sub-cities. This gives it the relative advantage of retaining its cultural traits in an urban setting. It is a common occurrence of seeing Gamo people, who did not pass through the schooling system, being proud of their identity, speaking their language freely, and performing their cultural practices publicly. Unfortunately, however, the youth who were born in the city and who passed through the modern school system, are ashamed of being associated with their community.

This study critically analyses how the indigenization of the basic education curricula can be achieved within the Gamo ethnic group, in order to address the issue of the relevance and functionality of the curricula.

## ***1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY***

The education system in colonial and post-colonial Africa lacks relevance due to its blind adherence to Western classical traditions. Western education and values are merely transplanted to Africa, with only slight post-independence modifications or adaptive reforms (Manuwuiké, 1978; Kisanji, 1995).

As Itibari (2006) states, the ongoing debate about African education, in and outside of Africa, reveals that it has been in a state of perpetual crisis in respect of relevance, pertaining to the learning context. In expressing the damage made by the education system transplanted from the West to Africa, Bekele (2007:116) states that

Those who received the education eventually ended up alienating themselves from their roots and cultures, developing contempt for the way of life of their compatriots. In the case of youth in the large urban areas they eventually lost the language of their fathers and forefathers.

Being cognisant of the necessity of making education relevant, many major curriculum reforms have been taking place throughout Africa since the 1960s (Salia-Bao, 1989; Obanya, 1999). However, the African curricular reform projects bore no tangible result, due to the major inherent structural defect of being built on Western philosophical, psychological, historical and social foundations, which are believed to be the external boundaries of a given curriculum. Even if the content of the subjects started being African, the Western cultural influences embedded in the foundations are still being transmitted to the students (Salia-Bao, 1989). Obanya (1999) also notices the weaknesses of the reform endeavours, and states that all the reform activities aimed at revitalizing African education have never succeeded in domesticating and re-

contextualizing the school in order to link it more closely with African cultural values, and reinstating the goal of enculturation in the teaching-learning process. Obanya (1999: 365) adds his reflection on curriculum reform, by indicating that,

While in the other parts of the world the school curriculum helps the learner to *enculturize* by treating cultural heritage as the foundation of learning, in Africa culture-related disciplines are relegated to the background, taught out of context by ill-motivated teachers, and accorded very low status in the hierarchy of school subjects (researcher's emphasis).

Beauchamp (1975) also argues that schools, as important social institutions, should be engaged in the generation and transmission of cultural values which should not contradict the values acquired by the youngsters through a general enculturation process in a society. In furthering his argument, Beauchamp (1975) contends that schooling implies using didactic and enculturation approaches in the generation and transmission of cultural values.

In commenting on the weaknesses of the reform efforts made, Abdi (2009) argues that counter-colonial philosophies and epistemologies of education have not been constructed so far despite the educational expansion exhibited on the content. He calls for the re-culturing and the relative Africanization of knowledge systems, because the acquisition of knowledge is a collective human achievement and requires some contextualization with respect to the environments in which it is being practiced.

According to UNESCO (2009), the lack of the relevance of mainstream approaches of education which were imported from Europe, gave impetus to the local design of curriculum content, pedagogies and assessment. The recognition by the developing countries of the non-responsiveness of the imported or inherited curricula to their local context and the learners' socio-cultural situation, drove them to demand a more relevant education that would be responsive to their context. As a way of ensuring relevance, UNESCO (2009: 97) came up with the idea that

...cultural diversity can be a powerful lever for ensuring the contextual relevance of educational methods and content, and it reminds us that education is never a culturally neutral process: teaching and classroom learning do not take place in a vacuum, in isolation from their social and cultural contexts, nor are facilitators (teachers) and learners free of specific cultural orientations.

Ethiopia, as one of the African countries situated in the sub-Saharan region, is no different from the rest of the African countries whose education has a strong colonial legacy. Though Ethiopia did not experience colonization, it used to and does still borrow from the Western system of education, along with its curricula, since the inception of modern education in the country in 1908 (Tekeste, 2006).

Unlike the rest of the African countries, the dependence of Ethiopia on borrowed Western curricula is a self-induced one. Amare (2009a) expresses his regret that Ethiopia, being a non-colonized nation, and who had the opportunity to develop its own curricula, unfortunately lost that opportunity, and the country remained dependent on borrowed curricula.

In Ethiopia during the imperial period, the lack of the relevance of the curriculum to the historical experiences and socio-economic situation of the country was perceived by different sectors of the society. Researchers, the conservative elements of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the nobility, argued that there was very little Ethiopian in the curriculum, and that those young Ethiopians who passed through the school system were disrespectful towards their society and its institutions (Tekeste, 2006). An American researcher, Ernest, was the first foreigner who alleged the irrelevance of the Ethiopian curriculum, and came up with a counteractive proposal where he recommended Ethiopianizing education in the country by using Amharic, the national language, as the medium of instruction, and by designing local textbooks using Amharic (Maaza, 1966).

Attempts were made to Ethiopianise the education system at primary school level through curricular reforms in 1947, the 1960s and the 1970s (from 1964 to 1974). The reforms focused on changing the medium of instruction and the textbook language, and involving the Ethiopian personnel in the process of curriculum development and implementation. Despite these efforts towards the Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level, it was practically impossible to indigenise knowledge and the curriculum because of the assumption that knowledge has a universal or global nature, and because of the continued foreign influence on Ethiopian experts (Solomon, 2008).

The cultural assimilation with Amharic as the language of instruction and the assimilation of other ethnic groups into the mainstream Amhara culture, was the policy in Ethiopia exercised during the imperial, and to a lesser extent, the military periods. This policy provoked some subjugated ethnic groups into initiating ethnic movements and armed revolts in various regions of the empire-state (Habtu, 2003). Therefore, the Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level can be considered as an affirmation of the assimilation policy which was publicly opposed by the subjugated ethnic groups.

The downfall of the Derg regime that ruled the country during the military periods and the coming into power of the ethnic-based opposition force led by Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Force (EPRDF) in 1991 ushered in a new political order in the country. The country started to try out a new kind of federalism which had never been tested before, and which was an exception to the general pattern in Africa known as *ethnic federalism*. Ethiopia's ethnic federalism is based on the ethnic communities as the constituent units and foundations of the federal state. As a result, the country was organized into nine ethnically-based regional states and two city administrations that made up the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

This change of political order ushered in a new era in the education system in general and in the curricula in particular. The education system and the basic education

curricula were aligned to the political system that the country started to follow. A new Education and Training Policy was adopted in 1994, which heralded the onset of the decentralization of the education system which remained centralized for almost a century since the introduction of modern education in 1908. Immediately after the adoption of the Education and Training Policy, the curricula of the country were changed.

The policy and implementation strategy documents adopted and issued by the Transitional Government and the Federal Government of Ethiopia clearly specified the deficiencies of the education systems of the country in general and the curriculum in particular, during both the monarchy and military periods, with respect to relevance and quality. In stating the problems of the country's education, the policy document articulated that

To date, it is known that our country's education is entangled with complex problems of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity. The objectives of education do not take cognizance of the society's needs and do not adequately indicate future direction (TGE, 1994:2).

The policy document suggests possible remedial actions to correct the problem in the country's education. The suggested solutions deal with the supply, distribution and utilisation of educational material, educational technology and facilities; and the decentralization of the educational management. The policy also emphasizes the development of culture in the content of education and curriculum structure and approach. It also calls for the development of the curriculum and the designing of textbooks to be conducted at central and regional levels, giving attention to concrete local conditions (TGE, 1994).

The Implementation Strategy Document also clearly sorted out the problems of the country's education system, among which relevance and quality were prominent. It stated that the curricula were directly copied from the nations which are friends of the

government without taking the context of the country into consideration. The Implementation Strategy Document proposed changing the existing curriculum in order to solve the problems of educational quality and relevance. In order to do this, the content of the curriculum was supposed to be aligned to the context of the country. To implement this proposal, primary education textbooks were being designed, taking the reality of the environment, the activities, the cultures, and the way of living of the local communities into consideration (MOE, 2002).

The 1997 Cultural Policy of Ethiopia also sets, as one of its objectives, the creation of culture-conscious citizens that are proud of their culture and identity, and who are determined to preserve them. The Policy also suggests the incorporation of cultural themes into the curricula, with the aim of integrating education with culture, and thereby shaping the youth with a sense of cultural identity (FDRE, 1997).

After the promulgation of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and the 1997 Cultural Policy, the indigenization from national perspective (Ethiopianization), already paved the way for the indigenization from the ethnic group's perspective, namely regionalization and localization. As a result, the ethnic groups in the country are trying to make basic education (1st cycle level) more responsive to their socio-cultural and structural context. Therefore, the indigenization of the curricula from the ethnic group's perspective in Ethiopia is presently being underpinned by these policy provisions.

Despite the reform in education policy and curriculum development, the country's education system is still being criticized for its lack of relevance. In research that he conducted, Tekeste (2006) argued that the relevance of education to the cultural, historical and economic needs of the country was not given sufficient recognition, even if returns on investment in education in terms of human capital functioned well. He attributed the genesis of the problem of relevance to the imported curriculum and the use of the English language as medium of instruction. Amare (2009b) also stated that the self-assessment of the education system revealed unsatisfactory results in terms of

quality, in respect of student achievement and characteristics. He indicated that concerns about the deteriorating quality of the country's education were being expressed in the mass media and in different public forums. The MOE (2010), in the recent ESDP IV programme action plan, still indicated high drop-out and repetition rates in primary education in the country, and this can be considered as signs and symptoms of a lack of relevance.

A study conducted by Woube (2004) revealed that a systematic way did not exist of incorporating culture into the curriculum, although the issue of culture was given emphasis in the country's policy documents. Furthermore, he stated, there was a lack of common understanding among curriculum developers on the concept of *culture* and the selection criteria for incorporating it in the curricula. Amare's (2009a:426) argument also concurs with that of Woube, and he raised the question

...who is to take this responsibility of incoherence in translating the spirits of the 1994 Educational Policy in to its proper perspectives, of making education culturally relevant, that is, to bring the social, technological, economic, and psychological life of the communities in to the schools (and curriculum)?

It was therefore imperative to undertake this study, namely to critically analyse the process of curriculum indigenization from a specific ethnic group's perspective so as to come up with a viable model of indigenizing the curricula of basic education, which may empower the different ethnic groups in Ethiopia in general, and the Gamo ethnic group in particular. The model that was generated by this research would make the education system of the ethnic groups relevant to their socio-cultural and structural context. In addition, this study could make a contribution to the local and international debate of ensuring the relevance of basic education, namely by designing curricula using the indigenization approach.

With this aim in mind the study employed a critical perspective to investigate the research problem. The approach and design will make use of a qualitative multiple case study.

### ***1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT***

The need for studying the indigenization of the basic education curriculum stems from the fact that the failure of domesticating the borrowed, or developing new curricula, rooted in Ethiopia's context, led to the multifaceted problems in the country. For those who succeed in the school system it caused selfishness, a lack of respect for their elders and parents and for their culture, and the destruction of the social structure, leading to the cultural alienation of the individual, and the destabilization of the traditional values, lives and identities (Manuwike, 1978; Kisanji, 1995; Salia-Bao, 1989). But for those who could not cope with the school system, it caused a loss of excitement and interest in learning, and alienation (Gay, 2004), leading to high drop-out and repetition rates, and juvenile delinquency (Salia-Bao, 1989).

Amare's (2009a) study on one of the major regions in the country, Tigray, disclosed that the youth (graduates, drop-outs and active students) in Ethiopia were characterized by profiles of dependency, incompetence and delinquency. He attributed this problem to the curricula, which gave the inculcation of Western values precedence above the rural values of hard work, personal integrity, and cooperative social relationships.

Shiundu and Omulando (1992) indicated that values are normally inferred from observed behaviour. Therefore, the very character being portrayed by school children in Ethiopia clearly shows the danger of local values. They demonstrate a Western character, forfeiting their own national character. Primary school leavers, in their desire to present themselves as being modernised, ended up in fantasy, and started to scorn the ways of their ancestors and their heritage. Many have become addicted to drugs, and are juvenile delinquents, and have quit their homes and families, ending up in the streets, or in rehabilitation centres.

The present emphasis of the Government of Ethiopia on improving access to basic education due to the rush to reach the Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015, is actually affecting the quality of basic education in all respects, including its relevance. The Government is forced to compromise on the quality and relevance of basic education because of its focus on increasing access to education, and on ensuring regional and gender parity. Even the intervention of the so-called Third Sector (the Civil Society) is confined to enhancing access and gender parity to basic education. To this end, non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are running Alternative Basic Education Programmes, which are aimed at providing access to education to out-of-school children.

If ensuring the relevance of curricula is not given precedence in research it will result in a decline in the quality of basic education in terms of relevance. This decline in turn, will lead to the loss of both the ethnic and the national Ethiopian identity and internal cohesion, and the degradation of important values, thereby hampering the country's development. In addition, it will also destroy the social fabrics of the society, perpetuate backwardness, and dependence on the West.

This research focused on basic education, due to the fact that basic education is instrumental in shaping a national culture in most countries, and in modernising young people in a society by teaching them the skills required in society (Carnoy, 1992). In addition, basic education is considered the level which lays the foundation for life-long learning (Obanya, 1999). It is in primary education that attempts at indigenizing the curricula from both national and ethnic groups' perspective have been made in the country since the 1930s.

In a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation like Ethiopia, indigenization could be carried out both from various ethnic groups' perspectives and from nationalist perspectives. Therefore, this study critically analyses how the indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in policy documents and in the process of curriculum

development (in policy and practice) in the basic education curricula, taking the experience of one of the ethnic groups in Ethiopia as an example.

Thus, the following research question was set, namely

Why and how is the indigenization approach conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation process at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy?

This main research question led to the statement of the following sub-research questions:

- ⦿ What does the indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally, and specifically in the context of the Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
- ⦿ What is the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy, and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy in respect of the Ethiopian school basic education curriculum?
- ⦿ What are the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group?
- ⦿ What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula in Ethiopian primary schools, specifically for the Gamo ethnic group?

#### ***1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY***

The aim of this study was to critically analyse how the indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policies, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, and to produce a model suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group.

This main aim led to the following objectives, namely

- ⦿ to explore the meaning of the indigenization of the school curriculum globally and specifically within the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group;
- ⦿ to critically analyse the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy for the basic education curriculum of Ethiopian schools;
- ⦿ to critically assess the circumstances that led to the adoption of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group; and
- ⦿ to design a model suitable for the indigenization of the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools.

### ***1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY***

This study is timely and significant because it aims to

- ⦿ identify the theoretical perspectives guiding or underpinning the indigenization of the school curriculum;
- ⦿ contribute to the ongoing national and international debates on the role of the indigenization approach in making the basic education curricula relevant and functional;
- ⦿ influence policy revision and practice, which would facilitate the development of relevant curricula using the indigenization approach;
- ⦿ stimulate other researchers to shift their focus towards making education relevant and responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context, by studying the curriculum development process in their respective countries; and
- ⦿ lead to the reconceptualisation of the indigenization of the curriculum and a model suitable for the Gamo ethnic group, as members of an Ethiopian primary school.

## ***1.6 DEFINITION OF THE TERMS***

**Basic education:** Level of education where a country places a great prospect for cultural formation (forming a local and national culture) and its stated purpose, as it is found everywhere, is modernization of its citizens. Basic education is influenced by language, teaching-learning styles, and the values of the family and community. Basic education denotes the period, level and content of formal education which lays the foundation for life-long learning (Carnoy, 1992:64; Obanya, 1999:441). It refers to the first cycle of primary education where children are taught, through the medium of their mother tongue, the fundamentals of their cultural heritage.

**Culturally-relevant or culturally-responsive pedagogy:** An instructional process which gives recognition and affirmation, and responds to the cultural realities of the learners, with the intent of promoting their academic achievement. Culturally relevant pedagogy uses student's community culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture (De Lissovoy, 2008:109). The term *culturally responsive* signifies a more dynamic or synergistic link between the home and community culture on the one hand, and the school culture on the other (Ladson-Billings, 1995:475). In this study *culturally-relevant or culturally-responsive* pedagogy refers to the instructional process which facilitates the implementation of an indigenized basic education curriculum so as to promote both the achievement and grounding of the children in their socio-cultural context. The instructional process has to align with the socio-cultural reality of the children, and should help them to associate rather than alienate with their society.

**Enculturate:** A process of orienting children to the values of their culture by treating their cultural heritage as the foundation for learning. Both a society and one of its important institutions, the school, make use of the enculturation approach in the generation and transmission of cultural values (Obanya, 1999:365; Beauchamp, 1975:85). In the context of this study *enculturate* means using the cultural heritage of the community as a foundation for orienting children towards the values of their culture

rather than orienting them towards values borrowed or inherited from a foreign culture. Enculturation could be done through designing and implementing an indigenized curriculum. Schools should use an enculturation approach in the generation and transmission of cultural values which align to the cultural values children acquire through a general enculturation process in a society.

**Ethiopianisation:** The indigenisation of the education system at primary school level in Ethiopia by making curricular reforms in 1947 and the 1960s (from 1964 to 1974). The reforms were focused on changing the medium of instruction and the textbook language, and the involvement of Ethiopian personnel in the process of curriculum development and implementation (Solomon, 2008: 39). In this study Ethiopianisation denotes the indigenization of education at national level which was carried out by both the Imperial and Derg regimes that promoted the use of Amharic as medium of instruction and textbook language for primary education.

**Indigenization of the curriculum:** A process of making the curriculum responsive or relevant to a given community by revitalising and incorporating the concepts of indigenous knowledge. It calls for replacing the exclusivist and ethnocentric features of colonial or dominant mainstream curriculum (Ismailova, 2004:251). In the context of this study *indigenizing the curriculum* denotes revitalizing the foundations of the curriculum by making them responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the community so as to counter the exclusivist and ethnocentric features of colonial or dominant mainstream curriculum. Adding local contents of the subjects to an imported or inherited curriculum will not make it relevant to the society it intends to serve, because the cultural influences embedded in the foundations of the lending countries would still be transmitted to the students through the curriculum. As the structure of a building is dictated by the foundation, the same analogy holds true for a curriculum. An indigenized curriculum is therefore the one which is designed on the philosophical, psychological, social, and historical foundations of the society for whom it is created.

**Relevant education:** Education which is grounded in the actual community life of the people and gives recognition to their indigenous knowledge and learning systems. Relevant education also bases itself on a relevant and functional curriculum, and produces efficient human capital which is instrumental to the modernisation and subsequent development of a society. In addition, relevant education is built on the profound appreciation of the cultural heritage of the society to whom it is directed (Alangui, 1999:1; Bekele, 2007:111; Tekeste, 1996:11; Salia-Bao, 1989:20). In the context of this study, *relevant education* is education which is responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the society. An indigenized curriculum has the power of modernizing a society by renovating the culture and inculcating local cultural values in its offspring. By renovating the culture and inculcating local cultural values an indigenized curriculum makes the education of a given society relevant which could ultimately lead to the development of the society.

**Relevant and functional curriculum:** Denotes a curriculum which has to be rooted in the culture and the needs of the people it intends to serve (Salia-Bao, 1989:23). In this study a relevant and functional curriculum is one that is rooted in and responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the community for whom it is prepared. A relevant and functional curriculum best serves the modernization of the society by renovating its tradition and resulting in subsequent development. In order to be relevant and functional a curriculum needs to be indigenized.

**Modernisation:** A process of renovation of tradition which involves the revival of Ethiopian survival (Messay, 2004: 23). In this study modernisation denotes the renovation of tradition which calls for a return to the Ethiopian tradition, rather than adopting the Western institutions and values in order to modernise.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

From a critical theory perspective, *theory* can be regarded as an *instrument* or a *weapon* which is used to *attack* certain targets of domination or discrimination. *Theories* can also be seen as optics, ways of seeing, and perspectives that illuminate specific phenomena (Rabaka, 2009).

A theoretical and conceptual framework, therefore, deals with the theories and concepts that help to illuminate the phenomenon being studied, and by doing this it underpins the research being conducted. Researchers of African origin and descent, in realising the need for an alternative theory to relieve African education from its problems, recommend looking inside the continent and using an African-centred critical theory which is rooted in the context (Jagusah, 2001; Itibari, 2006). Salia-Bao (1989:62-63) specifically suggested developing an indigenous African curriculum theory that would provide guidelines for curriculum development, implementation and evaluation. Janetius, Bekele and Mini (2008), on their part, came up with indigenizing the knowledge-base approach in education which highlights the need for indigenous, culture-specific theories, specific model and frames of knowledge for relevant education.

Therefore this study used a blend of both the Africana Critical Theory, conjured by Rabaka, and non-African critical theories, such as the cultural reproduction theory of Bourdeau and the critical pedagogy and critical complex epistemology of Kincheloe (2008) as its basic interpretive framework. This theoretical framework was used as a tool for critically analysing and exposing how the borrowed curricula serve the interests of the neo-colonial powers and their local stooges in perpetuating their cultural

domination over the marginalized people. The conceptual framework of indigenization, along with the conceptual model developed based on literature review, were used to critically analyse and to reconstruct, or to indigenise the curricula, so as to make them relevant to the local context.

In this chapter the researcher will briefly discuss the different views on the genesis of critical theory. He will then engage the researchers who built on the original theory, together with its major critiques and limitations, and its relationship to this study. Finally, the researcher will summarise and conclude the main issues discussed in the chapter.

## ***2.2 THE GENESIS OF CRITICAL THEORY***

There exists no unanimity among researchers of African origin and descent, on the one hand, and Eurocentric researchers on the other, on the origin of the classical critical theory. Those who give credit to the Eurocentric view attach the genesis of critical theory to the Frankfurt school, called the Social Research Institute, and its theorists, such as Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, Habermas, Horkheimer and Marcuse (Jansen, 1998; May & Powell, 2008; Ritzer, 2011; Wallace & Wolf, 2006). Those who favour the Afrocentric view, attribute the genesis of critical theory to continental and diasporan African intellectual activists, lifeworlds, and lived-experiences. The theorists whose work has contributed to the Africana critical theory, are the classical Africana intellectual activists such as Du Bois, Fanon, Cabral and James (Rabaka, 2009).

Rabaka (2009) contemplates that attributing the origin of critical theory to the Frankfurt School of critical theorists is just like placing the proverbial cart before the horse. It is a common attempt by the dominant discourse to intellectually erase or to conceal the intellectual inventions and contributions of continental and diasporan Africans. In order to further verify his argument, Rabaka (2009:6) makes the following statement,

But, the critics of Africana critical theory have been quick to query, isn't 'critical theory' Eurocentric? I usually respond speaking almost in a whisper so that they will know that I

am sincere when I say gently but emphatically, No. Then I go on, Frankfurt School critical theory may be Eurocentric, but critical theory, in a general sense, is not Eurocentric.

The view of the renowned contemporary critical theorist Kincheloe (2008), to some extent, supports the view of Rabaka in that the origin of the critical theory is not European. However, he differs from Rabaka namely where he avoids giving the credit to one or two groups only. Kincheloe attributes the origins of the critical theory not to the theorists of the Frankfurt School, but to the diverse cultures of Africa, India and other Asian locales, the Islamic world, and indigenous cultures around the planet.

Therefore, it is erroneous to attach the origin of the critical theory to one group or one continent. A one-sided ethnocentric view which pegs to either Europe or Africa and the rest continents which ignores the contribution of different cultures towards critical theory is undesired. In addition, if any study, underpinned by the critical theory, wants to be on the advantage side it should heed the advice from Kincheloe (2008:76), who advises that,

It is important for critical pedagogical advocates of a critical complex epistemology to draw upon both Western and non-Western critics and their unique insights into the issues of power and knowledge production.

The next section delves deeper into the nature of the classical critical theory.

### ***2.3 THE NATURE OF THE CLASSICAL CRITICAL THEORY***

In this section the nature of the classical critical theory is discussed in detail, highlighting the contributions of both the theorists of the Frankfurt School, and the predecessors of the Africana critical theory.

The classical critical theory refers to the theorists of the Frankfurt School, and the diverse cultures of Africa, India and other Asian locales, the Islamic world, and indigenous cultures around the planet that have worked under the critical pattern.

The researcher begins with the nature of the classical critical theory of the Frankfurt school, and then move on to others.

Critical theory studies the structures of the socio-economic class that enslave subjugated classes, and the ways that the school curriculum and curricularists unconsciously perpetuate this project of domination. In order to be free, the subjugated people need a liberating pedagogy. The critical theorists assert that the hidden curriculum and the null curriculum are important strands which have a much more profound impact on students than the overt curriculum (Slattery, 2006).

The exile of the major critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, namely Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse to the United States, after the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany, helped them to produce their major works while residing in the United States. The taken-for-granted mechanistic epistemologies of the American social science researchers, which claimed to have the power of describing and accurately measuring any dimension of human behaviour and the contradictions between progressive American rhetoric of egalitarianism and the reality of racial and class discrimination, served as a stimulus for their work (Kincheloe, 2008).

The critical theory of the Frankfurt school is centred on two propositions. The first is that since thought is socially constructed, it is impossible for us to reach objective knowledge and conclusions free of the influence of our particular era and its conceptual patterns. In other words, people's ideas and works are a product of the society in which they live, and are thus subject to its influences, and not uniquely objective. The second proposition is that intellectuals should not try to separate fact from value judgment in their analysis in the name of reserving objectivity. Instead, they should adopt a critical

attitude to the society they investigate, that is, they should adopt a judgmental position – so as to create awareness in people, and to bring about social change (Wallace & Wolf, 2006).

Critical theory is interested in a dialectical approach of investigating truth which is focused on the social totality. The dialectical approach advocates for a methodological prescription whereby one component of social life cannot be studied in isolation from the rest. This approach commits to work in the real world setting rather than seeking truth in scientific laboratories. Critical theorists use a process known as *authentication*, which is the ultimate test of their ideas. The validity of their ideas is determined by the degree to which they are accepted and used in practice by the people who have been the victims of distorted communication, in order to free themselves from that system (Ritzer, 2011).

The Frankfurt Critical School, unlike the orthodox Marxian theorists who focus on the economic realm, sought to shift its attention to the cultural realm in explaining the modern capitalist society. For the critical theorists, the locus of domination in the modern world shifted from the economy to the cultural realm, resulting in the cultural repression of individuals in modern society. They critiqued that pure economic determinism is simplistic, and it is not good to ignore other aspects of social life where domination is evident (Wallace & Wolf, 2006; Ritzer, 2011).

The critical theorists label the *formal rationality*, advocated by the modern world, as *technocratic thinking*, which serves the forces of domination rather than emancipating the subjugated people. For them the modern world, despite its claim of rationality, is full of irrationality. In order to counter the *technocratic thinking* or the formal rationality, the critical theorists suggest an alternative tool of judgment called *reason*, which was used by Hegel and other German philosophers. *Reason* involves the assessment of means in terms of the ultimate human values of justice, peace and happiness (Wallace & Wolf, 2006; Ritzer, 2011).

One of the distinct features of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School is the great influence that it has on the masses in raising their self-consciousness. It brought to the consciousness of the masses capitalist exploitation, bureaucratic domination and oppression, of which they may or may not have been aware. By raising self-consciousness, critical theory instigates a social movement that would result in the transformation of the existing systems of domination and exploitation, ultimately leading to liberation. Although members of the Frankfurt School themselves were not actively involved in politics, their work strongly influenced German student radicals and the American New Left of the 1960s (Wallace & Wolf, 2006; May & Powell, 2008; Ritzer, 2011). It can be deduced that these researchers lived up to their scholarly aspirations. Unfortunately, the contemporary critical theories have lost the fervour of its predecessors, and have started to be conciliatory to the corporate-driven forces that are perpetuating the various forms of domination. A desire for a democratic social order with social justice cannot materialise until the critical theory returns to its former radical fervour.

Another important area with which the critical thinkers are preoccupied is the restoration of the interplay and relationship between theory and practice. The Frankfurt School theorists maintain a view that theory and practice have been detached from each other in capitalist society in such a way that the theorising is done by one group while the practice is relegated to another. In most cases the theorist's work is uninformed by what went on in the real world, leading to an impoverished and largely irrelevant body of theories. The restoration of the harmony between theory and practice would enable theory to be informed by practice, and practice to be shaped by theory. In the process, both theory and practice will be enriched (Ritzer, 2011).

Now our focus is briefly shifted to the Africana critical theory. To begin with, the classical theorists who served as harbingers for the Africana critical theory, were Du Bois and Fanon. This is because they, above and beyond all others, have prefigured and provided the primary paradigms and pre-eminent points of departure for the discourse

and development of the theory. The Africana critical theory advances and applies two major dialectical presuppositions, namely the dialectics of deconstruction and reconstruction, and the dialectics of domination and liberation (Rabaka, 2009).

The researchers who built on the classical critical theory will be discussed next.

#### ***2.4 RESEARCHERS WHO BUILT ON THE CLASSICAL CRITICAL THEORY***

Having discussed in detail the distinctive nature of classical critical theorists in the previous section, our attention is now, in this section, being shifted to the researchers who built on the works of the classical critical theorists. Different Western and non-Western researchers have indicated their critiques against the established positivist epistemology. According to Kincheloe (2008:75), the group of researchers who belong in this category includes:

... the eighteenth century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico and nineteenth century German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, late nineteenth and early twentieth century sociologist Max Weber to twentieth century scholars such as W.E.B. DuBois, critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, social theorist Antonio Gramsci, sociologist C. Wright Mills, and hermeneutics scholar Hans-Georg Gadamer to name only a few. Around the world critics from Franz Fanon to contemporary non-Western scholars such as Gayatri Spivak, Vandana Shiva, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Walter Mignolo, Trinh Minh-ha, Russell Bishop, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and many, many others have also challenged the Eurocentric epistemology from so called "southern" perspectives.

Popkewitz (1998) also argues that the critical tradition within the Anglo-American education is a result of the different European Marxist social philosophies, such as the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory from Germany, the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, and the French Postmodern and Feminist theories. The most prominent critical theory researchers who are the successors of the first generation theorists of the Frankfurt School and belong to the selfsame school, are Jurgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (May & Powell, 2008; Ritzer, 2011). Another European researcher who is

best-known for writing within a critical framework, is the French sociologist named Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). He is one of the best-known of all contemporary French sociologists, and in the last decade of his life he even became better known – not only in France but in other countries, especially Germany – because of his opposition to, what he described as the *neo-liberal scourge*, afflicting the world (Wallace & Wolf, 2006:111).

Theorists who worked within the tradition of critical pedagogy in the United States include Giroux, Macedo, Steinberg, Joao Paraskeva, Kathleen Berry, Doug Kellner, Rhonda Hammer, Ozlem Sensoy, Peter McLaren, and Pepi Leistyna (Kincheloe, 2008). One of the best-known contributions to the critical theory from the Third World perspective came from the Brazilian educator, named Paulo Freire. He articulated his ideas in his first work, known as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Jansen, 1998). His work is considered as an important early example of critical theory in practice (Slattery, 2006). Unlike his predecessors within the critical tradition, Freire not only critiques the positivist form of education which uses the banking method, but he also came up with a method known as *dialogue*, which may empower the oppressed, so that they can challenge the oppressors (Freire, 1970).

The other contributors to the critical theory from the Third World are a group of the anti-colonial and post-colonial critics of the oppressed people, both within the colonies and in the colonial metropolis. The anti-colonial critical theorists criticised the colonial education, which was Eurocentric, and its curriculum, which glorified European values and traditions, and suppressed indigenous cultures, values and beliefs. The post-colonial criticism of education continued even after the achievement of political independence. The post-colonial critical theorists criticised the Third World education systems of dependency on the West, causing economic, cultural and political dependencies (Jansen, 1998). The contributions of the anti-colonial and post-colonial critics were so critical that it led to the development of the African critical theory in the twenty-first century, as an outgrowth of the theoretic innovations of both the social

sciences and humanities, as well as the political breakthroughs of grassroots radical and revolutionary social movements (Rabaka, 2009).

The last group of Third World theorists who contributed to the critical theory, are those who sought critical alternatives to inherited educational policies, principles and practices derived from the colonial legacy. Although their projects are sporadic, the researchers in this category tried to integrate indigenous knowledge into the inherited educational practices. The best examples of such kind of alternatives are the ethno-mathematics project in Africa, which advocated the incorporation of indigenous ways of doing mathematics into the formal school curriculum, the People's Education programme in South Africa, which offered a challenge to the apartheid curriculum through democratic decision-making and the teaching of liberatory curriculum content, the Education with Production programme in Zimbabwe, which attempted to reduce the separation between academic and vocational education in the context of socialist ideology, and the Education for Self-reliance programme in Tanzania, which was based on an African philosophy in order to do away with dependency on the colonial education model (Jansen, 1998).

Critical theories of education have been expressed from at least six distinctive theoretical positions, namely Structural Functionalism, the Cultural Reproduction Theory, the Resistance Theory, the Critical Pedagogy Theory, the Radical Pluralist Critical Theory, and the Feminist and Post-structural Critical Theory. These different critical theories of education are concerned with the intersections among power, knowledge and identity, and are motivated by the ethos of justice (Heilman, 2005).

A contemporary researcher who contributed much to critical pedagogy is Kincheloe. He was concerned with the relationship of the politics of knowledge with the socio-cultural, political, psychological, and educational dimensions of contemporary life. He used multi-perspectival research methods, which he termed *bricolage*, and multiple theoretical frameworks in his study. In order to justify the necessity of a multi-perspectival

approach, Kincheloe (Kincheloe, 2008) drew a parallel between Critical Theory and the General Theory of Relativity, conjured by Albert Einstein. He argued that as the theory of Einstein works for the physical universe, so does the critical theory for the social universe. Critical theory, seen in this context, is the social universe's 'General Theory of Relativity'.

Though there are many theoretical variants of critical pedagogy as in the overall critical theory tradition, all begin with the conviction that schools are institutionalized mechanisms that produce and reproduce the racial, class, and gender inequities between the powerful and the marginalised (Malewski, 2010). Therefore, the central goal of critical theory is the creation of a democratic educational vision that provides hope for all teachers and students, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, language, ability, ethnicity, or age (Slattery, 2006). The recent variant of critical theory is the post-modern critical perspective, which advocates that the main task of curriculum development researchers in this era is the empowering of teachers, peasants, students, and labourers to become leaders of emancipatory education and a liberating community (Slattery, 2006).

Though the critical theory, like all theories before and after it, made an important contribution to the world, it is not free from criticism.

Thus, the next section deals with the criticisms levelled against the critical theory.

## ***2.5 CRITICISMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CRITICAL THEORY***

All theories make critical conceptual contributions. However, each theory has its blind spots and lens limitations, what the contemporary discourse of Africana philosophy calls *theoretical myopia* (Rabaka, 2009).

One of the basic criticisms levelled against the critical theory is that it presents more problems than positive contributions. This persistent negativity provokes many

researchers to argue that the critical theory has little to offer to sociological theory (Ritzer, 2011). Eisner (2002) also criticizes critical theorists as being more interested in displaying the shortcomings of schooling than providing models towards which schools should aspire. In general, the critical theory continues to be perceived as excessively abstract and too far removed from the everyday life of schools.

In order to get rid of this limitation of the critical theory, that is, critical theory's failure to come up with realistic alternatives, critical pedagogy, as a critical theory of curriculum and teaching, has started to move beyond critique, and offers a positive strategy for a more just education (Heilman, 2005). Paulo Freire was the harbinger of critical pedagogy. He articulated his idea in his first work known as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Jansen, 1998). This work is considered to be an important early example of critical theory in practice (Slattery, 2006). Critical pedagogy was further developed in the early 1980s by theorists such as Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. A different kind of knowledge, a counter-hegemonic knowledge, is developed by critical pedagogy. This knowledge calls for students and teachers to mutually learn to build on points of resistance, explore social, political, and economic contradictions, and make connections among knowledge, power, and identity, through dialogue about generative themes in their lives (Heilman, 2005).

The other most important and often voiced criticism against critical theory is that it is usually written in such a way that it is totally inaccessible to the majority of people (Ritzer, 2011). In order to alleviate this problem and to make their works more accessible, critical theorists have started to write in the languages of the community.

Another criticism levelled against critical theory is the fact that it has generally ignored the economic realm of a society in its study (Ritzer, 2011). However, critical theory does not totally ignore the economy, as its critics claim. Instead, what it opposes is the focus of the orthodox Marxian theorists on the economic realm (economic determinism).

Therefore, in addition to the economy, it seeks to give attention to the cultural realm by explaining the modern capitalist society.

Therefore, this study will prove to be an asset in overcoming this criticism directed against critical theorists, namely by designing a model for indigenizing the curricula from an ethnic group's perspective. Further plans are to disseminate the findings of this study in order to make them accessible to the Gamo community in general, and the participants in the research project in particular. Thus, the aim is to ultimately publish the results in both English and Amharic, after being translated.

Having grappled with the debates surrounding the critical theory, the researcher now takes a stand regarding its use for this study.

## ***2.6 THE VALUE OF THE CRITICAL THEORY FOR THIS STUDY***

Despite the limitations discussed in the previous section, the critical theory still has validity in analysing present-day problems, and in this section it will be indicated how the critical theory is best suited for this study.

The indigenization approach emerged as a result of the struggle waged in the 1950s by the former European colonies that wanted to free themselves from the political and economic domination of former colonial empires. The major tenets of this approach include the nationalization of the economy; the transfer and redistribution of administrative power and functions from the colonizers to the indigenous people; the reclamation and rehabilitation of the colonised past; the struggle against economic and cultural dependency; and the revival and incorporation of previously suppressed indigenous languages, cultures, literature and traditional values into the contemporary educational curriculum (Ismailova, 2004). Therefore, the approach of indigenization is situated within the framework of critical theory, and is deserving of analysis.

The indigenization discourse articulates the differences between North American and European cultures because they have two fundamentally parallel premises. The North American and European social organisation and principles predominantly emphasise individualism and competition, as opposed to societies founded on collectivism, communalism and cooperation (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011).

As Kincheloe (2006a) states, post-colonialism and post-structuralism consistently challenged the universality of the production of Western knowledge and its capacity to oppress those individuals who failed to fit the certified criteria that emerged from such colonial scholarship. He further contends that multiple perspectives on knowledge, as well as multiple sources of knowledge are needed to overcome the cultural and political dominance of Western approaches to research. Concepts such as *local*, *subjugated* and *indigenous* knowledge are threatening to the dominant Western powers. In justifying the significance of divergent perspectives, Kincheloe (2006a:40) argued,

From a critical multilogical position, valuing such ways of knowing and the knowledges they produce is akin to valuing biodiversity - awareness of this epistodiversity grants us new insights into the world and our role in it. Without this epistodiversity, we are tied to an "evidence-based" positivist form of knowledge production riddled with harmful assumptions that often undermine the possibility of sustainable human life in sustainable environments socially grounded on democratic and egalitarian principles.

The indigenization approach has taken on distinct forms and names in different parts of the world. It is known as *Africanization* in post-colonial Africa, *Afrocentricity* in North America, *Arabization* or *Islamization* in Muslim countries, and *ethno-cultural* and *linguistic resistance* and *revival* among the native communities of the Americas (Ismailova, 2004). Filipino researchers have also come up with two different approaches and models of indigenization, known as indigenization from *within* and indigenization from *without*. The failure of indigenization from *without* in the psychology of the Philippines led Enriquez to come up with another version of indigenization known as

indigenization from *within*, to which he attributed a different name, namely *cultural revalidation* (Pe-Pua, 2006).

Curriculum development and studies have begun to use indigenization as a strategy for rehabilitating and bringing back the knowledge-base and perspective of the neglected and subjugated indigenous peoples. Advocates of the approach of curriculum indigenization justify the necessity of revitalizing and incorporating into the curriculum concepts derived from indigenous knowledge (Ismailova, 2004).

This study is situated within a critical theory paradigm. This is due to the fact that approaches to curriculum construction and change as a contextualized social process – curriculum in-context – are located within a critical paradigm (Cornbleth, 1990). In addition, Itibari (2006) argues that the practical paradigm, which can extract the best indigenous thought and practice that can deter the current challenges in African education, is an African-centred critical theory. Kincheloe (2006a) also argues that the notions of multiple perspectives, known as *multilogicality* and *epistodiversity*, which are required to buttress our attempt to counter the ethnocentrism of positivism, must always be critically grounded. Therefore this study, which aims to come up with a model of indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group, namely one that counters the mainstream and standardized curricula borrowed from the West, needs to be grounded on critical theory.

The concept of *difference* is central to a critical ontology and epistemology (Kincheloe, 2006a; 2006b). According to the ontology of critical theory, virtual reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; and crystallized over time (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, the ontological position of this study is that the reality of the Gamo ethnic group is uniquely constructed and shaped by the socio-cultural and structural context of its people.

One task of epistemology is to provide theories of the nature of knowledge, of its genesis, and its justification. Different epistemologies promote different forms of knowledge along with different methodologies and ways of knowing (Kincheloe, 2003). In critical epistemology the investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of situated “others”) inevitably influencing the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, the ontological position of this study is that there is a strong link and interaction within the Gamo ethnic group, which is the object of the study, with the researcher as investigator. I belong to this ethnic group and raised in an area which houses large Gamo community in Addis Ababa.

Critical theory’s dialogic or dialectical methodology helps in the reconstruction of previously-held constructions. Critical theorists believe that knowledge grows and changes through a dialectical process of historical revision which continuously erodes ignorance and misapprehensions and enlarges more informed insights (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, this study makes use of the dialectical method to critically analyse the deconstruction or decolonization, and the indigenization or revalidation of the curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group.

## ***2.7 INDIGENIZING THE FOUNDATIONS – THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK***

In the previous section the relationship of critical theory with this study was justified. This section presents the conceptual framework of the study in detail along with the conceptual model.

Cornbleth (1990), who is one of the contemporary critical theorists in curriculum studies, has developed the idea of designing a curriculum which includes both the systemic (structural) and the socio-cultural context of the community. She affirms that it would be cost-effective, less cumbersome and easier to design and implement a curriculum that fits the local context than trying to change the context in order to implement a totally out-of-context curriculum. It is also pedagogically sound to make a curriculum responsive to

the context because students learn best, become highly motivated and perform more successfully on all levels when the school curriculum is based on their cultures, experiences and perspectives (Gay, 2004; Banks & Banks, 2010).

Although adding and integrating multicultural content, concepts, themes, and perspectives is seen as a viable approach, Banks (2006) argues that adding content about cultural groups to the mainstream curriculum can never change the basic assumptions, perspectives, paradigms, and values of the dominant curriculum. This explains the reason why the approaches attempted so far in Africa became fruitless.

In order to further illustrate this view the researcher had to resort to the analogy of erecting a building. Foundations determine the style and structure of the building to be erected. Putting up a building on the foundation of the Western style would not give rise to houses in the Ethiopian style. By the same token, adding content to the borrowed curricula with a Western foundation would not bring about substantial change to the assumptions, perspectives, paradigms, and values of the curriculum. It follows then, that the foundations of the curriculum set the external boundaries of the knowledge of the curriculum, and define what constitutes valid sources from which to derive the field's theories, principles, and ideas. The conceptual model of indigenization, developed by Janetius, Bekele, & Mini (2008:16), is adapted in constructing the indigenous theories/knowledge bases, which serve as the foundations for the curriculum. The model has four parts or stages, namely identifying the key cultural constructs; Afro/Ethiocentric qualitative research, which uses paradigms and methods relevant to the context; the creation of local theories and a knowledge-base; and incorporating the theories and knowledge-base into the curriculum.

For the planning of the curriculum the model suggested by Lawton (1975:85) was used, together with a slight modification, due to the fact that it views a curriculum as a selection from culture. In addition, Lawton (1984), in his model for incorporating culture in the curriculum, suggested a step before curriculum-planning, known as *cultural*

*analysis. Cultural analysis* is a systematic way of analysing the culture of a given society before a selection from the culture is prescribed. Lawton's main considerations in the cultural analysis-process include viewing culture as a historical as well as a contemporary process, and viewing the cultural lag and curriculum inertia.

Finally, the planned curriculum using the indigenisation approach is implemented through the culturally-relevant pedagogy that gives cognisance to the context (De Lissovoy, 2008). The theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy was articulated by Ladson-Billings (1994), and calls for teachers to intentionally connect their teaching to the lived experiences and knowledge of their students and their communities. The suggested conceptual framework for indigenizing the curriculum is outlined in Figure 2.1. The model is generated by the researcher based on literature reviewed.

As suggested by African researchers, this is the long-awaited radical approach to curriculum development and study, which proposes changes in curriculum studies/research, planning and implementation. Its conceptual model consists of three stages – indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum, indigenizing its planning, and its implementation. This new indigenization approach can be materialized through close collaboration among curriculum researchers, planners and implementers in the form of a relay race. It provides a way of creating a connection between curriculum theoreticians and practitioners. By doing this, it helps to maintain a link between theory and practice in the education system.

Indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum should feed into curriculum planning, while indigenizing curriculum-planning needs to produce a curriculum plan based on the foundations, and coming up with culture-specific contents and learning experiences drawn from the findings of the curriculum researches in the first stage of the model, i.e. indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum. In the stage of indigenizing the curriculum implementation, practitioners should implement the curriculum as intended.

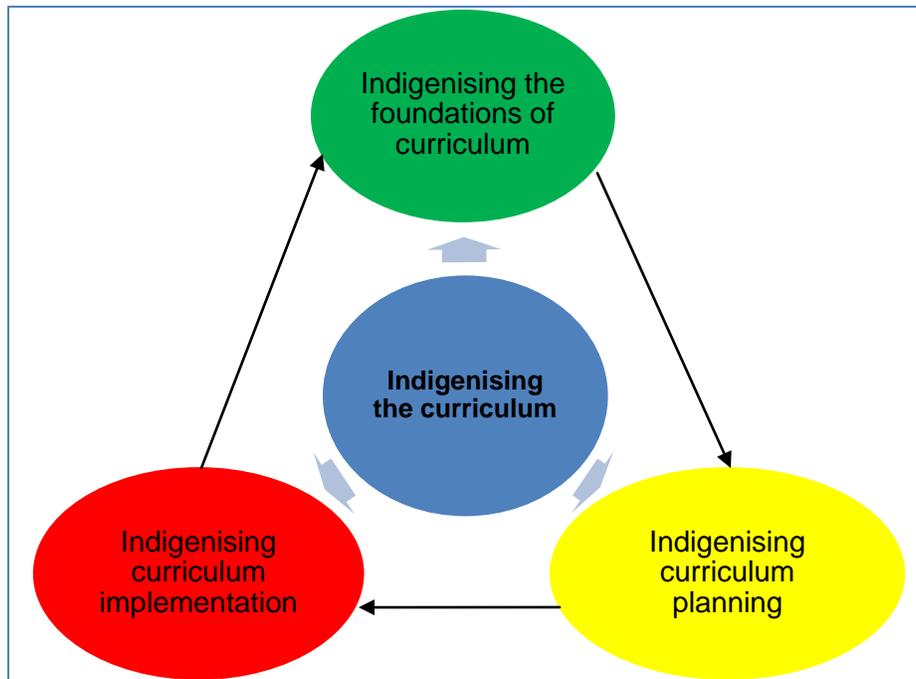


Figure 2.1: A conceptual model for indigenizing the curriculum

The following procedure is a guideline for indigenizing the development of the curriculum, based on the conceptual model.

#### Stage 1: Indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum

- Identify key cultural constructs that can be integrated into the curriculum and that stand as the foundation for Ethnocentric research, knowledge-base and theory-building. Almost all the identified key constructs have to be interwoven in one or another way with culture, tradition, religion, local practices, and so on.
- Conduct Afro/Ethiocentric qualitative research that uses paradigms and methods relevant to the context. Qualitative research helps to formulate theories and a knowledge-base, using the grounded-theory method. The research should not be focused on indicating the percentage and degree of the phenomena being studied, but should explain the phenomena in an *emic* way, in order to pave the way for the creation of theories and a local knowledge-base.

- Create local foundations or a knowledge-base on which the curriculum is to be anchored. The research findings will be used as a springboard to define the local foundations or knowledge-base, such as a local philosophy, theory, sociology, history, etc., which can replace the out-of-context Euro-American foundations.

#### Stage 2: Indigenizing curriculum-planning

- Set educational aims and goals that fit the context rather than borrowing the aims and goals from elsewhere. Use the local knowledge-base (foundations) established by curriculum studies and research conducted by institutions engaged in curriculum studies/research as a source for setting local educational aims and goals.
- Translate the local educational aims and goals stipulated in a policy into curricular objectives.
- Select and organise content from the cultural constructs, research findings and the local foundations that may assist in achieving the objectives of the curriculum.
- Select and organise learning experiences based on local learning theories and learning styles that were established by qualitative research in stage one.
- Organise the curriculum in stages and sequences to make it ready for implementation.

#### Stage 3: Indigenizing the implementation of the curriculum

- Organize and conduct pre-service and in-service training for practitioners who implement the curriculum in order to equip them with the strategies of a culturally-relevant pedagogy established based on the curriculum studies and research.
- Implement the curriculum as intended, using culturally-relevant pedagogy, by making use of the trained practitioners who understand the culture of the students being served.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

A theoretical and conceptual framework helps to illuminate and underpin the phenomena being studied. The critical theory, which serves as the theoretical framework for this study, consists of different variants. It encourages multilogicality and epistodiversity. Although both Eurocentric and Afrocentric researchers attribute the genesis of critical theory to scholars of their specific continent, it is a product of the diverse cultures of Africa, India and other Asian countries, the Islamic world, and other indigenous cultures around the planet.

The major tenets of critical theory are criticism of domination in all its forms, and emancipation of the subjugated groups in modern society. Critical theory entails a dialectic approach of investigating the truth, which is focused on the social totality where one component of social life cannot be studied in isolation from the rest. Critical theorists make use of a process known as *authentication*, which is the ultimate test of their ideas. The validity of their ideas is determined by the degree to which they are accepted and used in practice by, for example, the people who have been the victims of distorted communication, in order to free themselves from that system.

Critical pedagogy, which is known as *critical theory in practice*, was developed by Paulo Freire (1970). It indicates that schools are institutionalized mechanisms that produce and reproduce the racial, class, and gender inequities between the powerful and the marginalized. Critical theory is, therefore, engaged in the creation of a democratic educational vision that provides hope for all teachers and students regardless of race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, language, ability, ethnicity, or age. The postmodern critical perspective specifically advocates that the main task of curriculum developers has to be the empowering of teachers, peasants, students, and labourers to become the leaders of emancipatory education and a liberated community.

However, as each theory has its so-called blind spots and lens limitation, critical theory is not free from criticism. The major criticisms labelled against this theory are its

engagement in indicating the shortcomings in the school system rather than providing models, and its inaccessibility to the audience. Attempts to mitigate these criticisms have been made by critical theorists, but with little success.

Unfortunately, the contemporary critical theories have lost the fervour of their forerunners, and have begun to be conciliatory to the corporate-driven forces that are perpetuating the various forms of domination. Our desire for a democratic social order with social justice will not be able to materialise unless the critical theory returns to its former radical status. As suggested by African researchers, this is the long-awaited radical approach which proposes changes in curriculum studies/research and planning, and the implementation of the curriculum.

The indigenization of the foundations of the curriculum will be an alternative approach to ensuring the relevance of the curriculum in the socio-cultural and structural context of the people. By doing this, it will be able to liberate the marginalised people from cultural domination, and to chart their own path of education for development, and for preserving their own culture and identity.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **A REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH ON THE PROBLEM**

#### ***3.1 INTRODUCTION***

This chapter critically examines and shares a review of relevant and related literature on the indigenization movement, and also the forces that are militating against its proper maturation, resulting in its consequent marginalization.

It begins with a critical analysis of the place of context in determining educational and curricular relevance, and based on that, indicates how the colonial and postcolonial education and curricula lacked relevance. Then, attempts made so far at making education in general and the curricula in particular relevant to the socio-cultural and structural context of the marginalized groups throughout the world, with special emphasis on Africa, are entertained. The views of the supporters and critics of the indigenization approach are given ample coverage. Whether the supporters and critics used relevant arguments to justify their support or opposition of the indigenization approach, or whether they simply defend or attack it out of blind adherence to a specific ideology, are critically reviewed in this chapter. Particular emphasis is placed on the indigenization movements in various disciplines which intend to revolutionize the disciplines, so as to make them relevant to the marginalised groups. The adoption of the indigenization approach in the field of curriculum studies, the different types/genres of indigenization, and the place of the language of instruction in the indigenization process, are also addressed in detail in this section. A historical overview of the indigenization approach to education in Ethiopia, and which used two polar opposite perspectives during the imperial period and currently (the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) will also be given. The potential obstacles which have the capacity of paralysing the attempt at enriching the indigenization approach in the development and study of the curriculum are identified, so as to make all those persons who have a stake in

curriculum development and studies aware of them, and ready to meet the challenges. Finally, brief reviews of the relevant local interpretive studies, which are related to the problem under investigation, are presented.

### ***3.2 THE PLACE OF CONTEXT IN EDUCATIONAL AND CURRICULAR RELEVANCE***

Relevant education and a relevant and functional curriculum are rooted in and are responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the society they are intended to serve. A relevant education system and a relevant and functional curriculum have the power of modernising a society by renovating the culture and inculcating its cultural values in its offspring, ultimately leading to the development of the society.

In this section, context, which serves as a major determinant of educational and curricular relevance, is analysed in detail.

Researchers who have worked on indigenous knowledge have forwarded their views on the intent and significance of relevant education for the indigenous people who have been subjugated by the Western knowledge systems since coming into contact with modern education (Manuwuikie, 1978; Salia-Bao, 1989; Tedla, 1995; Kisanji, 1995; Alangu, 1999; Obanya, 1999; Tekeste, 1996; 2006; Bekele, 2007; Dei, 2008; Abdi, 2009; Amare, 2009b).

Tekeste (1996) argues that for education to be relevant it has to be built on the profound appreciation of the cultural heritage of the people to whom it is directed. He furthers his argument in the study he conducted in 2006 entitled *Education in Ethiopia: From Crisis to the Brink of Collapse*, by mentioning that relevant education fosters a unity of vision among citizens by inculcating in them social, cultural and political values. Any education system which ignores the inculcation of these values that keep a society cohesive and looking forward will have a negative impact on the nation in the long run. In arguing

about the significance of a relevant and quality education system and the concomitant result of its absence, Tekeste (2006:45) states,

Only an educational system based on relevance and quality can counteract the risk of fragmentation of society and the consequent loss of political legitimacy and hopefully in the long run deter the perpetuation of the use of authoritarian power.

According to Alangui (1999), an educational system can be considered as relevant if it is grounded in the actual community life of the people, and gives due recognition to their indigenous knowledge and learning systems. Abdi (2009) also argues that relevant and effective education has to be based on sound and culturally-inclusive social philosophies that are reflective of the lives of the people. To him it is only an education of this kind which will surely bring about social development in a society.

Dei (2008) also depicts relevant education as the one that is anchored in cultural experience and the historical and cultural knowledge of the people whom it is destined to serve. According to him, educational relevance is, in turn dictated by the justification and extraction of the model/style of instruction, pedagogy, and curricular material of the culture of the people. Amare (2009a) also asserts that culturally-relevant education is education which incorporates the social, technological, economic, and psychological life of the society into their schools and curricula.

According to Salia-Bao (1989), the social relevance of an education system of a society can be ensured by the development of relevant and functional curriculum material. The relevance and functionality of the curriculum is dictated by its relation to the culture, livelihoods, value schemes, and psychological make-up of the society (Amare, 2009b); its rootedness in the culture, environment and needs of the people; its grounding in the philosophy, politics, and economy of the society (Salia-Bao, 1989); and its alignment to the social structure to which the students belong (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). Gay (2000) also asserts that a relevant curriculum is supposed to include information about the histories, cultures, contributions, experiences, perspectives, and issues of the

students' respective ethnic groups. As Bennett (2011) argues, the development of a curriculum which is attentive to the students' own culture and history as a context for learning is a multicultural curriculum development.

The value of relevant and functional curricula and the concomitant effect of its absence in a given nation have been elaborated on by Salia-Bao (1989). To him, relevant curricula can contribute to the national unity and development, and the ideological and social cohesion of a nation. The absence of relevant curricula could destroy the fabric of national culture, and thereby undermine any form of the national development of a nation.

A key tenet within a critical complex epistemology advocates the inseparable link between knowledge and context (Kincheloe, 2008). In the field of curriculum studies, Cornbleth (1990) has come up with a notion known as *curriculum in context*, which concurs with critical complex epistemology. She made a call for designing a curriculum which takes both the systemic (structural) and the socio-cultural context of the society it is destined to serve into consideration. According to Sleeter (2005), the intellectuals from the historically marginalised communities also hold a perspective of knowledge as always being situated in the context of the people who create it and make use of it.

In justifying the inseparable link between education and the cultural context, and the negative consequence of not maintaining that link, Sleeter (2005:110) further reflects that:

Classrooms in which the students, teacher, and subject matter are rooted in a similar cultural context are likely to activate the knowledge the students bring, regardless of whether the teacher specifically plans for this or not. But classrooms in which the students' cultural context is different from that of the teacher and/or subject matter do not necessarily activate the students' prior knowledge. When the students' prior knowledge is not activated, and the teachers are unfamiliar with their lives outside the classroom,

they may assume the students know far less than they actually do an assumption that feeds the deficit ideology.

Shizha (2006) similarly explicates that knowledge is a product of people's everyday experiences, and is particular to a society, as it takes meaning from forms of life within which it is constructed. He further asserts that knowledge is a product of people's socio-cultural milieu. According to him, indigenous knowledge is a social construct that evolves out of people's social world and cultural experiences, and exists in social, historical and cultural contexts. Thus, in order to generate a transformative and inclusive educational system, indigenous knowledge has to be incorporated into formal educational practices.

It is also pedagogically sound to make a curriculum responsive to the structural and socio-cultural context of the students' communities. Banks and Banks (2010) argue that students learn best and become highly motivated when the school curriculum is developed, based on their cultures, experiences and perspectives. These researchers claim that many students of colour in the United States are alienated at school, due to the cultural conflict and discontinuity that arise from cultural differences between their schools and the community. As a remedy they suggested a curriculum which reflects the culture of their ethnic groups and communities.

An antithesis to the curriculum-in-context approach is the standardization of the curriculum, which advocates a 'one size fits all' approach. The standardization approach is non-responsive to the learners' context, and creates a mismatch between what the pupils learn and what they live. As a result, the approach leads pupils from marginalized backgrounds to high levels of educational failure, by delinking school education with their own experiences (UNESCO, 2009).

According to the views of Banks and Banks (2010), the two renowned multiculturalists in the United States, a mainstream-centric curriculum poses a negative influence on students outside the mainstream culture, by marginalising their experiences and

cultures and neglecting their dreams, hopes and perspectives. As Sleeter (2005) argues, a multicultural curriculum, in contrast, conceptualises students and their respective communities as sources and producers of knowledge, and a foundation on which to build new academic knowledge. Pinar (2003) also asserts that *culture* and *identity* are the fundamental concepts in multicultural curricular projects.

Multiculturalists propose adding or infusing contents about a cultural group as a remedy for the irrelevance of the school curricula. However, Banks (2006) argues, adding content about cultural groups and also women, to the existing mainstream curriculum, using an additive or an infusion approach, can never result in changing the basic assumptions, perspectives, paradigms, and values of the dominant curriculum.

Therefore, the indigenization approach, as a revolution for relevance, is a favourable approach for curriculum studies and development, to ensure its relevance to the group it is intended to serve.

In the next section a critical discussion of borrowed curricula will be presented.

### ***3.3 THE IRRELEVANCE OF BORROWED AND INHERITED CURRICULA***

The direct copying and transferring of any curriculum system is doomed to failure due to the socio-cultural and structural differences between the recipient and giver countries. The mismatch between the Ethiopian socio-cultural and structural contexts on the one hand, and the curricula transplanted from the West on the other, poses challenges to policy-makers, curriculum experts and practitioners, namely not to totally rely on curricula borrowed from the West. This is due to the fact that the Euro-American foundations that are embedded in the curriculum content being taught in the schools in Ethiopia are irrelevant and non-applicable to the local context.

Salia-Bao (1989) argues that all educational and curricular models are culturally-based, and their direct transference from one setting to the other results in the incorporation of

foreign culture and practice into the recipient country, which in the long run, will deter any form of national development. In this regard, Bekele (2007), who is an ardent opponent of the borrowing of foreign curricula, argues that the borrowing of foreign curricula leads to the incorporation of the philosophy of education of the lending country. He further contends that every country needs to have its own philosophy of education, which gives due cognisance to the specific history, culture, identity, needs and goals of the society. However, as Tedla (1995) argues, the Western education system which was transplanted in Africa ignores the cultures, history and contributions of Africa. She furthers her argument and suggests that African education should learn a crucial lesson from the West, which does not abandon its heritage while designing its own education system. Teklehaimanot (1999) also affirms that a curriculum which is based on an alien culture cannot be considered as a relevant and useful curriculum for a given society.

The failure of developing curricula anew, rooting it on your own socio-cultural and structural context, or by domesticating the one which is borrowed from the West, leads to multifaceted problems at individual and societal levels. At societal level failure to develop curricula which is grounded in local culture leads to the displacement and marginalization of the vital indigenous knowledge and skills, causing their subsequent extinction (Janetius, et al., 2008). It may also lead to one losing one's own identity and, in respect of Africa, robbing the African youth of their pride and confidence (Tekeste, 2006; Bekele, 2007; Janetius, et al., 2008). The cultural extinction of indigenous people is no less a threat to the world than global warming. However, sustainability is emphasised only in terms of the environment, ignoring social sustainability.

Something else which clearly demonstrates the fact that borrowing a foreign model is without value was the adoption of socialism as an alternative path of development by some African countries during the Cold War era. Since the borrowed model was not derived from and well-grounded in the culture of the people, it had the prospect of being aborted when it lost the political support it used to enjoy from the local and lending governments. Obanya (1999) asserts that during the Cold War era, the African

countries with a socialist bent (Guinea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Congo, Angola and Mozambique) were able to evolve radical educational reform measures. All attempts at people-oriented education programmes in Africa which were patterned after the Eastern socialist block, including the policy of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Guinea, were abandoned after the collapse of communism in the 1990s.

Prah (1999:60) expressed his justification against cultural borrowings in favour of anchoring on ones own culture in order to achieve an African renaissance and sustainable development as follows:

Africa's development and a renaissance cannot be premised on unbridled cultural borrowings from outside. Development in a sustainable and meaningful way can only be achieved on the basis of Africa's own cultural usages in consonance with the history and cultures of the people of Africa. It is difficult to imagine development taking place along non-African lines in Africa.

The next section debates the legacy of colonial and post-colonial education and curricula.

### ***3.4 THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL EDUCATION AND CURRICULA IN AFRICA***

The present crisis in African education and curricula is implicated in the legacy of the colonial and post-colonial eras. Africa inherited and kept on borrowing from the Western world a deficit educational system, along with the curricula which were non-responsive to the context.

In this section the researcher critically analyses the characteristics of the colonial and post-colonial education system and curricula which gave rise to the current crisis in African education.

Dei (2008) attributes the current *crisis* in African education to the colonial legacy of the misguided educational policies and practices, namely curriculum, texts, and pedagogies that the continent adopted, and which failed to respond to the human experiences, histories and ideas that have shaped, and continue to shape human growth and development in the continent. It follows that the education system in colonial and post-colonial Africa lacked relevance, due to its blind adherence to Western classical traditions. Western education and values were merely transplanted to Africa with slight post-independence modifications or adaptive reforms (Manuwuiké, 1978; Kisanji, 1995). The schooling, curriculum content, teaching and learning styles were non-responsive to the socio-cultural realities that the students brought to school (Shizha, 2006). The imposed education system could only be characterised as “non-indigenized” and “Eurocentric” education, which continued to distort, misappropriate, and misinterpret the African human condition and reality (Dei, 2008).

Colonization, in the name of “modernity” and “enlightenment”, stripped the colonized people of their indigenous learning structures and knowledge constructs by forcibly imposing on them the knowledge constructs and learning structures of the colonizer. The colonial educational practices marginalised and subordinated the voice of the colonised people (Shizha, 2006). In defining the characteristics of the colonial curriculum, Pinar (2003) argued that it was merely Eurocentric, dominated by European ideas, and excluding African history, ideas, and movements.

The post-colonial education system continued to depend on the educational structures and constructs imposed during the colonial era, and thereby perpetuating the colonial legacy that continues to define school knowledge as a Western, empirically-derived rational science. The dependence on alien definitions of knowledge is again fostered by importing textbooks from Western publishers, and the inclusion of literature that portrays life in the West. In addition, the Western constructs and frames of knowledge continued to dominate the school curriculum and classroom practices at all educational levels (Shizha, 2006).

In disclosing the effects of both the colonial and postcolonial curricula and pedagogical practices on Africa, Shizha (2006:26) contemplates that:

Western culture, colonial and postcolonial curriculum, and pedagogical practices are deeply implicated in each other and continue to render formerly colonized, marginalized and repressed indigenous voices partially, and in some cases, totally silent. School knowledge continues to imprison the voices of the “voiceless” that are not actively involved in decisions affecting the schooling of their sons and daughters.

The colonial experience in Africa has resulted in a culture clash, leading to a number of impediments to education in the region. The first barrier is that it led to changing the objectives of education from enculturation into the indigenous culture to learning about an alien culture through the medium of a foreign language. Secondly, the content and orientation of education reflected the alien colonial culture rather than the indigenous culture. In addition, the colonial system also drove a wedge between the people and the government institutions. The colonial schools, as part of the government institutions, were often located on the fringes of the village, and fenced around, and practices within the school premises (the language spoken, the modes of dress, eating habits, etc) were expected to be different from what existed in the surrounding community. Thus, while in every other society, the one who passed through the system (the educated or cultured person) is someone well-versed in the culture of his or her community, in Africa the educated have carried with them the burden of the lack of a cultural identity (Obanya, 1999).

The colonial and post-colonial curricula in Africa are based on Western foundations, and thus emphasise the promotion of an Eurocentric knowledge-base and Western values at the expense of the African indigenous knowledge-base and values. After political independence, although the African countries changed the content of the curricula to make it African, the Western cultural influences embedded in the foundations of the inherited and borrowed curricula are still transmitted to African children. In addition, the structure of the Western curricula encouraged individualism, which is contrary to the

cultural structure and the community interdependence promoted through the extended family system in Africa. The remedy for this is relevant education and curricula which place the emphasis on the cultures and values of the society, as well as training for community solidarity and social commitment (Salia-Bao, 1989).

Ismailova (2004) also argued that the colonial education system used the knowledge-base that reflects the values and interests of colonial regimes and neglects the indigenous perspective. The indigenization approach in curriculum studies and development has started to be used as a major strategy for rehabilitating and returning the neglected indigenous knowledge-bases and values.

Thus, attempts to reform the educational problems have been made, which the next section focuses on.

### ***3.5 REFORMS MADE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATIONAL AND CURRICULAR RELEVANCE***

So far a plethora of attempts has been made throughout the world at making education in general and the curricula in particular relevant to the socio-cultural and structural context of marginalised groups. In the Northern industrialised nations that house large groups of indigenous people and immigrants, attempts have been made at indigenizing the academy/education by individuals who wanted to see the reign of social justice in their respective societies. In the global South a large number of subjugated ethnic groups are being subjected to the dual affliction of alien neo-colonial forces, and their associates/protégés in their localities. Although the colonised countries have now achieved nominal independence, they are still suffering from the vestiges of neo-colonialism, which manifests itself in *academic* and *mental* colonisation. The subjugated ethnic groups are further subjected to imposition from the local dominant mainstream culture.

The next section will focus on the attempts made so far, by categorizing them into two groups.

Before the articulation of the current discourse on the African renaissance, different researchers came up with notions that called for revitalising and revalidating the African tradition. A highly esteemed, and the forerunner of all the notions, was the idea of Afrocentrism, forwarded by Asante (1991). In presenting Afrocentricity as a panacea for the African Americans, Asante (1991:179) argued:

Afrocentricity... seeks to respond to the African person's psychological and cultural dislocation. By providing philosophical and theoretical guidelines and criteria that are centered in an African perception of reality and by placing the African American child in his or her proper historical context and setting, Afrocentricity may be just the "escape hatch" African Americans so desperately need to facilitate academic success, and "steal away" from the cycle of miseducation and dislocation.

The other notion which called for revitalising and revalidating the African tradition before the discourse of the African renaissance, is Africanization. Horsthemke (2004) views the *Africanization* of knowledge as a counteraction to the process of colonization and globalization, which severed African learners from their natural and social environments, that is, their roots. He contends that Africanization would serve this purpose by reintroducing or re-familiarising African students with their peculiar African natural and social environments.

*Africanization* entails a post-colonialist and anti-racist discourse, which can generally be seen as a renewed focus on Africa and on reclamation of what has been taken from Africa. With regard to knowledge, *Africanization* signifies a focus on indigenous African knowledge and its subsequent legitimation and protection from exploitation. With regard to education, *Africanization* denotes the Africanization of institutions, curricula, syllabi, and criteria for excellence in performance (Horsthemke, 2004).

A notable attempt at reforming education in Africa, which based itself on an indigenous philosophy, content and practice, was the project *Education for Self-Reliance* applied in Tanzania. Semali (1999) considers the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) project in Tanzania as a well-known example of a national effort to indigenise the curriculum in Africa. As Shizha (2010) argued, Tanzania implemented a home-grown curriculum through Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance.

The experiment aimed at localising the curriculum in Tanzania by emphasising practical rural-oriented education. As a result, the content and practice of knowledge for primary schools were changed so that they reflected community life. Nyerere recognised the need for integrating school knowledge and home knowledge to make learning relevant for African students in order to disrupt the cultural dissonance that existed in the delivery of formal knowledge in science. However, the programme of ESR was not completely successful because it was more ideological than pedagogical (Semali, 1999; Shizha, 2010).

Obanya (1999) generally classified the major educational reform efforts in Africa into four approaches, namely Radical-Revolutionary, Realistic-Revolutionary, Ad hoc and Evolutionary. The ESR programme of Tanzania falls under the Realistic-Revolutionary Approach.

### ***3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRICULAR REFORMS AND THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE THEORIZATION***

This section focuses on the limitations of the reform activities which have been attempted in post-colonial Africa to make the curricula relevant to its inhabitants' context, and the urgency of the need for an alternative theorisation to rescue the education system on the continent from crisis.

Other researchers also attribute the deficit educational orientation in general and the curricula in particular in Africa to the lack of culture-specific and transformative

theorisation on the continent, and too much dependence on Western theories (Salia-Bao, 1989; Jagusah, 2001; Itibari, 2006; Janetius, et al., 2008). The deficiency of the curricular reforms is clearly evident in the current situation of education on the continent. At present, despite the reform efforts made, education in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular, is said to be in a state of perpetual crisis (Itibari, 2006; Tekeste, 2006; Dei, 2008).

The recognition of the educational failure sustained during the colonial and post-colonial period compelled many concerned researchers in North America and Africa to critically analyse and spell out the deficiency. They also made attempts to recommend alternative strategies which would rescue the education sector from the debilitating effects of the imposed and inherited Eurocentric education system.

Among the researchers who critically analysed and verbalised the problem in clear terms, was Salia-Bao (1989). He argued that the major curriculum reforms which have been taking place throughout Africa since the 1960s bore no tangible results, due to their major inherent structural defects, namely that they are built on Western philosophical, psychological, historical and social foundations. As a remedy, Salia-Bao (1989) suggested developing an indigenous African curriculum theory that would provide guidelines for the development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum. Relevant research which studies the culture, the needs and the environment of the African society is a prerequisite for drawing up the guidelines. According to his view, a research-based curriculum development project is a better prospect than an imported curriculum model.

The weaknesses of the reform endeavours in Africa were also perceived by Obanya (1999), who affirmed that all the reform activities aimed at revitalizing the African education have never succeeded in domesticating and re-contextualising the school in order to link it more closely with African cultural values. As a remedy he forwarded the advice that

African education has to be built on a solid cultural foundation in the form of eclectic policies and practices based on Africa's rich cultural heritages. This entails weaving all the strands of the educational web into a consistent whole (113).

Shizha (2010) is another African researcher who identified the deficiencies in the curriculum reforms on the continent. He argued that most curriculum changes were promoted by outsiders, mainly from the Western countries, and were a 'copy cat' of Western curriculum forms which merely reproduced the curricula of the Western countries. He recommended the teaching of both African indigenous knowledge and Western dominant scientific knowledge through critical pedagogies, and pedagogy of place.

In order to rehabilitate African education from its crisis, Jagusah (2001) suggested an intrinsic development which could be achieved more easily through African intertextuality, or rootedness in the context. Itibari (2006) recommended an African-centred critical theory which could extract the best of indigenous African thought and practice to present research-based alternatives and solutions. Janetius et al. (2008) came up with an *indigenizing the knowledge-base* approach, which highlighted the need for indigenous, culture-specific theories, and specific modes and frames of knowledge for relevant education. Dei (2008) recommended critical African education which examines and validates African experiences and histories, as well as criticises the continued exclusion and marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems from global knowledge production. He also suggested curriculum reform that uses local knowledge and expertise and practices that have at the centre the African experience and culture. Shizha (2006) proposed a knowledge pluralism and hybridisation approach, which is a relational process between forms of knowledge, whereby indigenous and Western knowledges condition one another. He believed that this approach would give voice to the formerly marginalised people in school curricula in Zimbabwe. The approach seeks to demystify, demythicise and deconstruct knowledge universalism and globalisation which propagate similarities in bodies of world knowledge that can be found in all global spaces and societies.

Hawi (2005), a Sudanese researcher who identified the problem of the reform endeavours in Africa which were based on imitating the Western models, asserted that the backwardness of the Africans emanated not from the failure to make good use of Western methods and theories, but from the strict adherence to them. As the sustained failure in Africa demonstrated, imitating or stereotyping Western methods hinder development by placing hurdles in the identification of local values and customs that can foster development. Therefore, he recommended the adoption of alternative local human development theories for Africa in general, and for Sudan in particular. The alternative, he suggested, is known as the *indigenization* approach.

In commenting on the weaknesses of the reform efforts made, Abdi (2009) also argued that counter-colonial philosophies and epistemologies of education have not been constructed so far, despite the educational expansion exhibited in the content of education. He called for the re-culturing and the relative Africanization of knowledge systems, because of the fact that knowledge is a collective human achievement and requires some contextualization with respect to the environments in which it is being practiced.

According to Dei (2008), better prospects in the struggle to reconstruct African education lie in the current discourse of the African renaissance. This discourse iterates the need for reflecting on past experiences and histories and utilising locally contextualised cultural knowledge to respond to contemporary problems. The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, which was adopted in January 2006, expresses the significance of designing an educational system that gives a good grounding of the youth in local culture in the following way,

It is imperative to edify educational systems which embody the African and universal values, so as to ensure the rooting of youth in African culture, their exposure to the values of other civilizations, and mobilise the social forces in the context of a sustainable, endogenous participatory development (African Union, 2006: Preamble).

The African renaissance can be considered as a counter-hegemonic vehicle which has grown out of the realisation of the need for meaningful change, and "... offers us an opportunity to reinvent ourselves in line with our new insights" (Ntuli, 1999). To this end, the movement has adopted as its cultural foundation the *back-to-Africa* model, so as to revisit and reconstruct the submerged heritages of precolonial Africa (Diop, 1999; Vilakazi, 1999).

At the core of the African renaissance vision is the conviction that the people and institutions of Africa have the capacity and the responsibility to foster economic, political, social, and moral processes. That fostered economic, political, social, and moral processes in turn, could enable to define Africans as competent and proud citizens, on par with the best in the world (Khoza, 1999).

The Ethiopian researcher, Tedla (1995), came up with the notion known as "returning back to the source and fetch" for which she had adopted an Akan term known as *Sankofa*. In this notion the source denotes our culture, heritage and identity, and as we move forward into the future, we need to exploit from the source, all that work and are positive. According to Rabaka (2009), the first proponent of the thesis of "returning to the source" was the Cape Verdean and Guinea-Bissauan revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral. His thesis became inspirational to other African researchers. Messay (2004), another distinguished Ethiopian researcher, furthered this notion by developing a new theory of modernisation, which counters the hegemonic theory of modernisation. The alternative theory of modernisation he proposed is known as the "Renovation of Tradition", which calls for a return to the Ethiopian tradition, rather than adopting the Western institutions and values in order to modernise.

The discourse in respect of indigenization, which this study advocates, is an alternative discourse that would counteract the dominant and hegemonic Western discourses that led to the deficit education in Africa. We have to return to and renovate our culture, and develop local theories which could be incorporated in curriculum development and

education. The discourse of the African renaissance concurs with the discourse of indigenization because both call for grounding the African youth in their local culture and values through formal education. In addition, both do not romanticise the African values and culture, and avoid the role of outsiders, which could act as a kind of catalyst. Therefore, the best approach for the current African renaissance movement is the indigenization approach.

Having said this, the need arises to dedicate the next section to the indigenization discourses.

### ***3.7 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM REFORM IN ETHIOPIA***

In this section the historical background to the curricular reforms in Ethiopia will be discussed, with special reference to the indigenization approach in primary education curriculum development, along with its flaws.

Any curricular reform in a given nation should attend to the history of curriculum development. If not, the reform could lead to the further marginalization of the subordinate groups, by causing them to be integrated into the mainstream culture. Soudien (2010) laments that the policymakers in post-apartheid South Africa simply imported a curriculum model from New Zealand and the United Kingdom, ignoring the history of the country as if “the social context” of their nation was “empty.” Thus, the 2005 curriculum reform, he reiterates, led to the integration of black people into the hegemonic order, and thereby perpetuating older forms of discrimination.

Thus, in this section the researcher will analyse the history of the curriculum development process in Ethiopia, with special reference to the indigenization efforts. In Ethiopia attempts at indigenising education and the curricula have been made in two different eras with different approaches. Indigenization from the national perspective was carried out during both the imperial and the military periods. The indigenization

from the ethnic groups' perspective was initiated after the advent of EPRDF to power in 1991, and is still being carried out in the country.

### ***3.7.1 Indigenization from the national perspective***

In Ethiopia all the ethnic and linguistic groups delivered indigenous education so as to transmit the cultural identity. The major aims of the indigenous education were instilling in children the attitudes and skills appropriate for their social roles, focusing on the duties and privileges derived from cultural values. The indigenous education responded to the concrete problems of the local communities and was imparted by means of the local language. Indigenous education still plays an important role in preparing the young generation for their future role in the rural areas, where there is little access to modern education (Getu, 2011).

A significant step in the history of Ethiopian education was the introduction of modern western education which officially commenced in 1908 with the opening of Menelik II School in Addis Ababa (Getu, 2011). Woube (2000) argued that since its introduction modern western education has been given exceeding precedence over indigenous education. He viewed the neglecting of tradition as ignoring the invaluable experiences accumulated over a long period of time. He thus recommended the revisiting of the role of indigenous education and revitalising it for modern use.

Since the inception of modern western education different attempts have been made by different regimes in the country to reform the educational system. Each of the reform endeavours criticised the preceding educational systems and formulated new policies which would underpin the anticipated change. The major purpose of each educational reform was to make the school curriculum relevant to the learners' cultures (Temechegn, 2000).

In Ethiopia, during the imperial period, the lack of the relevance of the curriculum was perceived by different sectors of the society. The conservative elements of the Ethiopian

Orthodox Church and the nobility argued that there was very little Ethiopian in the curriculum, and that those young Ethiopians who passed through the school system were disrespectful of their society and its institutions. Some researchers also pointed out the irrelevance of the Ethiopian school curriculum to the historical experiences, and the socio-economic situation of the country as early as 1958 (Tekeste, 2006).

The first foreign researcher who alleged the irrelevance of the Ethiopian curriculum and who came up with a counteractive proposal was Ernest Work, an American who taught Ethiopian Studies in the United States, and who served as an expatriate advisor in the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in Ethiopia. He made a study of the contemporary education system in Ethiopia during 1934-35, and made a radical proposal that recommended a system suitable to the Ethiopian situation be developed. He called for Ethiopianising education in the country by using Amharic as the medium of instruction, and by preparing local textbooks in Amharic (Maaza, 1966).

Attempts were made to Ethiopianise the education system at primary school level by making curricular reforms in 1947 and the 1960s (from 1964 to 1974). The reforms were focused on changing the medium of instruction and the textbook language, and the involvement of Ethiopian personnel in the process of curriculum development and implementation. In spite of these efforts towards the Ethiopianization/indigenization of education at national level, in practice it was impossible to indigenise knowledge and the curriculum because of the assumption that knowledge has a universal or global nature, and because of the continued foreign influence on Ethiopian experts (Solomon, 2008).

Edward Janty, an American expert who served in the education sector in Ethiopia indicated, in the middle of 1949, the irrelevance of the curriculum to the realities of the country, as follows

Added to the above classroom situation is the fact that the pupils had to learn a foreign language (English) from foreign textbooks with illustration material alien to their own

culture, and you get a dramatic picture of the crucial nature of the educational process for both pupils and instructors (as quoted in Tekeste, 1990:5).

Despite the reforms which were aimed at Ethiopianising the education system in general and the curricula in particular at national level, the education system in the country remained irrelevant to the situation in the country. This deficiency was clearly identified by the Education Sector Review (ESR) in 1972. The Education Sector Review was conducted due to the bold policy decision made by the Imperial Government of Ethiopia to conduct a comprehensive study on the education sector, with particular emphasis on the curriculum. In the end the study pointed out six major shortcomings in the Ethiopian education system. One of the six problems identified in the Review mentions:

The educational experience of Ethiopian youth is inadequately related to the Ethiopian realities and milieu, as attested by undue reliance on foreign books, foreign languages, and foreign teachers... The school system is consequently producing youth that is unaware of, unappreciative of, and alienated from its own cultural heritage and roots (MOE, 1972: 5-6).

During the military period the use of a national language as medium of instruction was raised from primary school level to secondary school level. It proceeded to the extent of replacing English with Amharic, both in primary and secondary education. Unfortunately, the experiences accumulated during its reign were completely swept away by the regime that succeeded it. The federal government initiated a language policy which introduced more than fifteen languages instead of only Amharic as media of instruction at primary school level (Tekeste, 2006).

In Ethiopia the policy of the cultural assimilation, with Amharic as the language of instruction, and the assimilation of the other ethnic groups into the mainstream Amhara culture, was the policy exercised during the imperial, and to a lesser extent, the military periods. This policy provoked a number of subjugated ethnic groups, that is, the Oromo

and other minority groups, who were conquered at the end of the nineteenth century, and who were forced to submit to the dominant rule of the Shewan dynasty of the Amhara kings into initiating ethnic movements and armed revolts in various regions of the empire-state (Habtu, 2003; Kassam, 2002). Therefore, the Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level can be considered as an affirmation of the assimilation policy which was publicly opposed by the subjugated ethnic groups.

### ***3.7.2 Indigenization from the ethnic groups' perspectives***

The classification of people into various cultures signifies the differences among them. The fact that people live in one country and have one national identity does not make the cultural groups the same. In this sense, any commonalities become secondary, as they are not the major defining factors of each cultural group (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011). This justifies indigenization from the ethnic groups' perspectives.

Banks (2006) portrays a *cultural ethnic group* as a group who shares a common set of values, experiences, behavioural characteristics, and linguistic traits that differ substantially from other ethnic groups within the society. Membership of such a group is drawn, not by choice, but through birth and early socialization. Members of a cultural ethnic group are likely to take collective and organised actions to support public policies that enhance the survival of the group's culture and ethnic institutions. The members also pass on components of the group's cultural heritage, such as the symbols and language, to the next generation. The ethnic cultural heritage is a source of pride and group identification for its individual members.

Bennett (2011:50) defines an *ethnic group* as a community of people within a larger society, and who is socially distinguished or set apart from others, and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of characteristics such as religion, language, or tradition. According to Falola (2003:9), an *ethnic group* is a cultural group which doubles as a source of identity affirmation and as a cultural unit, and an agency of power politics. What sustains the group is history and tradition. Established cultural habits in respect of

food, attire, literature and music are put to good use to socialise members into a group, encouraging marriages among group members, and generating a feeling of respect.

The cultural role played by the schooling system in Ethiopia was to undermine many Ethiopian cultures, and to impose the cultural values of only one dominating national culture upon the other nations and nationalities in the country. Despite the complex nature of the cultural basis, however, both the monarchy and the military administration of the Derg regime had opted to set the educational foundation on a narrow segment of the Ethiopian culture, which effectively served only a limited membership of the Ethiopian community, and as a consequence resulted in unsatisfactory and undesirable social, economic, political and cultural outcomes (Teklehaimanot, 1999).

The policy and implementation strategy documents adopted and issued by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Federal Government of Ethiopia, respectively, also clearly specified the deficiencies of the education systems of the country in general, and the curriculum in particular, during both the monarchy and the military periods, with respect to relevance and quality.

In stating the historical problems sustained by the education system of the country the policy document articulated that,

To date, it is known that our country's education is entangled with complex problems of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity. The objectives of education do not take cognizance of the society's needs and do not adequately indicate future direction (TGE, 1994:2).

The Implementation Strategy document also clearly sorted out the problems of the country's education system, among which relevance and quality are the prominent ones. It clearly stated that the curricula were directly copied from nations which are friends of the government, without taking the context of the country into consideration (MOE, 2002).

The downfall of the Derg regime that ruled the country during the military periods, and the coming into power of the ethnic-based opposition force led by the EPRDF in 1991, ushered in a new political order in the country. The country started to experiment with a new kind of Federalism which had never been tested in the country before and which was an exception to the general pattern in Africa, known as ethnic federalism. Ethiopia's ethnic federalism is based on ethnic communities as the constituent units and foundations of the federal state, based on ethnicity and language. As a result, the country was reorganised into nine ethnically-based regional states and two city administrations that made up the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Habtu, 2003; Lovise, 2011; Tekeste, 2006).

This change in the political order heralded a new era in the education system and curricula in the country. The education system and the basic education curricula were tuned or aligned to the political system that the country started to follow. A new Education and Training Policy and Implementation Strategy documents were adopted in 1994 and 2002 respectively, which intended to deal with the educational problems inherited since the introduction of modern western education in 1908 in the country. The decentralisation of the political system that accompanied the implementation of the federal constitution placed the responsibility of primary education on the shoulders of the federal states (Tekeste, 2006).

The ethno-federalist approach to education in Ethiopia converged with the postmodernist way of thinking, namely that both claim to make the issue of ethnic minority an important part of their moral discourse. As a way of achieving this, the ethno-federalist system put forward a policy to use ethnic languages as the medium of instruction, even in the absence of sufficient academic resources (Girma, 2012).

The education and training policy document suggested possible remedial actions to correct the educational problems faced during former regimes. The suggested solutions deal with the supply, distribution, and utilisation of educational material, educational

technology and facilities; and decentralising educational management. The policy also emphasises the development of culture in the content of education and curriculum structure and approach. It furthermore calls for the development of the curriculum and the preparation of textbooks to be conducted at central and regional levels, giving attention to concrete local conditions (TGE, 1994).

The Implementation Strategy Document also came up with the proposal of changing the existing curriculum in order to solve the problem in respect of educational quality and relevance. To this end, the content of the curriculum was supposed to be aligned to the context of the country. In order to materialize this proposal, primary education textbooks were prepared, taking the reality of the environment, the activities, the cultures, and the way of living of the local communities into consideration (MOE, 2002).

Unfortunately, despite the introduction of educational reform based on indigenization from the ethnic groups' approach at basic education level, the education system in general, and the curricula in particular, are still being criticised by many for its lack of relevance. In the research that he conducted, Tekeste (2006) argued, in terms of his findings, that the relevance of education to the cultural, historical and economic needs of the country was not given sufficient recognition, even if returns to investment in education, in terms of human capital, functioned well. He attributed the genesis of the problem of relevance to the imported curriculum, and the use of the English language as medium of instruction. Amare (2009a) also stated that the self-assessment of the education system revealed unsatisfactory results, in terms of quality (student achievement and characteristics), and that concerns on the deteriorating quality are being expressed in the mass media and on different public forums. The MOE (2010, in the recent ESDP IV programme action plan, still refers to the high drop-out and repetition rates in primary education in the country, which can be considered as signs and symptoms of a lack of relevance.

The findings in a study conducted by Woube (2004) revealed that there exists a lack of a systematic way of incorporating culture in the curriculum, although the issue of culture is given emphasis in the country's policy documents. He stated that there is a lack of common understanding among curriculum developers on the concept of culture and the selection criteria for incorporating it into the curricula. Amare's (2009a: 426) argument also concurs with that of Woube where he raised the question, namely

Who is to take this responsibility of incoherence in translating the spirits of the 1994 Educational policy into its proper perspectives, of making education culturally relevant, that is, to bring the social, technological, economic, and psychological life of the communities into the schools (and curriculum)?

As Janetius et al. (2008) affirmed, the indigenization movement started to add momentum in Africa, and the need for indigenizing education was becoming a leading issue in educational circles. Unfortunately, they stated that they do not find many notable initiatives being taken in Ethiopia to establish indigenous theories and a knowledge base that could be incorporated into the curriculum and education. Janetius et al. (2008) blame the current education system in Ethiopia for succumbing to the knowledge and systems of Euro-Americanism through assimilation. They also argue that if indigenization is carried out, it would offer a wonderful basis for cultural responsiveness and socially-responsive knowledge, as well as culturally-responsive learning for consequential education in Ethiopia.

In order to illustrate the gap that exists between traditional life and modern influences brought about by modern western education Roschanski (2007:43), in a research study that he conducted in Ethiopia entitled *Deprived Children and Education: Ethiopia*, quoted a teacher from the mission school who said, "Formal education is rather incompatible with Borena way of life, with tradition and culture"; and a father from Dhoqqolle, Borena Zone Ethiopia who said that, "The boy in school may turn his back on the Borena tribes and culture. He will not be 'our' boy anymore".

In Ethiopia a notable initiative at transforming the indigenous knowledge system has been taken by the Oromo ethnic group. By translating theory into practice and by drawing on the blended Oromo and Western development models, Hundee, an Oromo Civil Society Organization, started the process of transforming the indigenous knowledge system. The revalidation of the indigenous knowledge system was supposed to serve as an instrument for the struggle of the Oromo people against the historical economic and cultural discrimination it has suffered. The reactivation of the indigenous knowledge system was thus seen, not as a mere luxury, but rather as a matter of the cultural survival of the group (Kassam, 2002).

Having deliberated on the curricular reforms in Ethiopia, with particular reference to the indigenization approach, the next section will focus on the indigenization discourses.

### ***3.8 THE INDIGENIZATION DISCOURSES***

The discourses on indigenization were articulated by researchers in the fields of social science, psychology, history, anthropology, social work, and philosophy in the formerly colonised nation-states through out the world and by the first nations who housed indigenous or aboriginal peoples. At the moment, from among the fields of study where indigenization is greatly debated are Social Work and Psychology. Therefore, it would be beneficial to reflect on the ongoing debate about the approach in the fields of social work and psychology, and to take some lessons from it so as to incorporate them in curriculum studies and development.

As regards social work, researchers from diverse contexts interpret the concept of *indigenization* from their particular viewpoint, resulting in multiple interpretations. A review of the literature revealed that most researchers unanimously use the term to refer to the irrelevance of Western social work in non-Western contexts (Gray, 2010). Therefore, the central notion of the concept of indigenization presumes that any intervention in a given locality should be based on the unique characteristics of that

locality. As a result, education in different parts of the world cannot be the same, even if they share some commonalities (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011).

The discourses on indigenization have undoubtedly emerged as a response to the oppression of colonialism (Gray & Coates, 2010). The discourses criticise professional imperialism, question Western values and theories, and emphasise the importance of the indigenous social and cultural structure (Yunong & Xiong, 2008). The discourses maintain that the Western theories and approaches developed at the metropolitan states in the Western world are irrelevant for Africa (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999). The discourses also call for locality and cultural relevance, not only in the global South, but also in the global North (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011).

The supporters of the indigenization approach argue that the local practices provide the case studies, the raw data, and certain philosophical approaches. However, serious problems emerge when this data are meshed with un-reconstituted models, theories and paradigms, developed to answer problems and explain processes elsewhere. The exchange is thus founded on unequal terms, in that the unrecorded local ways of making sense of processes and doing things tend to get lost. When the global context lends itself to the circulation of paradigms it is often negotiated in favour of the dominant intellectual perspectives (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1999).

In the field of psychology indigenization is considered as a worldwide process of making knowledge culturally appropriate by transforming the transplanted or borrowed external elements to make them suit the characteristics of the region or the culture of the recipients. The culture-bound and culture-blind tendencies of mainstream psychology have been the main impetus for the process of indigenization (Sinha, 1997).

Dei (2009:8), on his part, defines *indigenization* from a political science perspective as

...the processes of enabling people to reflect upon their own practices, identify their own resources, and cultivate their own sources of power to heal themselves, reconcile their

society, and build new institutions or transform old ones so that they respond to their new challenges and needs.

In curriculum studies the indigenization approach calls for the elimination of cultural dependency, by revitalizing and incorporating into the curriculum the concepts of indigenous knowledge, and the replacement of exclusivist and ethnocentric features of colonial or dominant mainstream education, by an inclusive curriculum and 'culturally responsive pedagogy'. Indigenization projects seek to eliminate all types of oppression, to counteract assimilative education, and to ensure equal representation in the curriculum (Ismailova, 2004). The developing countries are applying the indigenising approach in their practice and curricula by drawing upon their own traditions so as to develop locality-specific paradigms (Dominelli, 2005).

Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988) define *indigenization* as a process of modifying a transplanted Western model so as to make it relevant to the importing country's political and socio-cultural context. It involves adapting values, aims and procedures while retaining the presumed universal components, such as knowledge, skills, principles, etc. as they are. Their definition makes them supporters of the Universalist view of knowledge, skills and principles, which make the latter to be context-free (they are not context-bound) and applicable in all contexts without any kind of modification.

Globally social work education has been transformed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century by means of two key approaches, known as *indigenization* and *authentization* or *reconceptualization*. Continuous attempts have been made to indigenise and re-indigenise the imported social work models in the recipient nations. Unfortunately, the attempts failed to change the original model's ingrained philosophy from the remedial interventions in the recipient nations which favoured the mass-restructuring of the surrounding social system. Therefore, the dissatisfaction with the outcomes of indigenization in the developing world compelled the latter to distance themselves from the Western social work model, and to generate new approaches that address structural social problems from within. This desire for new approaches from within resulted in the

shift of focus from an indigenization approach to that of an authentization or culturally appropriate approach (Ferguson, 2005).

The first proponents of the authentization approach were Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988). The authentization approach looks for the authentic roots in the local system to construct a domestic model in the light of the social, cultural, political, and economic characteristics and needs of a particular country. This approach does not promote the total rejection of the theory or experience transplanted from other countries, because closing the door and excluding contact with foreign models is impossible in the reality of living in the current increasingly integrated world system.

Dei (2009) also holds the view that the indigenization approach, unlike endogenization, does not preclude the role of outsiders. Indigenising is about evolving local institutions and mechanisms through processes of internal as well as internal-external dialogues to respond to emerging social, political, and economic situations. The indigenization approach produces material and structures which are innate to the society, with outsiders acting as a type of catalyst.

The Filipino researchers, in their attempt to develop a Filipino psychology known in their language as *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, applied in their country two different approaches and models of indigenization, known as indigenization *from within* and indigenization *from without*. The former approach focuses on a simple translation of concepts, methods, theories, and measures into the Filipino language. However, as elsewhere, the indigenization *from without* approach failed, and thus compelled Enriquez, the father of indigenous psychology in Philipins, to come up with another version of indigenization, known as indigenization *from within*, to which he attributed a different name, known as *cultural revalidation*. The new approach propagated looking at indigenous psychology from within the culture itself, rather than merely trying to clothe a foreign body with a local dress (Pe-Pua, 2006).

The indigenization and authentization approaches were also applied in the global North by nations like Holland and France, for a different purpose to that of nations who housed and who were attentive to addressing the needs of indigenous people and immigrants. These Western countries wanted to use the approach to decrease the influence of the imported models of social work, particularly from America. The domestic alternatives used are illustrated, for example, in the concept of *agology* in Holland, and *animation* in France (Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988).

In this section I have argued that for indigenization *from without* to materialise indigenization *from within* have to be carried out first. This is due to the fact that unless the key cultural constructs are identified well, using indigenization *from within*, it would be difficult to carry out indigenization *from without*, which is a process by which foreign knowledge is made to pass through the culture of a given community to be utilized as valid knowledge.

### ***3.9 CRITICISM AND DEFENCE OF THE INDIGENIZATION APPROACH***

In the previous section the researcher tried to elaborate on the indigenization discourse.

In this section the criticisms levelled at the approach will be presented, as well as the arguments in favour of the approach.

The indigenization approach has attracted much criticism from its opponents, but also defence from its proponents since its inception. However, to cover all the criticisms and praises is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, only some will be addressed, with special emphasis on the exchange of criticisms between Yunong and Xiong (2008), ardent opponents of indigenization in social work, and Gray, (2010) a defender of the approach.

One of the opponents of the indigenization approach in curriculum development is Ismailova (2004), who conducted a study on the indigenization of the history curriculum

in her native country, Kyrgyzikistan, during the post-Soviet era. She raised the view that the indigenization approach has an exclusivist consequence, which leads to the marginalization of non-indigenous learners. To her, indigenization is not an empowering and equitable pedagogical practice for all, but it increases inter-group and inter-ethnic tension and conflict by placing more emphasis on one group than on another. Her favoured approach that could resolve the problem of exclusion is an inclusive curriculum or culturally-responsive pedagogy which provides a space for cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity in society.

In the researcher's view, Ismailova (2004) tried to concile a mainstream-centric curriculum with an indigenised curriculum. It is a centric curriculum like the mainstream Eurocentric curriculum which the developing nations borrowed from the West, and the mainstream national curriculum, that promotes the perspective of the dominant group at the expense of the marginalized groups' perspective, that result in ethnic-polarizations and that disrupt internal cohesion. An indigenized curriculum, though, which is built on the foundations of the reality, traditions, and the values and beliefs of the marginalised groups, gives the marginalised groups the capacity to enter into inter-cultural dialogue with equal partners in order to forge an inclusive curriculum. Indigenization is, therefore, a prerequisite for an inter-cultural dialogue which would enable the development of an inclusive curriculum.

Yunong and Xiong (2008) criticised indigenization for its blind adherence to indigenous social and cultural structures, its questioning of the Western social work's values and principles, and its overemphasis of the differences between Western cultures and indigenous cultures. However, different researchers have clearly indicated the distinction between the Western and indigenous cultures (Salia-Bao, 1989; Tedla, 1995; Bekele; 2007; Amare, 1998, 2009a, 2009b; Messay, 2004; Janetius, et al., 2008; Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011). Therefore, one cannot deny this clearly discernable difference, and emphasise the similarities alone. In addition, Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie (2011) argue that the indigenization discourse neither promotes blind adherence to

indigenous cultural and social structures, nor negates collaboration with external partners and experts, seeking resources for capacity-building. Gray (2010) dismisses Yunong's and Xiong's (2008) criticism as a simple allusion, and views indigenization as one of the concepts or levers used to discuss, question and promote the debate on the appropriateness of Western social work. But, it is the unquestionable imposition of the dominant Western model from the outside that voices the precipitating dissent from non-Western and indigenous social workers. Indigenization, likewise, questions unjust or outmoded customs and cultural practices.

In justifying the desirability of the indigenization approach, Gray (2010) contends that enormous tension arises when national and local bodies attempt to devise culturally-relevant education and practice programmes while outside influences attempt to impose alien universalistic values and a professional culture. Therefore, indigenous or First Nations people's primary fight is for social justice and political recognition, and they constantly highlight the injustices suffered by indigenous people at the hands of the most powerful groups in society, the colonisers or political majorities who have subjected the indigenous minorities to heinous treatment. Their fight is for cultural and political recognition, which is even more important, given the increasing diversity of the modern, multicultural, pluralistic Western societies.

One of the criticisms against indigenization, levelled by Gray and Coates (2010), is its narrow focus, which runs the risk of being ethnocentric in the extreme – one that excludes and includes. However, Sinha (1997) contemplates that it would be an oversimplification to regard indigenization as an ethnocentric denial of the West, or as a clash between tradition and modernity.

Yunong and Xiong (2011) criticize the proponents of indigenization for their dangerous attempts to dismiss universal values and standards. The fact that there are shared values (commonalities) in the world does not warrant the fact that values are universal across all cultures. Just as different cultures share values, there are certain values

which are peculiar to a specific culture. Spreading the values of one culture through coercion all over the world could never legitimize the universality of values.

Yunong and Xiong (2011) also place the blame for questioning the modernization discourse, for preserving the existing culture and traditions, and for resisting change, on the proponents of indigenization in social work. They made a call for social workers' commitment to supporting and promoting modernization at the expense of postmodernism or indigenization if they want to reduce poverty, as well as the promotion of people's autonomy and freedom, and democracy. By making these propositions they clearly identified themselves as the supporters and defenders of the modernization theory. As Tekeste (2006) argues, modernization which propagates the imitation of Western values is a project which has already been doomed to failure in the Third World countries. Therefore, what the Third World countries should do is not to keep up a system that has already failed, but to come up with viable alternative approaches, amongst which the most probable one is indigenization. The main reason for the onset of the indigenization approach is the failure of the western modernization approach. Even if change is needed in the Third World it should emanate from within and be based on the indigenous culture, rather than replacing it with values borrowed from a foreign culture. As the saying goes, "necessity is the mother of invention", thus the changed agenda should arise from the need within the society. The Third World need to have a clear vision, namely the formation of a post-modern society where there would be justice and sustainability in the social realm, a society free from imposition, domination and marginalization of one group over another.

Sinha (1997) states that the process of indigenization has some pitfalls inherent in it, which, if not guarded against, may lead to cultural chauvinism and anti-scientific tendencies that are likely to be dysfunctional to the development of the discipline of psychology. Another danger perceived by him, which emanates from indigenization, is parochialism in knowledge which is built on the exaggerated emphasis on a Western versus a non-Western dichotomy. Therefore, it is crucial to be attentive to these

problems, and make use of knowledge which is relevant to the context, and which contributes to sustainable development.

In the next section the models and principles of indigenization, as suggested by different fields of study, will be discussed, so as to identify important principles which could shed light on the indigenization of curriculum development and studies.

### ***3.10 THE MODELS AND PRINCIPLES OF INDIGENIZATION***

The indigenization of the social sciences has been underpinned by many models and principles. In his review of the indigenization of the social sciences, as advocated by researchers in Taiwan, Chang (2005) identified the following three models, namely the trans-national model, the theoretical-reasoning model, and the grounded model. The trans-national model attacks the blind application of Western concepts and theories in non-Western societies, and emphasizes native studies from an emic point of view by native scholars. The theoretical-reasoning model focuses on a socio-cultural critique, and attacks the dominance of empiricism in Western social sciences. The grounded model stresses the importance of grounded research with careful fieldwork, and asks indigenous researchers to investigate their own problems and research agendas relevant to indigenous societies.

Atal (1981:193) indicates four forms of the indigenization of the social sciences in Asia, namely

- teaching in the national language, and using local material;
- research by insiders;
- determining research priorities; and
- theoretical and methodological reorientation.

Cheung and Liu (2004:121-124) summarise five guidelines for promoting indigenous social work in developing countries. The first guideline is to build an indigenous

philosophical foundation, and to invent theories, working principles and approaches in the education of social work. The second guideline is to address social problems and to develop strategies within an indigenous social and developmental context. The third is to develop an indigenous conceptual framework and methodology by redefining the central focus, knowledge and value bases of the practice of social work. The fourth is to acknowledge the historical and cultural experiences and realities of the indigenous people. The fifth is to conduct social work practice from the perspective of the expertise and resources of the local community.

Cheung and Liu (2004:113) also suggest the following five principles which would underpin the indigenization of social work practice with women in China, namely

- understanding women in the context of the family;
- understanding the origin of the knowledge of social work;
- defining women's needs from their own perspectives;
- starting from within in the indigenization of social work; and
- being open to professional communication and debate.

In addition, Yip (2005:594-595) suggests five components of indigenization in social work practice.

These include

- the adaptation of Western social work practices to local needs;
- implementation in the local context;
- a local indigenized criticism of the impact of the knowledge, ideology and technology of the Western social work model on non-white countries;
- reflection on the professional imperialism and colonialism behind the impact of the Western social work model; and

- a re-engineering of skills and techniques according to local structures and practice.

Dei (2009:8) forwards five broad assumptions and principles which are applicable in the indigenization approach from a political science dimension. These are context centrality, which emphasizes uniqueness and challenges the assertions of universality; a celebration of heterogeneity; interactivity; normativity; and regenerativity.

Juxtaposing the models and principles outlined above, some important principles stand out which may be incorporated in curriculum studies and development.

These are, namely

- building an indigenous foundation, such as a philosophical basis, theories, working principles and approaches;
- developing an indigenous conceptual framework and methodology by redefining the central focus, knowledge and value bases;
- conducting curriculum studies and development practice from the perspective of the expertise and resources of the local community;
- concentrating on the centrality of context;
- teaching in the national language, and using local material;
- research by insiders; the determination of research priorities;
- theoretical and methodological reorientation;
- the adaptation of Western curriculum studies and development practice;
- implementation in the local context;
- a local indigenized criticism of the impact of the knowledge, ideology and technology of the Western model on non-white countries;
- reflection on professional imperialism and colonialism behind the impact of the Western model;

- the re-engineering of skills and techniques according to the local structure and practice;
- starting from within in the indigenization process; and
- being open to professional communication and debate.

The deliberations this far suggest a discussion of the multicultural and culturally-responsive perspectives to curriculum.

### ***3.11 A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM AND A CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY***

Multicultural education and a culturally-relevant pedagogy have principles and dimensions which have a direct bearing on the indigenization approach.

Therefore, it is imperative to take a brief look at them in this section.

#### ***3.11.1 Multicultural education and the curriculum***

*Multicultural education* is a total school reform effort which involves changes not only to the curricula but also to the total structure of educational institutions or the educational environment. The main goal of the change is to increase educational equity in schools and classrooms for a range of cultural, ethnic, gender and economic groups in order to foster an equal chance for academic achievement. Multicultural education seeks to achieve this goal by readdressing and removing the racial and structural inequalities in relation to identity groups. Mainstream education privileged the dominant groups by denigrating the marginalised groups to unequal economic and political treatment, using the deep-seated structural injustices and systemic patterns of dominance and suppression (Gumbo, 2001; Banks, 2006; Banks & Banks, 2010; Bennett, 2011).

Included in multicultural education are interactive dimensions which should be used as a guide to school reform. The following four were identified by Bennett (2011:5-10), namely equity pedagogy, curriculum reform, multicultural competence, and social

justice. However, according to Banks and Banks (2010:4) and Banks (2006:4), there are five dimensions which are both similar and different to those of Bennett. They are, namely content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure.

According to Bennett (2011:93), the major goals of multicultural education are the following:

- understanding multiple historical perspectives;
- developing cultural consciousness;
- developing intercultural competence;
- combating racism, sexism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, so as to improve race relations;
- raising awareness of the state of the planet, and global dynamics; and
- developing social action skills.

Bennett (2011:4) also lists four foundational principles that underpin multiculturalism, namely (1) the theory of cultural pluralism; (2) the ideals of social justice, which would bring to an end to racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression; (3) affirmations of culture in the teaching and learning process; and (4) visions of educational equity and excellence, leading to high levels of academic learning and personal development for all children and the youth.

The multicultural curriculum conceptualizes students and their respective communities as sources and producers of knowledge, and a foundation on which to build new academic knowledge (Sleeter, 2005). One of the central tenets of multicultural curriculum development projects is the deployment of the students' own culture, history and identity as a context for learning (Pinar, 2003; Bennett, 2011). The other important concept which is central to multicultural curriculum development projects is the incorporation into the curriculum of content which builds a sense of ethnic pride within

each student. The content should be incorporated in ways that would encourage the students to understand the underlying values and patterns of the socialization of a particular culture rather than focusing only on the more superficial cultural appendages such as food and holidays, heroes, and historical events (Bennett, 2011).

An important goal of the development of a multicultural curriculum is catering for multiple historical perspectives to correct the biases of the traditional mainstream curriculum which stress the political development of Anglo-American civilization. The multiple historical perspectives could be developed using the knowledge and understanding of the worldviews, heritages and contributions of diverse ethnic groups. This project could materialise when the methods of distortions, stereotypes and serious omissions of the ethnic minorities' perspectives as used in the mainstream-centric curriculum development to maintain the dominance of the major ethnic groups over the ethnic minorities, are eliminated (Bennett, 2011).

A multicultural curriculum is known for its attentiveness to the school's hidden curriculum, which constitutes the teachers' values and expectations, student cliques and peer groupings, and school regulations on the one hand, and the values, cultural styles, knowledge, and perceptions that students bring to school, on the other (Bennett, 2011). McLaren (1989:183-184) elucidates the concept in the following way:

The hidden curriculum deals with the tacit ways in which knowledge and behaviour get constructed, outside the usual course materials and formally scheduled lessons. It is part of the bureaucratic and managerial "press" of the school - the combined forces by which students are induced to comply with the dominant ideologies and social practices related to authority, behaviour and morality.

Since the hidden curriculum is a major means used in mainstream curricular projects to systematically induce the dominance of the major ethnic groups over the ethnic minorities, it is necessary to give due attention to this part of the curriculum in using the indigenization approach.

### ***3.11.2 A culturally-responsive pedagogy***

The genesis of a culturally-responsive pedagogy goes to researches which were aimed at understanding and mediating mismatches between the students' home culture and the culture of the school (Bennett, 2011). Thus, the term *culturally-responsive* signifies a more dynamic or synergistic link between the home and community culture on the one hand, and school culture on the other (Ladson-Billings, 1995:475).

A theory of culturally-relevant pedagogy was first articulated by Ladson-Billings, and later the idea was further researched by herself and other prominent American researchers, for example Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995), Gay (2000, 2001) and Nieto (2002). This pedagogical approach calls for teachers to intentionally connect teaching to the lived experiences and knowledge-frameworks of their students and the students' communities. It also views teaching as a process of contextualizing and embedding students in their community and culture. It allows the students to have a proper grounding in their socio-cultural context in order to make them thrive (De Lissovoy, 2008:109).

Classrooms in which the students, teacher, and the subject matter are rooted in a similar cultural context are likely to activate the knowledge students bring from their culture. However, classrooms where the students' cultural context is different from that of the teacher and/or subject matter do not necessarily activate the students' prior knowledge. When the students' prior knowledge is not activated and the teachers are unfamiliar with their lives outside the classroom, they may assume that the students know far less than they actually do (Sleeter, 2005:110).

Gay (2000) also indicated that the validation and affirmation of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically-diverse students as a channel for effective teaching is the crux of a culturally-relevant pedagogy. Academic knowledge and skills are more likely to be personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and learned more easily and thoroughly using culturally-

relevant pedagogy. This pedagogical approach has the power of making the teaching-learning process comprehensive, transformative, and emancipatory (Gay, 2000), and relevant for all students, especially for those who are ill-served by the school because of their ethnicity, their mother tongue, or low-income background (Bennett, 2011).

De Lissovoy (2008) also argued that culturally-relevant pedagogy poses a challenge to dominant but deficit approaches, perspectives and practices to education by giving due recognition, affirmation, and response to the cultural realities of students with the intent of promoting their achievement. Thus, the recovery and assertion of the strengths and values of a marginalised culture against ongoing domination is the main concern of educational progress and transformation in this approach. De Lissovoy (2008:110) stated the worth of this focus as follows,

This process of empowerment of children on the basis of their own cultural identities is not merely the precondition for a liberatory form of education but rather coincides with the creation of democratic conditions in school and society.

Ladson-Billings (1994) charted some principles which would underpin a culturally-responsive pedagogy, such as possessing positive views of families and communities, communicating and holding high expectations for academic achievement, employing active methods of teaching, and reshaping the curriculum to facilitate culturally-relevant learning experiences.

According to De Lissovoy (2008), the success of a culturally-relevant pedagogy hinges on its attentiveness to the concrete contexts, identities, and relationships that surround and define students. In this pedagogical approach the authenticity of teaching is determined by its recognition of the students' cultural realities, the challenges it poses against the racism of deficit approaches and its commitment to the achievement of all students. Thus, in order to be effective in teaching it is mandatory for teachers to spend their time to know the contexts of their students' lives. Nieto (2002) adds that teachers

who use this pedagogy provide students with the opportunities to draw on their cultural and linguistic knowledge and resources to foster more meaningful learning experiences.

Ladson-Billings (1995) suggested that in order for pedagogy to be considered as culturally-relevant it must meet three important criteria. These are an ability to develop the students' academic achievement, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a socio-political or critical consciousness that challenges the structural inequities maintained by schools and other institutions. *Cultural competence* refers to the proficiency of students in the local language and interaction styles, and taking a demonstrated pride in their identity and cultural heritage.

Ladson-Billings (1995) recommended that culturally-relevant pedagogues could be produced by the re-orienting of prospective teachers with their own and others' culture, and the role of culture in education. Gay (2001), on her part, forwarded five essential elements which pedagogues need to possess in order to qualify as culturally-responsive teachers or pedagogues. These are, namely to develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity; the ability to design culturally-relevant curricula; to demonstrate care and build learning communities; the confidence to communicate with ethnically-diverse students across cultures; and the ability to respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

Language is thus implied in the indigenization approach to curricula.

### ***3.12 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE INDIGENIZATION APPROACH***

There exists an inextricable link between language, identity, culture, and education. Language, and especially the parents' dialect, is the medium through which the content of ethnicity, culture and the identity of the group is formed and transmitted. The dialect is also a vehicle in the formation of the offspring's perceptions, attitudes, and values about their physical and social environment, which is decisive for cultural development. Therefore, a language system in general and dialect in particular helps to categorise,

interpret, and share experiences. The students' native language or dialect should be used as a means to transmit their cultural heritage and identity (Banks, 2006).

Language is not simply a means of communication, but it expresses the cultural view of the world and of one's existence (Shizha, 2007). Language is an important component, symbol, and a means of reflection, which serve as a mirror of ethnicity and culture (Banks, 2006; Shizha, 2007; Janetius, et al., 2008). An individual's language is important in understanding the cultural reality that surrounds his or her life, and reflects one's attitude toward your physical environment (Shizha, 2005; Banks, 2006). A person's view and interpretation of the world is reflected in his/her language (Banks, 2006). Therefore, the recovery and restoration of indigenous identities, knowledge, and experiences are contingent in the revitalization of indigenous languages (Shizha, 2007).

Holistic transformation is unlikely in a community where knowledge is not produced and transmitted to the people in their own language. It has been proved that no language that can replace the child's mother tongue in providing her/him with a proper education. Therefore, the issue of language has to be taken seriously in order for education to have meaning for the overwhelming majority of the people in Africa (Bekele, 2007).

Shizha (2005, 2007) argues that at present the languages of instruction in African schools lacks Africanness and an African rationality; it alienates students from their local communities, disrupts the teaching and learning processes and hampers the students' cognitive development and learning outcomes. He therefore recommends the transformation of science education in Africa by counter-inventing the language of instruction. Shizha (2007) cites different studies undertaken in various countries in order to substantiate the positive value of incorporating indigenous languages into science teaching to enhance students' understanding and to make it meaningful to their realities.

Shizha (2005) indicated earlier how a student whose mother tongue had not been used in scientific discourse was subjected to difficulties of cognition and understanding.

Students who are being taught in a language other than their mother tongue are compelled to undertake dual translation in making sense of what they are learning; they have to translate what is taught in a Western language into their indigenous language, and then retranslate it to the Western language to be able to communicate.

Tekeste (2006) also made an urgent call for the shift of the discourse on the role of education in the survival of the Ethiopian political and cultural society. For him the key instrument in the evolution of a new counter-discourse on the role of education in Ethiopia is the utility of indigenous languages at all stages in the education process. Therefore, as Shizha (2007) asserts, language is a vital component for incorporating indigenous knowledge and culture into the school curriculum. An indigenization approach in curriculum studies and development could not materialize in the absence of the revitalization of the indigenous languages and its incorporation in the education system.

At this stage it is important, in response to the trail of discourses on the relevant curriculum issues, to explore the different genres of the indigenization approach.

### ***3.13 THE DIFFERENT GENRES OF THE INDIGENIZATION APPROACH***

In general the approaches in indigenization can be broadly categorized into three groups in respect of the relationship between Western science and indigenous knowledge. These are the indigenization approach, which advocates a complete break from western knowledge and focusing on Indigenous knowledge only; blending western knowledge and indigenous knowledge; and restructuring or adapting the borrowed or inherited western knowledge to make them suit to the indigenous context.

#### ***3.13.1 A complete break from Eurocentric knowledge and values***

Blyden (1969) is one of the African researchers who advocated complete cultural separation from the West in order to preserve and to utilise for development the local traditions. In order to justify his argument he indicated that Africa used to live in peace

until its contact with Europeans. Thus, the only means to regain the lost innocence and peace in Africa is to return to its original traditions and to restore its own institutions. In *African Life and Customs*, Blyden represents as “pure” Africans those whom he considered to be untouched by Europeans or foreigners. He felt that an appreciation of native laws, customs, and societies was the best approach to pan-Africanism in the twentieth century.

African American researchers who have realized the deficit and the consequent irrelevance of the Western education system to the African communities have come up with an indigenization approach, which is a centric one that counters the Western system. Such a kind of indigenization approach calls for a complete break from the Eurocentric curriculum, and focuses on indigenous perspectives. This is known as *Afrocentricity* or *African-centeredness* or *Afrocentric pedagogy*.

In education *centricity* refers to a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. *Afrocentricity*, as a theory, is against racism, ignorance and mono-ethnic hegemony in the curriculum. It is a frame of reference where phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. In education this means that the teachers provide the students with the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African worldview. In Afrocentric educational settings, however, teachers do not marginalize African American children by ignoring their people's history.

The Afrocentric challenge has been posed in three critical ways, according to Asante (1991:171):

- it questions the imposition of the White supremacist view as universal and/or classical;
- it demonstrates the indefensibility of racist theories that assault multiculturalism and pluralism; and

- it projects a humanistic and pluralistic point of view by articulating Afro- centrality as a valid, non-hegemonic perspective.

### ***3.13.2 Blending indigenous knowledge with Western science and technology***

Very recently there emerged a group of researchers and political figures in Africa who suggest a different kind of indigenization approach from that which was proposed by their predecessors. They called for the blending of indigenous knowledge with western science and technology. One of the researchers of this genre is Shibanda (2006). For him the blending of indigenous knowledge and Western technology through the transfer of technology would serve as a stimulant for economic growth in Africa.

Another advocate of the blending of indigenous knowledge with Western science and technology is the Ethiopian researcher, Tedla (1992, 1995). The blended approach which she suggested calls for building education on both the positive aspects of the past, and foreign ideas and methods which are carefully selected and imported. She proposed a new form of education in Africa for the 21<sup>st</sup> century which is firmly anchored in indigenous African thought and education, while wisely borrowing ideas and technologies from other peoples of the world.

Shizha (2006) is another supporter of the blended approach. His knowledge-pluralism-and-hybridization-approach supports a relational process between indigenous and Western knowledges whereby they condition one another. Salia-Bao (1989), although critical of borrowed and inherited curricula, also favours a blended approach, whereby indigenous culture is integrated into relevant aspects of Western education. African curriculum programmes should partly use indigenous and partly contemporary Western ideas. In justifying his stand for including contemporary Western ideas he argues that Africans should not be ignorant of what is happening in the world around them, and should include in the curriculum contemporary knowledge that affects them. In furthering his argument he suggests a blended curriculum design where a situational

analysis model and an indigenous curriculum model could be merged to form a coherent design.

At present the blending approach is becoming the most favoured one globally among the researchers who are proposing the indigenization approach. The blending approach, advocated by the two Chinese researchers Yan and Cheung (2006), defines *indigenization* as a process of the transfer of knowledge from developed to developing regions, or of knowledge recontextualisation, rather than the process of knowledge creation by the developing regions. They view *internalisation* and *indigenisation* as the two dialectically interacting processes of the transfer of knowledge mostly from developed to developing areas. Unlike the other researchers who are calling for the blending of the Western and indigenous knowledge systems, Yan and Cheung's approach makes a call for blending the two processes of knowledge transfer.

Among the current African politicians who are in favour of the blending approach is the Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa (2004). He raises the idea that the Africans should not romanticize indigenous knowledge and consider the global knowledge as irrelevant. He is convinced that sustainable development could be promoted if both indigenous and global knowledge are blended in a democratic and self-determined way. However, in the researcher's view, the two stocks of knowledge should see each other as equal partners to be able to work together in a democratic and self-determined way. Unfortunately the proponents of Western knowledge are undermining the other people, and are using all its means to impose itself on the other at the expense of indigenous knowledge.

Different researchers, for example Teklehaimanot (2000) and Bekele (2007), tried to convince the world that the blending approach works well, by citing the experiences of Japan, the East Asian and Southeast Asian countries as examples of countries who have achieved economic development by blending western science and technology with their cultural, historical and other heritages. The blended approach utilised in the Asian

countries focus on local languages and cultural values which are grounded in Confucian tradition and beliefs, absorbing science and technology from the West in an efficient and concerted manner. As part of their effort in adapting Western science and technology they translated books and essential material from the West into their languages. Therefore, certain measures have to be taken to compensate for the deficit in establishing indigenous foundations that can pave the way for sharing foreign experiences.

Whether Africa should continue borrowing models which have worked well in other contexts, or should lay the foundation for devising a system which suits her well, is a question that needs to be answered. Of course, there may not be any problem with sharing the experiences of other contexts if the sharing is done with proper care and adaptation to the context of the receiving country. However, this researcher does not support the borrowing of experiences (biases and prejudices) from a knowledge system which undermines its counterpart, and considers it retrogressive and unequal. There exist clear distinctions between the Eurocentric and indigenous knowledge systems that make blending difficult.

Amare (1998) raised the issue of compatibility which necessitates a narrower gap between the cultural content of the borrower and the recipient and similarity in the strand of the two cultures for synthesis or blending to take place. In order to justify his argument he forwarded two ideas from an Ethiopian experience. The first idea is the fact that Ethiopian culture remains Ethiopian and Western culture remains Western, despite the sustained interaction between the two for more than a century through curriculum importation, student exchanges, scholarships, etc. Secondly, the modern Ethiopians who have passed through the formal school system absorbed the important strands of neither the domestic culture nor the foreign culture. Nevertheless, in contradiction to his argument of difficulty in the synthesis approach, he finally recommended a curriculum which synthesizes the Ethiopian and the imported Western culture.

The modernization discourse, the major weapon to expand Western values in colonized regions at the expense of their home-grown values, argues for the introduction and perpetuation of Western values and the curriculum in non-Western societies. The discourse openly calls for the complete replacement of the traditional values with the presumed universal Western values and self-denial, as a precondition for the modernization and subsequent development of Africa (Amare, 1998; Tekeste, 2006; Bekele, 2007). However, both Amare (1998) and Bekele (2007) argue that the development endeavour of a given nation will succeed only through self-assertion or by enriching the own culture, rather than by the replacement of the own culture with an alien culture.

Researchers such as Bekele (2007), call for an intercultural approach which strikes the right balance between the exogenous and endogenous forms of knowledge. Unfortunately, intercultural dialogue can only take place when the two knowledge systems are on an equal footing and are ready for exchanges. Similarly, Janetius et al. (2008) suggest a bicultural approach known as *acculturation* whereby a traditional cultural knowledge base is dug, identified, retained and integrated with specific forms and modalities which are selectively adopted from other cultures.

### ***3.13.3 Restructuring or adapting the borrowed or inherited Western methods***

Another group of researchers propose the genre of indigenization which involves only restructuring or adapting the borrowed or inherited Western methods to make them suitable to the context. This approach reduces the marginalized groups to the level of the consumers of knowledge which has been produced elsewhere, rather than being producers of their own knowledge. One of the researchers who favour this approach is Hawi (2005). He defines *indigenization* as the originalization of Western methods of development by adapting it to the culture, norms, and traditions. Thus, his model of indigenization can be considered as *indigenization from-without*. In order to strengthen his justification for such a kind of indigenization he indicates that

...indigenization will allow us to benefit from theorization by others, and to borrow them but after a comprehensive cognitive understanding that leads to absorbing, developing or modifying them to suit our norms, traditions, and needs to the extent that they may appear as if they represent our own product and not of others (6).

During its inception and first stage, indigenization in almost all fields of studies pursues this genre. In the field of social work, Gray and Coates (2010) argue that in its initial stage indigenization has been seen as a process of importation and adaptation of Western, mainly United States, models of social work into developing non-Western contexts so as to make the imported knowledge fit the local contexts.

#### ***3.13.4 Reflection on the three genres of indigenization***

A complete-break approach will further marginalize the subordinate groups by denying learning from what others have achieved. If thoughtfully selected and imported, the global South can benefit a lot from the Western science and technology, as Japan, Eastern and Southeast Asia did. This approach, therefore, is not a viable approach for the marginalized groups. In addition, experience in the history of Ethiopia teaches us that this approach is detrimental to proper development. The Ethiopian medieval Emperor Fasiledes (reign 1632-1667) initiated a closed-door policy whereby he barred all Europeans from entry into the Christian highlands by signing agreements with the governors of Mitsiwa and Suakin not to let Europeans in through the ports. He was perplexed by the death of many people following his father Susenyos's (reign 1607-1632) attempt to introduce Catholicism from above. This policy kept Ethiopia isolated from the rest of the world for two centuries (Marcus, 1994:40). This isolation blocked the opportunity to learn from others and thereby hampered the Ethiopia's development.

Vilakazi (1999) also argued against the complete-break approach. He held the view that Africa should not only be guided by the African past, and should not be closed to outside influences since no civilization has ever developed and prospered in isolation. He reiterates that the unique African pattern of development into modernity should base

itself on the use of the resources provided by her civilization, opening up to the finest influences resulting from cultural intercourse with other civilizations.

However, the failure of restructuring or adapting the borrowed or inherited Western methods became evident from the practices in the global South. After the sustained use of the indigenization approach in their context, concerned researchers in the global South have come to realise its irrelevance, and proposed a new approach of indigenization which counters the earlier approach. The new approach they proposed is known as *indigenization from-within* or cultural revalidation and authentization.

The researchers and politicians who favoured the blending-approach have not made any kind of valid suggestions on how to blend the two knowledge systems which are contradicting and vying with each other, and have different foundations. How can one blend two substances with different characteristics and textures? Can oil and water mix completely? For the researcher the blended approach is just like trying to mix oil and water. The Western world and marginalized people everywhere have different philosophies of life and worldviews, hence, a different philosophy of education, which makes blending improbable. In addition, the educational knowledge of the marginalized indigenous people is underdeveloped because of the onslaught from the Western knowledge, and whenever we try to blend them, there is a likelihood of the former to float above the latter, as oil floats atop water. For centuries the traditional knowledge has been attacked by the modern western knowledge being considered as retrogressive for modernization and development and subject to marginalization. The Western knowledge system made use of a policy of assimilation which served during the period of colonization and its successor and twin-sister globalisation (with its tool the standardization drive) which is serving in the present era of neo-colonialism to present itself as the universal knowledge system that could serve everywhere. These policies of assimilation and globalisation contained, and are still trying to contain, the development of indigenous knowledge systems.

Instead, indigenous knowledge should be allowed to stand on its own feet first before any consideration is made to blend it with Western science and technology (Yishak & Gumbo, 2012). At present indigenous knowledge is not well established and is not on an equal level with Western knowledge which, through its acts of colonialism and neo-colonialism, has spread to large areas and established itself as a dominant or hegemonic knowledge globally. Therefore, initially it would be fine if each knowledge system travelled on its own independent path, and later share the positive aspects of the two knowledge systems on equal and democratic terms by means of intercultural dialogue. Attempting to synthesise the two knowledge systems before reconstructing and revalidating the marginalized indigenous knowledge system, is like placing the proverbial cart before the horse.

The foundations of a curriculum define the constituents of valid sources from which to derive the field's theories, principles, and ideas. The commonly-accepted foundations of a curriculum are philosophical, historical, psychological, and social. Regardless of their approach, curriculum specialists generally agree and rely on these foundations to study and practice curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Brightone, Nasongo & Wamocho, 2009).

Brightone, et al. (2009) proposed anchoring the development of the African curriculum on philosophical foundations such as *ubuntu* or *communalism* and indigenous education, as a viable approach to evolving some curricula development strategies. For them philosophical reflections can enhance the process of curricula development, and thereby make it possible to tackle the twin challenges of ethnicity and development in Kenya, specifically. Therefore, the new approach being propagated is indigenising the foundations of the curriculum in its entirety first in order to bring about fundamental changes in it, and making it relevant to the African structural and socio-cultural context. This new approach of indigenisation would enable to rehabilitate the knowledge-base of marginalized communities, and pave the way for them to preserve their identity and

culture, while at the same time making a valid contribution to the funding of international knowledge.

This researcher advocates a stand-alone approach until the local theories and epistemologies are well established, and then moving on to the blended approach that would promote intercultural dialogue. He suggests the blending of the two indigenisation approaches in different phases, as follows: in phase one, the stand-alone indigenisation approach, which assists in rooting curriculum studies and development on indigenous foundations and theories, principles and ideas, derived from the culture. This indigenisation approach will help to rehabilitate the indigenous knowledge base, which could be incorporated into the curriculum. In phase two the blended approach could be used to allow for an intercultural dialogue between the indigenous knowledge and the Western knowledge bases, so as to enrich the curriculum studies and development process. The view Ntuli (1999) holds is compatible with this researcher's view. He argues that since the Africans are of two worlds - both Western and African, the success of the renaissance will depend on how they are positioned first, and then synthesising the two inherited worldviews.

#### Phase 1: The stand-alone indigenisation approach

In this phase a stand-alone approach, which involves the indigenising of the foundations of the curriculum first, in order to reconstruct and revalidate the marginalized indigenous knowledge, is recommended. The foundations of the curriculum define the constituents of the valid sources from which to derive the field's theories, principles, and ideas.

#### Phase 2: The blended approach

The mutual exchange of positive strands of each knowledge system could be facilitated by means of an intercultural dialogue. The intercultural dialogue, in turn, could be fostered by the two models developed by Banks and Pe-Pua. These models could assist in building both national and international curricular models shared by all the cultures alike (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). The first model indicates how the national

macro-culture is drawn from the different micro-cultures within the nation-state. The second model depicts how the different national cultures work as a source for the creation of genuine cross-cultural knowledge, or a cross-indigenous perspective.

An affirmation of the intercultural dialogue-approach in curriculum studies has been the new form of internationalization of curriculum studies initiated by William Pinar (2010) in curriculum studies in South Africa. His approach entails a process of engaging nationally distinctive fields of curriculum studies in complicated conversation or dialogue with one another. For him internationalization can provide scholars with a critical and intellectual distance from their own local cultures and from those standardizing processes of globalization. In his study the six South African scholars were charged with the task of providing a critical review of the South African curriculum context. The two international scholars, Hongyu Wang of China and Elizabeth Macedo of Brazil, were entrusted with the task of engaging the six South African researchers in dialogue by means of a series of questions and comments.

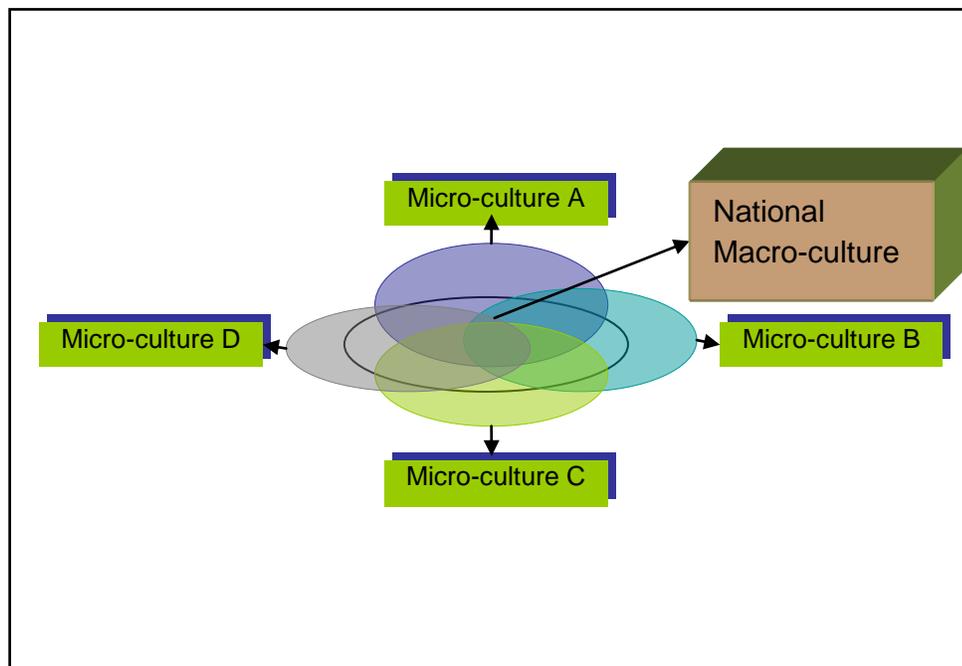


Figure 3.1: Micro-cultures and the National Macro-culture (adapted from Banks, 2006: 73).

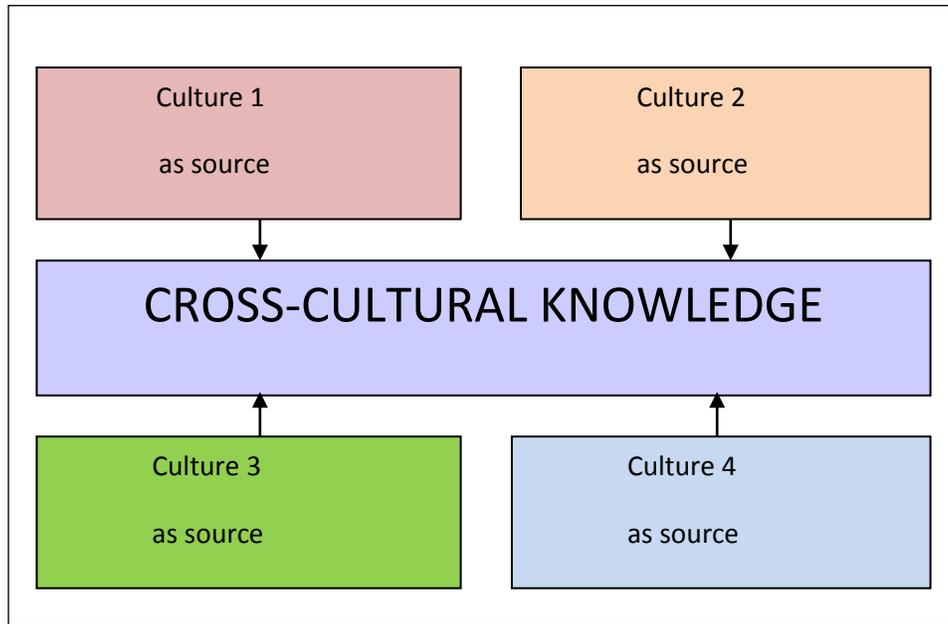


Figure 3.2: Towards a global knowledge through a cross-indigenous perspective (adapted from Pe-Pua, 2006:132).

### ***3.14 THE OBSTACLES OF THE INDIGENIZATION APPROACH***

Negligible attempts have been made to establish the African culture as new paradigm of knowledge and education to counter the negative effects of Eurocentrism. However, there were obstacles that paralyzed the reform efforts which have been initiated by marginalized communities. Likewise it will not be so easy to materialize indigenization approach in curriculum development and studies because it may face similar obstacles. Therefore, it is important to identify the obstacles, so as to make everyone who has a stake in curriculum development and studies aware of them, and ready to discharge their responsibilities at any cost. The obstacles can be categorized as internal and external ones.

#### ***3.14.1 Internal obstacles***

##### ***a) The Western-educated African elites***

These people have a Eurocentric educational background, and consider culture in terms of their colonizers' schema, both in research and education (Janetius et al., 2008). They

have not accorded deep respect and experimented with indigenous institutions and systems, as they did with other people's institutions and systems (Tedla, 1995). Obanya (1999) indicated how intransigent the attitude of the African elite was towards the cause of educational reform. This class contradicts its own ideas by sending its children to private schools where purely Western education which they publicly denounce, is being offered.

Historically, intellectuals serve as the voice and instruments for the development of the higher culture of their civilization. Unfortunately, African intellectuals could not properly carry out their role as developers, minstrels and trumpeters of African civilization. This was due to the fact that the educated Africans became Europeanized and alienated from the mass base of African society and culture, due to the modern education they acquired. As a result, a wedge has been driven between the educated society, and the principles and patterns of African civilization. African intellectuals have completely forfeited their knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilization, whereas the ordinary and uneducated Africans, especially those in the rural areas, became reservoirs of knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilization (Vilakazi, 1999).

### ***b) The teachers' and the students' African myths***

Janetius et al. (2008: 10) identified four myths regarding Ethnocentrism versus Eurocentrism which were recognized as barriers to indigenizing the knowledge base in Ethiopia. They are the following:

- Myth 1: The Euro-American way of thinking is the civilized way. Encouraging local concepts and ideologies will lead the society to backwardness.
- Myth 2: The Euro-American way of doing research is the most accurate scientific way. Identifying local modes of data-collection are unscientific and unreliable.

- Myth 3: The Euro-American system of education is the best, as it is global and universally accepted. When the best system is available, why go for indigenous Afrocentric models?
- Myth 4: If contextual culture-specific theories need to stand out on the international podium, they must follow some universal norms.

Wilson (2004) similarly observed that the native people's internalization and uncritical acceptance of the racism and ideologies of the dominant Western culture is the greatest challenge to the recovery of indigenous knowledge.

***c) The lack of extensive resources for research about relevance in the educative process***

Sponsored research is only interested in research that debases Africa. Less funding is made available for research that focuses on indigenous knowledge (Jagusah, 2001). Obanya (1999) also argues that it is impractical for debt-ridden African countries to carry out any kind of development, including education, since there are no financial resources for investment.

***d) The complexity of retrieving subjugated knowledge and transforming the curriculum***

The process of retrieving subjugated knowledge and then transforming the curriculum for the teachers is complex. This is because the process involves not only new learning, but also coming to grips with a different and possibly very unfamiliar ideology (Sleeter, 2005).

However hard it may be, Vilakazi (1999: 225) suggests the indispensability of facing the challenge of the restoration of subjugated knowledge like this:

African education for sustainable development should face the challenge of drawing the best from existing indigenous paradigms that are relevant to our current needs. It should wrestle with the task of recovery of our languages, cultures and histories while inventing our future in this technological era.

***e) The lack of democratic culture on the African continent***

As Obanya (1999) argues, genuine educational reform is always interwoven with reforms into the political, social and economic systems of the society. The indigenization of African education could not materialize until the African political system follows democratic principles in giving people full say and full participation in setting goals, and the orientations of society. Askvik (2006) similarly argues that thick democracy will provide a guarantee that institutions are adapted to the local context, because local knowledge is better exploited under conditions of participation.

***3.14.2 External obstacles***

***a) The lack of respect for indigenous people's sciences and ways of looking at things***

The corporate-driven Western forces denied the indigenous people's sciences and ways of looking at things their due respect, while looting their intellectual property wealth and products. For example, indigenous knowledge concerning cultivating a crop, fabricating a fishnet, harvesting seeds, using particular plants for industrial production, medicine, cosmetics, food preparation and storage, etc. were promiscuously stolen without regard for ownership or compensation (Kincheloe, 2008).

***b) The control of the university by the corporate-driven forces of the Western empire***

In clarifying how these forces lure and co-opt the scholars, Kincheloe (2008:113) states the following:

The imperial market has hired a cadre of voluptuous sirens who whisper to us in our dreams, who take scholars, even critical pedagogues, and corrupt them with careerist motivations and visions of high status in the academy.

### ***3.15 A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LOCAL RESEARCH***

A number of researchers have conducted interpretive studies on the prospect of culture and the heritage of the society in making the education system relevant in Ethiopia.

In this section the review of these studies will be presented, with special emphasis on the purpose of the studies in relation to the problem under investigation, the methods that were used, their main findings, and the important suggestions and recommendations that were made.

The first Ethiopian researcher who has been calling for a thorough knowledge of the country's historical heritage as a prerequisite for evolving a meaningful curriculum in the country, is Tekeste Negash. He has contributed three major works on Ethiopian education. His first work is, *Crisis of Ethiopian education: Some implications to nation building*, which was published during the final year of the *Derg* regime in 1990. The main purpose of the study was to re-examine the relevance of the teaching of history for nation-building in Ethiopian secondary schools, that is, the extent to which the curriculum and the teaching-learning process were used to impart knowledge about the country and its history. He highlighted the structural crisis in Ethiopian education. He attributed the expansion of the educational sector beyond the country's available material resources and the irrelevant curriculum, as the main causes for the decline of the educational sector in the country (Tekeste, 2006: 83).

Tekeste blamed the history curriculum, which is directly copied from the book of a Russian author, as irrelevant to the country's context, and even detrimental to nation-building which was the avowed purpose of a national curriculum by then. He made a critical call for firmly anchoring Ethiopian education in general, and the teaching of

history in particular, in the history and culture of the country, so as to evolve self-reliant development and a common identity. He also raised the issue of making use of the country's tradition in literacy and in developing Amharic as a medium of instruction in secondary education.

Since this work is a product of its own era, that is, the era of nations and nationalism, it emphasized the cultivation of a common national identity. Therefore, his work concurs with the indigenization from national perspective, known as *Ethiopianization* carried out during the imperial and military periods in the country.

The second work by Tekeste, *Rethinking Education in Ethiopia*, which was published in 1996, had the purpose of indicating the better prospect in non-formal education rather than in formal education, of expanding literacy and meeting the development needs of the country. The study analyzes educational issues and policies in Ethiopia from the historical and contemporary perspectives in relation to the development of the country.

The study was established on three major premises. These are, it is morally wrong and economically unjustifiable to invest the scarce resources of the country in the formal education system, whose contribution to the development of the country is weak and irrelevant; the rural population has little respect for the formal education system which ignores their culture; and, in order to be successful development efforts have to be responsive to the needs of the actors (Tekeste, 1996:11).

He argued in favour of the establishment of two separate education sectors, that is, the formal education and non-formal education sectors. Though not opposing the emphasis being placed on formal education by means of curriculum and quality improvements, he showed preference for designing a non-formal education strategy to meet the development needs of the rural population and the urban poor. Though he openly criticized the 1994 Education and Training policy for its silence on non-formal education, he identified the position accorded to an appreciation of one's culture which makes the

content of education relevant for the student and rewarding for the teacher, and the recognition given to regional languages as a medium of instruction, as the policy's new inputs and strengths.

He saw a good degree of correlation between improved food intake and societal development. In order to elaborate on the correlation, he argued that the great majority of the population of a nation needs to be physically and mentally fit in order to keep the momentum of development alive. Such fitness emanates from the availability and accessibility of food. Therefore, for him the availability and accessibility of food is crucial for development, and he proposed the idea that attention should be given to mobilizing the human and material resources of the rural population to the production of food. Finally, he emphatically expressed his position in the following manner: "I argue that in the Ethiopian context, the strategic foundation for the development of the society ought to be the production and distribution of food" (Tekeste, 1996:12). He attributed the recurrent food shortages and the prevalence of widespread diseases in sub-Saharan African countries both to the inadequacy of indigenous knowledge systems, and the failure of the African governments to build on the knowledge systems which already existed.

He raised the following question, which has to be posed by any scholar who is concerned about the development deficit in his/her own nation, namely, "Could there be an Ethiopian way to social, political, and economic development?" (Tekeste, 1996:25). The question is so vital that it paves the way for local initiatives, among which indigenization could be one. This researcher concurs with his argument that an education program, if it wants to achieve its objectives, ought to be based on the already available structures and knowledge systems within the society. Furthermore, he justified his argument in that it is "in line with the philosophy of Education for All" (Tekeste, 1996:26), which points out that the content and methods of education should be sensitive to and reflective of the local culture. He also contended that the Ethiopian communities have successfully tamed their environments for centuries, possess a

reservoir of knowledge accumulated over a long period of time, and developed elaborate systems of political, social, ideological, and economic socialization which suited them and their natural environment. These communities were neither stagnant nor static, nor isolationists. They have been responsive to new ideas and technologies that conform to their overall cultural framework.

He is against the imposition of the Western development models on African communities in general, and on the Ethiopian communities in particular, through a number of conditionalities. For him the pressure of modernization led to the emergence of modernizing states in Africa, with programs which take very little account of the needs of the majority of the rural population. He argues that the sustainability of a development strategy greatly hinges on the strong link it has with the world views of their beneficiaries, and bear with them direct, immediate and concrete benefits. Therefore, he personally advises the donors to restrain from imposing development strategies on African nations, and to engage in promoting the progress of locally-devised development strategies.

One of the major weaknesses of Tekeste's work, which this researcher observed in his second work, is his call for a different kind of education for the rural population and the urban poor on the one hand, and the rest of the urban population on the other. Such a strategy would further widen/aggravate the cleavage already created between the urban and rural communities (urban/rural divide). Amare (2009a), on his part, saw the need for different kinds of transformations for the urban and the rural areas. The urban areas need the values of hard work, a cooperative spirit, and innovativeness, while the rural areas are in need of scientific knowledge and competence-building. However, he never recommended separate curricula for the two, but an inclusive education that addresses the needs of both.

Tekeste's third work on Ethiopian education, *Education in Ethiopia: From crisis to the brink of collapse*, was published in 2006. The main purpose of this work was to indicate

the deepening crisis in education, despite the phenomenal growth in enrolment, pushing the education system into the verge of collapse. He made use of the methodological tool of discursive analysis of relevant episodes and instruments. The purpose of this study was to contribute to a shift in the discourse on the role of education in the survival of the Ethiopian political and cultural society. The key instrument in the evolution of a new counter-discourse was the role of indigenous languages at all stages in the education system (Tekeste, 2006:11).

He asserted that Ethiopia, though not really being colonized, implemented an education system very similar to those that prevailed in the African states that were colonized for longer periods. He further contended that the most powerful discourse that had a strong currency during the decolonisation process in Africa, argued for the introduction and perpetuation of Western values and curriculum, which led the educational system that the African states inherited to be crisis-ridden.

Tekeste was against Western aid to the African countries, including Ethiopia. He clearly showed how the aid hampers sustainable development by sapping the initiative, creativity and enterprise of the citizens of the aid-receiving countries. He further elaborated on how aid was being used to impose the presumed universal Western values like democracy and a democratic system of governance, and to destroy the African economy, especially agriculture. He also indicated how the Western world tried to shift the blame of not showing development in aid-receiving countries on the failures of the countries themselves, or otherwise on structural obstacles emanating from the receiving countries. He further criticized the aid provided by the International non-Governmental Organizations (INGOS), which he believed could hardly lead to sustainable development, since most of the projects were donor-driven and were poorly linked to the views and perceptions of the target populations, and subject to abrupt changes.

Tekeste criticized the inadequacy of the attention being given to the quality of education in terms of relevance to the cultural, historical and economic needs of the country. He elaborated on the criticism levelled by the conservative elements of the Ethiopian church and nobility against modern education in Ethiopia.

He discovered that the main causes of the crisis in Ethiopian education were the uncontrolled expansion of the education sector in relation to the available material resources and job opportunities, and the use of English as medium of instruction. The use of a foreign language as medium of instruction implies the absorption of the values of that language. He equated the adoption of English as medium of instruction with the westernization of the Ethiopian society, but without the necessary financial and economic resources.

He was critical of the language policy in Ethiopia, which introduced ethnic languages as mediums of education at primary level. In his view the language policy appeared to produce citizens that would find it hard to communicate with one another. The fact that Amharic is taught in non-Amhara areas only as a subject was not sufficient to make Amharic a trans-ethnic media of communication (Tekeste, 2006:40).

He concluded that the policy of westernising the Ethiopian society with the assistance of development aid would hardly lead to the development of a dynamic and sustainable education system. He advised the Ethiopian state and society to rely on their environment and have a hard look at how to restructure their education system in order to find their place in the globalised world. He therefore suggested that the decision to abandon English as medium of instruction could undoubtedly lead to a cultural revival which, in turn, is a precondition for the modernization of the Ethiopian society (Tekeste, 2006:52). He forwarded two important recommendations which are vital in the revitalization of the Ethiopian education sector. These are, namely (1) adapting Amharic and Oromiffa as the languages of instruction, and (2) implementing policies which are

developed with the involvement of all the stakeholders, that is the parents, students, civic organizations, and all the major religious institutions.

The other two contemporary Ethiopian researchers, who advocated the idea of synthesizing culture and heritage in the curriculum development and studies, so as to ensure the relevance of the curriculum, are Amare (1998) and Woube (2004).

Here, it would be imperative to review their major works, and reflect on them.

Woube's work entitled *The need for analyzing culture in planning the curriculum*, was published in 2004. The purpose of the research was to review the practices of planning the curriculum, particularly in relation to culture, and to come up with some suggestions and recommendations for incorporating cultural elements in a curriculum. He conducted a qualitative study involving a review of relevant literature, and personal experiences. Based on his personal experiences as a curriculum developer at the former Institute of Curriculum Development and Research (ICDR) and a professor at the Addis Ababa University, he reflected on his personal experiences at analyzing culture in the planning of the curriculum in Ethiopia. He also did a thorough literature review and synthesized it with his personal experiences.

The major findings of his study are the absence of any systematic way of incorporating culture in the curriculum, and the lack of a common understanding among curriculum developers on the concept of culture and the selection criteria for its incorporation in the curriculum. Despite the emphasis placed on culture and the sporadic attempts made to develop a method of cultural analysis in the country, the development of a viable or valid model still awaits a further verification and experimentation.

He forwarded a valid recommendation pertinent to analyzing culture in planning the curriculum. He firstly suggested that it is crucial to understand the different perspectives in cultural analysis in order to come up with a workable model or theoretical framework

which would foster the process of synthesizing culture in curriculum studies and development. Secondly, he made a call to academics, educators, curriculum developers, and others who have more expertise and experience in curriculum development, and institutions engaged in curriculum studies to give consideration to the task of cultural studies (Woube, 2004: 29). Therefore, this study can be considered as a first attempt to come up with a strategy for developing a viable model for incorporating culture in the curriculum, so as to make it responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the community for whom they are prepared.

Amare's 1998 study, known as *Culture and development*, is a counter-discourse to the hegemonic discourse on development advocated by the followers of the modernization theory. The Western development theory used the approach of discarding the domestic culture in favour of picking up an alien culture. He examined the relationship between culture and development in the light of modernisation and the cultural synthesis models of development.

He elaborated on how discarding one's own culture, however traditional it may be, plays a dysfunctional role in development. Instead, development strategies should incorporate the important variable that is culture, so as to attain the development objectives. He tried to verify, by means of practical experiences in Ethiopia as analogy, the two important assumptions of the strategy of cultural synthesis. To verify the first presumption, that is, the difficulty of the replacement of cultures, he argued how the Ethiopian culture remained Ethiopian, despite the attempts to change it for more than a century by means of curriculum importation, student exchanges, scholarships, the introduction of science and technology, international communications, etc. To corroborate the second assumption, that is, the absorption of the useful strands of a developed cultural content by the borrower, requires compatibility (a narrower gap between, or similarity in the strands of the two cultures), he mentioned the practical example of the Ethio-Italian cultural synthesis in the transfer of construction, mechanical, and hard work skills in the 1940s. He further resorted to two analogies to

strengthen the verification. It is easier to convert a Jew or a Protestant to Catholicism than to Islam, or it is easier to make friendship among nearly equals than among unequals (Amare, 1998:4).

He stated that the educational system of the Western world uses its culture as its content, and transfers the latter from generation to generation through education. Unfortunately, he laments, "...our education system in general and the curriculum in particular, have neglected the integration of our culture in them". The 1994 Education and Training Policy aims to consider the cultural factors to make the curriculum relevant. Implementation of this aim will not be easy, as the inherited curriculum was developed on the model of modernization. Therefore, he called for a radical approach to operationalise the intent of synthesizing culture in curriculum development and implementation. He admitted the necessity of a change of culture, but contended that the change needed to come from within and not from outside the culture. The intrusion of a foreign culture must aim at enriching/fertilizing the domestic one if the former is to play a constructive role (Amare, 1998:4).

He forwarded two important recommendations. These are, namely firstly, an integration of culture with education. The culture must make up the major content of the curriculum, with a possibility of a synthesis with the imported one; and secondly, the integration of the two separate ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Information, since they function as the content and means of the same system, respectively.

A very influential work on indigenization was carried out by a group of researchers, namely Janetius, Bekele and Mini, in 2008. Their study is entitled *Indigenizing knowledge base for consequential education in Ethiopia*. The objective of their study was the enhancing of consequential education by indigenizing the local knowledge base. To this end the study intended to identify key cultural constructs, components and obstacles for indigenizing the Ethiopian knowledge base, and preparing a conceptual

model of indigenization for consequential education in Ethiopia. The study made use of a qualitative approach, a mixture of ethnography and the phenomenological method. Delphi debate, brainstorming, and document analysis were used to collect the data. Indigenous methods like story-telling and informal conversations/interviews were also employed, so as to have contextual, ethnographic and phenomenological relevance. The data were collected from 1250 students and 76 teachers of Gondar University, using the purposive sampling technique. One of the major findings of their study is the absence of notable initiatives in Ethiopia to establish indigenous theories, a knowledge base that could be incorporated into curriculum and education. The study also disclosed a number of myths that are common among teachers and students regarding Ethnocentrism versus Eurocentrism, which are barriers to indigenizing the knowledge base in Ethiopia. The study identified many local cultural constructs that need further extensive research to contribute to the establishment of a local knowledge base and the formulation of local theories.

Inspired by the findings, these authors proposed a six-stage pyramid model of indigenization to situate the current condition of Ethiopian education, and suggested a Conceptual Model of Indigenization for Consequential Education in Ethiopia. In their pyramid model, the indigenization and cultural integration process moves from top to bottom – from Eurocentrism towards Afro/Ethiocentrism. The six stages of the model are, initiation, assimilation, replication, realization, indigenization and integration. The Conceptual Model of Indigenization consists of four parts or stages: a) Identifying key constructs; b) Afro/Ethiocentric qualitative research; c) the creation of local theories and a knowledge base; and d) consequential education. The study came up with a comprehensive definition of indigenization. It identifies *indigenization* as a process not limited to indigenous concepts and practices, rather a positive movement towards integration that extends to encompass modern theories, knowledge and methodologies that are used all over the world.

The above study proposed three important recommendations that could contribute to establishing consequential education in Ethiopia. Firstly, they called for the establishment of a local centre for indigenous research which specializes in descriptive studies of cultural concepts and cultural constructs, so as to develop Ethiocentric theories which can be incorporated into education. Secondly, they suggested a refresher pedagogical training for teachers to bring about a shift to Afro/Ethiocentrism from the Eurocentric education system in which they were brought up. Finally, they made a call to other researchers to use the findings of their research as a stepping stone to indigenize knowledge on a broader scale, by including more variables and validating their conceptual model further.

### ***3.16 CONCLUSION***

Relevant education and a relevant and functional curriculum, which are rooted in and responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of a society they are intended to serve, have the power of modernizing a society by renovating the culture and inculcating its cultural values in its offspring, whereby ultimately leading to the development of the society.

The colonial and post-colonial education system and curricula which Africa inherited and borrowed from external forces can only be characterized as “non-indigenized” and “Eurocentric”, which is irrelevant and non-responsive to the local context. The colonial and post-colonial legacy, in turn, led the education system into perpetual crisis.

A number of curricular reform projects have been implemented in Africa since the 1960s, which, unfortunately, delivered no tangible results, due to their major inherent structural defects. They focused on adding African contents to the structures of the borrowed curricula, keeping the transmission of Western cultural influences embedded in the foundations intact. This made the curricular material irrelevant and unrelated to the students’ culture and philosophy.

The failure of the curricula reforms compelled researchers to seek an alternative approach to curriculum development and study. The new alternative approach is known as the *indigenization* approach. In the field of social work most researchers unanimously use the term *indigenization* to refer to the irrelevance of Western social work to non-Western contexts. The indigenization approach, which began in the form of a process of modifying a transplanted Western model so as to make it relevant to the importing country's political and socio-cultural context, has now been transformed into authentization or the *cultural validation* approach, which seeks the authentic roots in the local system to construct a domestic model in the light of the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics and needs of a particular country.

Multicultural education and a cultural-relevant pedagogy have principles and dimensions which have a direct bearing on the indigenization approach. Language is a vital component for incorporating indigenous knowledge and culture into the school curriculum. Unfortunately, the language of instruction in African schools at the moment lacks Africanness and an African rationality, alienates students from their local communities, disrupts the teaching and learning process, and hampers students' cognitive development and learning outcomes. Therefore, the indigenization approach in curriculum studies and development would not materialize in the absence of indigenous language revitalization and incorporation in the education system and the curricula.

In Ethiopia the indigenization approach, known as *Ethiopianising*, has been introduced during the 1940s. The approach advocated changing the medium of instruction and the textbook language, and the involvement of the Ethiopian personnel in the process of curriculum development and implementation. The Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level had been considered as an affirmation of the assimilation policy which was publicly opposed by the subjugated ethnic groups. After the coming to power of EPRDF in 1991, indigenization from the ethnic group's perspective has emerged, whereby each ethnic group is allowed to follow its path of preserving its own

culture, language and identity. A notable initiative at transforming the indigenous knowledge system was taken by the Oromo ethnic group through its famous Civil Society Organization, called Hundee. The organization prepared a development model for the Oromo ethnic group by blending the Oromo traditional and Western development models.

However, like all approaches attempted in the Third World, the indigenization approach is not free from criticism. Some of the criticisms levelled against the approach are valid ones, which are admitted even by the proponents of the approach. Some criticisms are mere allegations of the approach by its opponents, so as to defend the dominant and mainstream approaches.

This study suggests an alternative approach at indigenization which calls for the preparation of the curriculum grounding on indigenous foundations and theories, principles and ideas derived from the culture. The approach falls within the authentication or cultural validation approach, which seeks the authentic roots in the local system to construct a domestic model in the light of the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics and needs of a particular country. The approach is a prerequisite for an intercultural dialogue between curriculum studies and developments in different contexts.

This approach of indigenising the curriculum was to face many obstacles like its predecessors which had been initiated in the Third World nations. However, through determination and deep commitment of all the stakeholders in curriculum development and studies, the obstacles will be overcome and the approach will be enriched to serve the purpose of educational relevance for the subjugated groups.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### ***4.1 INTRODUCTION***

This chapter is devoted to the research design and methodology employed in this study. The study is situated in the critical theory paradigmatic position. It employed a qualitative case study design. Different sampling techniques were used in order to select the study sites and the participants. Three types of data sources, namely documents, interviews and direct observations were used. In order to facilitate the smooth flow of the research activity the study followed a coherent procedure for data collection. Being a study with units embedded within each case, an embedded analysis was used. A within-case analysis was conducted first, followed by a cross-case analysis. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data, case study protocol, a database of the case studies, and a pilot case study were employed, whilst a chain of evidence was maintained. To protect the participants in the study from any possible harm related to their participation in the research, the ethical protocol was considered, and an ethical guideline was prepared and strictly adhered to.

In the first section of this chapter the selection, justification for selection and characteristics of the research paradigm are highlighted. The second section is devoted to the research approach employed in this study. The third section focuses on the research design which served as a plan to guide the process of connecting the empirical data to the research questions. The fourth section deals with the techniques employed to select the study sites and the participants. The fifth section highlights the sources of data and the instruments used for gathering the data. The sixth and seventh sections focus on the pilot study and procedures for data gathering followed in the study respectively. In section eight the main focus is on the principles followed to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of the data. The ninth section deals with the strategy used

to analyse the data, and the ethical principles that served as guidelines for the study. In the last section a brief conclusion of the issues addressed in this chapter will be presented.

## ***4.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM***

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), there are four paradigmatic positions of research, known as positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. All the paradigms have their own ontological, epistemological and methodological bases, although some of them share axiomatic elements that are similar. This study is situated within the critical theory paradigm. The reason for the choice of this paradigm is that approaches to curriculum construction and change as contextualized social process, i.e. curricula in context, are located within a critical paradigm (Cornbleth, 1990). This study raises issues of curriculum relevance within a set Ethiopian educational context, which justifies the choice of a critical paradigm. In addition, the practical paradigm which helps to extract the best indigenous thought and practice and thereby deter the current challenges in African education is an African-centred critical theory (Itibari, 2006). Kincheloe (2006a) also affirms that the notions of multiple perspectives known as multi-logicality and episto-diversity, which are required to buttress the attempt to counter the ethnocentrism of positivism, must always be critically grounded. Therefore, this study which is poised to come up with a model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group is grounded on critical theory. The model, which emanates from the study, will provide a solution to the problem of curricular relevance to the Gamo people by countering the mainstream and standardized curricula which are either directly borrowed from the West, or drawn on the dominant and mainstream local Amhara culture.

The concept of *difference* is central to a critical ontology and epistemology (Kincheloe, 2006a; Kincheloe, 2006b). According to the ontology of critical theory, virtual reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; and is crystallized over time (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, curriculum study and development

in the Gamo ethnic group is shaped by the structural and socio-cultural context of the group.

One task of epistemology is to provide theories of the nature of knowledge, of its genesis and its justification of favouring the knowledge. Different epistemologies promote different forms of knowledge along with different methodologies and ways of knowing (Kincheloe, 2003). In critical epistemology, the investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of situated “others”) inevitably influencing the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To this end, this researcher is linked to the ethnic group under study, and the values that both he and the ethnic group members hold have an influence on this study.

The dialogic or dialectical methodology of critical theory helps in the reconstruction of previously held constructions. Critical theorists believe that knowledge grows and changes through a dialectical process of historical revision, which continuously erodes ignorance and misapprehensions, and enlarges more informed insights (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, previously held discourses on developing relevant curricula for the ethnic group are critically analysed and deconstructed so as to come up with a counter-hegemonic discourse.

Critical theorists have expressed the hope that research which understands and addresses unequal relations of power could lead to emancipation and social justice for the oppressed groups (Smith, 2005). The Gamo ethnic group, as one of the oppressed groups in Ethiopia, can achieve emancipation and social justice if the imposition of the dominant group’s values and cultures through curricula are properly studied and addressed practically by using the findings of the study in curriculum development.

In the next section the research approach suitable for the study will be presented.

### ***4.3 THE RESEARCH APPROACH***

The course of social science research is dictated by the problem under investigation, but not by the methodology. Thus, good research makes use of the methodology which best helps to answer the research questions (Flyvbjerg, 2006; 2011).

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the value-laden nature of inquiry, the intimate relationship between the researchers and the researched, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In addition, a critical and social justice approach to qualitative research is known for opening up the academic space for much of the early work of indigenous research (Smith, 2005). This study, which was prepared to critically analyse the indigenization of curriculum policy and practice in Ethiopia by taking one ethnic group as a case, followed a qualitative research approach. The researcher investigated the problem from the perspective of the Gamo ethnic group, and opened up a scholarly space for the earlier works of indigenous scholars.

Cornbleth (1990) makes a call for critical curriculum studies to move beyond document analysis and design to the examination of practice in context and contextualized approaches to curriculum change. Therefore, this study used the qualitative approach, which enabled a critical examination of the indigenization approach being carried out in policy formulation and curriculum development within a Ethiopian socio-cultural context, with particular emphasis on one ethnic group, namely the Gamo ethnic group.

The following section deals with the research design employed in this study.

### ***4.4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN***

Yin (2009) indicates that all types of empirical research have a research design, which serves as a plan that guides the researcher to connect the empirical data to the study's

research questions, and eventually, to answering the questions that were set. He mentions that case study is the best method of inquiry when an investigator deals with a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clear. Thus, indigenizing the basic education curricula from the ethnic group's perspective is a contemporary phenomenon in the socio-cultural context of Ethiopia, and the best design for studying it, is case study.

The other rationale for using the case study design is the fact that whenever there is a research question which needs deeper insight, the appropriate method of inquiry is a case study (Stake, 1995). Therefore, it was the researcher's conviction that he would gain a deeper insight into the indigenization of the basic education curricula by making a detailed examination of the case of the Gamo ethnic group in rural and urban settings by using a case study design.

The kind of research questions dictate the research design to be used. Yin (2009) argues that a qualitative case study is a preferred design whenever a researcher has the minimum control over the events, and when the focus is on process rather than on outcome. This study, which focuses on the process of curriculum development may be studied using a case study design. A multiple case study design was used because of the fact that looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases strengthens the precision, validity and stability of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Figure 4.1 below depicts the design of the study.

As shown in the Figure 4.1, first a conceptual model of indigenizing the curricula, which underpins the study, was developed. Then the different cases involved were determined, and the data collection protocol was prepared. In the third place, the data gathered from the three separate cases were analysed separately, and the within-case report was prepared. Fourthly, analyses across the three cases were made and the original conceptual model of indigenizing the curricula was thus modified, and

implications for the revision of policy were developed. Finally, the cross-case report was prepared and presented.

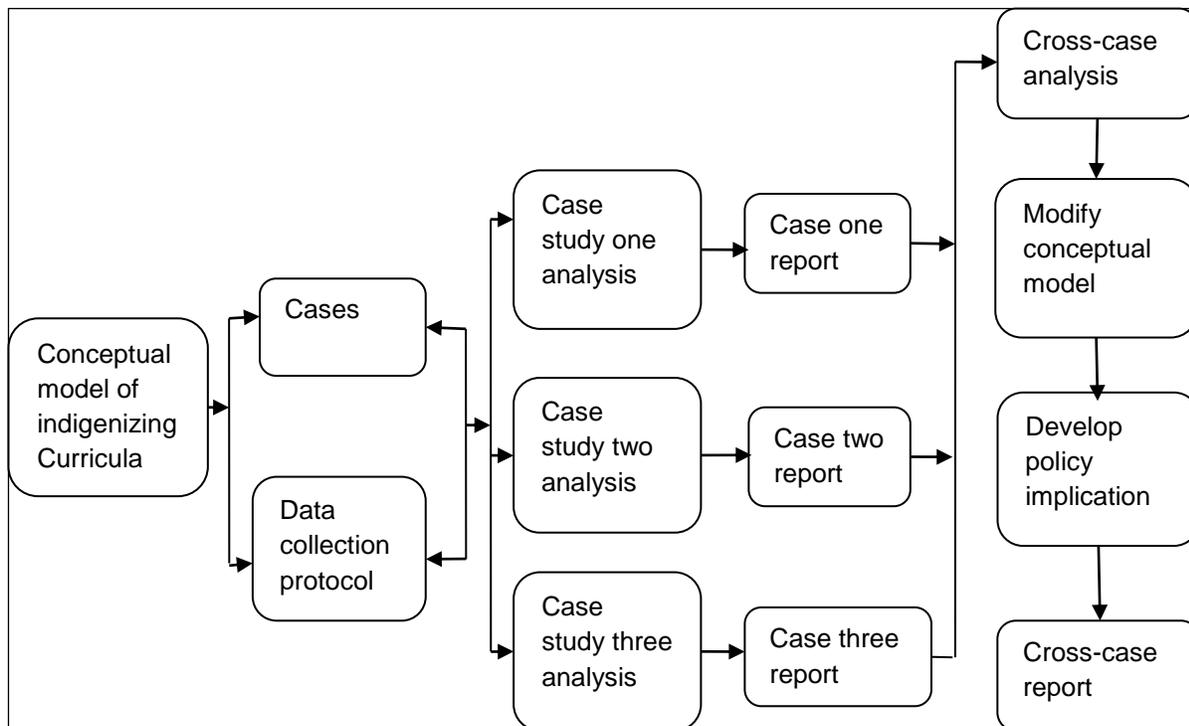


Figure 4.1: Design for the empirical research (adapted from Yin, 2009: 57).

The next section deals with the techniques employed to select the study cases and the participants.

#### ***4.5 THE SELECTION OF THE STUDY CASES AND THE PARTICIPANTS***

A case study is not an example of sampling research, but may be useful in selecting cases which are typical or representative of other cases (Stake, 1995). This study involved three separate cases that indicated the different perspectives on the problem, process, or event that the researcher intended to portray. Policy and implementation strategy documents that guide the development of the basic education curriculum were organized centrally by the federal government. These documents were critically analysed as a separate case (Case 1). The responsibility of developing and

implementing the basic education curricula hinges on the Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* Education bureaus. Therefore, in order to critically analyse the indigenization of the basic education curricula development and implementation process from the Gamo ethnic group's perspective, two cases were selected, i.e. Case 2, a school in Gamo Gofa Zone from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Case 3, a school in Gulele sub-city where a large Gamo community resides. These cases were selected using purposeful maximal sampling (Creswell, 2009) because the researcher descends from the ethnic group under study and speaks the language fluently. The language of the ethnic group is being used as medium of instruction at primary school level in the Gamo Gofa Zone. This gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the school activities and interactions between the students and the teachers. He could also review the relevant documents without any barrier. Whenever necessary he conducted interviews using the vernacular language.

More than eighty ethnic groups were listed in the 2007 census in Ethiopia. Of these, only ten have a population of one million or more. Gamo is the tenth of these ethnic groups with a total population of 1 107 163, and accounts for 1.5% of the total population of Ethiopia (CSA, 2008). This study aimed to critically analyse the indigenization of the basic education curricula in the Gamo ethnic group, both in an urban and a rural setting. The case in the Gamo Gofa administrative zone was investigated in the rural setting, whilst the case in the Addis Ababa city administration was investigated in an urban setting.

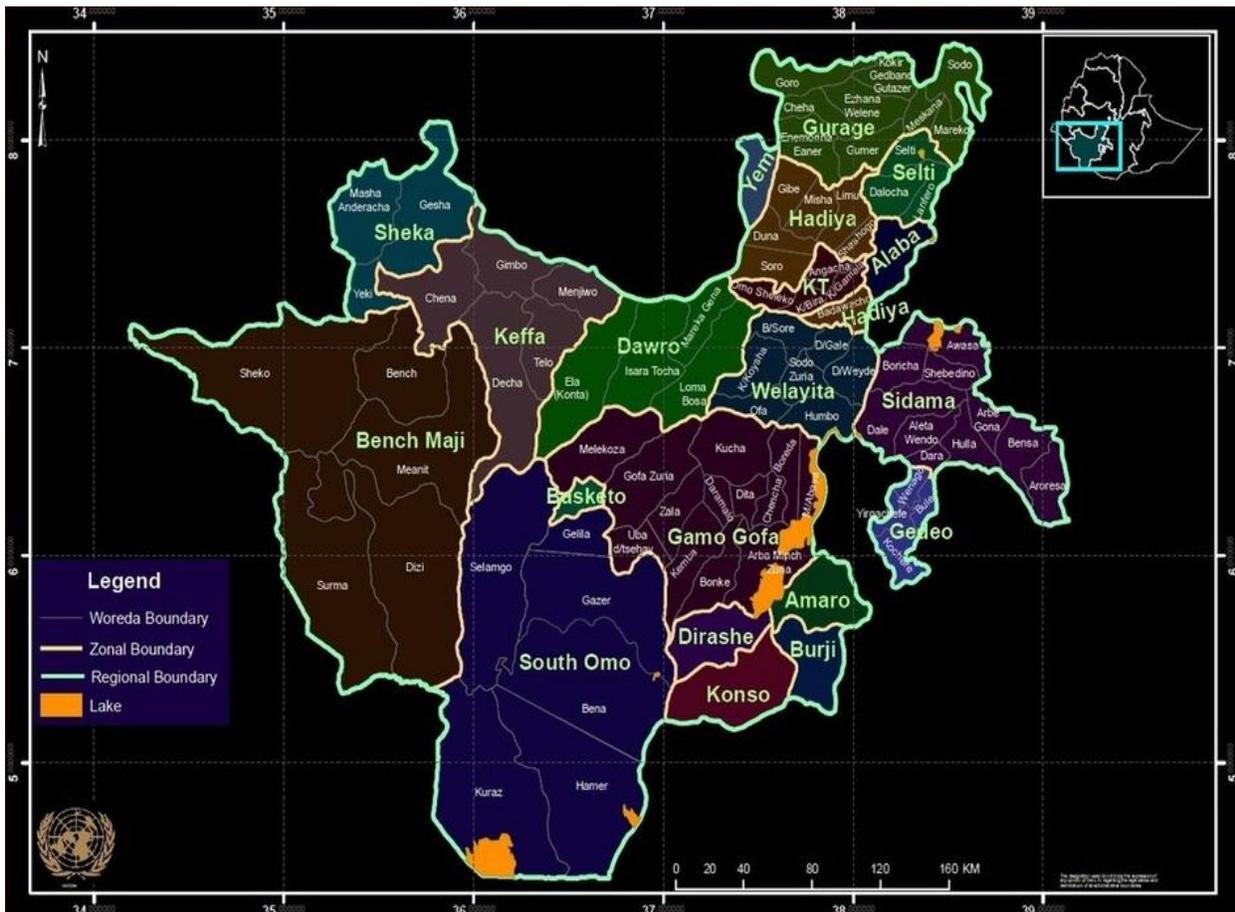
Addis Ababa, which is the capital city of Ethiopia, houses different ethnic groups. The Gamo ethnic group, unlike the rest of the ethnic groups, is settled in clusters in different sub-cities. This gives the ethnic group the relative advantage of retaining its cultural traits in the urban setting. It is common to see the Gamo culture intact in its people in the city. All the people who did not complete the school system speak the ethnic group's language, and practice cultural activities such as conducting a mourning ceremony for burying the dead in the city, the same as in the rural setting in the Gamo Gofa

administrative zone. In addition, the local self-help association, known as the *edir* of the Gamo community in the city, draws only members from the same ethnic group.

The curriculum experts at the Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* Education Bureaus of the two cases (Cases 2 and 3) were selected by means of snowball sampling. This helped to identify those who took part in the development of the basic education curriculum for the SNNPR, a region where the Gamo Gofa Zone is situated, and Addis Ababa City Administration. The group of curriculum experts comprises a total of six experts, three from each case, who will provide information on the application of the indigenization approach in the processes of curriculum planning.

Two schools each from the two settings (Cases 2 and 3), were selected, using purposeful sampling. A school which is considered to be successful at implementing the indigenization approach, was selected from the Gamo Gofa Zone with the help of the Zonal and *Woreda* Education bureau personnel. A school which houses a large number of students from the Gamo community in Addis Ababa was selected with the help of the personnel of the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau. School teachers, principals and parents of students of the selected schools were used as sources of information to study the implementation process of the basic education curriculum. The selection of the school performing best in implementing the indigenization approach served as a strong source of empirical data for the reconceptualization of the strategies in the education policy into a model suited for indigenizing the basic education curriculum of the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools. The school teachers and principals were selected purposefully in order to gather the information on the curriculum implementation process. Three teachers and two principals were selected for interviews in each case. The students' parents were selected, using the snowball sampling technique. First the researcher reached out to one parent, and thereafter identified the next parent with the help of the first parent, and the third parent with the help of the second parent, and so on. Three parents were interviewed from each case making six the total number of parents being interviewed.

In this study, students were not involved directly because the study is restricted on the first cycle of primary education. The children who enrolled in the first level of primary education in Ethiopia are aged from 6 to 9 years and it was not ideal and feasible to interview the children and get reliable and relevant data because of their level of mental development. However, information about students was obtained indirectly by means of observation of the school and classroom activities and interviews with their parents and teachers.



Map showing administrative Zones within the SNNPR region of Ethiopia

SOURCE: <http://www.actiononpodo.com/about-us.html>

The next section highlights the sources of data and the instruments used for data-collection.

#### ***4.6 SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND INSTRUMENTS OF DATA-COLLECTION***

The data in this study were collected from multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual material. Yin (2009) indicates six sources of data, namely documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artefacts. From the six forms of information sources suggested by Yin, this study made use of three, namely documents, semi-structured interviews and direct observations. To this end, the study used three types of instruments to collect the data. They are interview guides, document review guides, and observation checklists and fieldnotes for recording observations (see Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F).

Policy documents were critically analysed to identify the conceptualization of indigenization advocated by the country's policy provisions using the document review guide (see Appendix A). The documents included the Federal and Regional constitutions, education and cultural policies, implementation strategy documents, and documents obtained from study sites. Interview guides, which comprised semi-structured questions derived from the research questions (see Appendices B, C, and D), were prepared. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with curriculum experts at Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* education bureaus, teachers, principals, and the students' parents to elicit information on the application of the indigenization approach in the processes of curriculum planning and implementation. Direct observations were made with the help of the observation checklist and fieldnotes (see Appendix E) in order to identify how the interactions between the teachers and the students, and among the students themselves, signified alignment with the local culture.

In the next section the significance and strategy for piloting the study is discussed in detail.

#### ***4.7 THE PILOT STUDY***

A pilot case study helps to refine the research design, the data-gathering plans and the fieldwork procedures. A pilot case study can be done, using the criteria of convenience, access and geographic proximity. The pilot case report needs to be written in the form of a memorandum which elaborates on the lessons learned about the research design, the data-gathering plans and fieldwork procedures (Yin, 2009).

Before directly applying the research design data, the gathering plans and the procedures of the study in the actual cases selected for the study, pilot testing was conducted in Addis Ababa City Administration and Gamo Gofa Zone, in order to check their utility and to make the necessary adjustments.

The pilot test was conducted on 27 to 31 May 2013. First the researcher conducted the pilot test in Addis Ababa City Administration, and then in Gamo Gofa Zone. One curriculum expert, one teacher, one director and one parent from each setting were involved in the pilot test procedure. The tool for observation and document review had been piloted. The pilot test revealed that the research design, the data-gathering plan, and the procedure of the study were viable. However, some of the concepts in the interview schedule were found to be difficult for the participants. As a result, the researcher decided to explain the difficult concepts immediately after the signing of the consent form by the participants, and before the commencement of the actual interview. The data-gathering plan also faced a problem of postponement, due to the fact that the time collided with the end of the academic year. As a result, some readjustments had to be made in consultation with the supervisor before gathering the actual data.

The researcher planned to secure ethical clearance from the College of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa. During the pilot test he realised that if he waited until he could secure the ethical clearance, schools would be closed for the long rainy season vacation (more than two months). The effect of this would cause a delay in his data-collection, and a consequential delay of the study.

Thus, the collision of the time of data-gathering with the time of school closure for the vacation hampered his effort to seek ethical clearance from the College of Education Research Ethics Committee. In order to compensate for that, a letter of consent was secured from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education before the commencement of data-gathering (see Appendix G and H). The letter confirmed the fact that the research was free from ethical dilemmas and that it had high national significance. In addition, the researcher conducted data collection by strictly abiding by the data collection protocol in order to compensate the non-securing of ethical clearance.

The following section deals with the procedures of data-gathering in the study.

#### ***4.8 THE PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY***

Yin (2009) contends that a multiple case study design uses the logic of replication where the investigator replicates the procedures for each case. The case of indigenization at policy level was studied separately, while the procedures for the second and third cases were the same, because both cases focused on studying the indigenization process in curriculum planning and implementation in two different settings, that is, Gamo Gofa and Addis Ababa. Finally, the three cases, i.e. the case of educational policy formulation, and the cases of curriculum planning and implementation in the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration were analysed collectively by means of cross-case analysis.

In order to facilitate the smooth flow of the research activity, this study followed a coherent procedure for data-collection. First a review of the literature was done to develop the conceptual model for indigenizing the basic education curriculum and the case study protocol, which served as a guide for the collection of the data and case reporting. As Yin (2009) states, case study protocol comprises an overview of the case study project, the fieldwork procedures, the case study questions, and a guide for the case study report.

The collection of the data was done between 6 to 21 June 2013, and 24 June 2013 to 12 July 2013 in the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration respectively. Data should be gathered in a systematic manner that is appropriate and facilitative for analysis. Data-recording strategies should fit the setting and the participants' sensitivities (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). To ensure that this prescription was adhered to, a digital sound recorder was used to record the interview data to facilitate its translation and transcription. A digital camera was also used to take pictures to help in storing important events and documents.

All the interviews were conducted face-to-face with all the participants in a convenient place chosen by them, namely in the director's office, the staff room, under a tree, or in the homes of the parents. As mentioned above, the interview data were recorded, using a sound recorder, and were stored on a computer, using the sound organizer software. The stored information was translated and transcribed simultaneously, and the data were displayed in a Word document, in order to facilitate smooth merger and analysis.

The researcher conducted the document analysis on the school premises. Documents such as mark lists, name lists, inter-office memos, announcements, teaching notes, and text books were analysed using the format prepared for this purpose. The researcher was interested in the language of the documents, and their reflection of the culture and values of the Gamo ethnic group.

The researcher started making observations immediately after securing the consent of the principals of the respective schools, by using the observation checklist and notebooks. The most important aspects that were observed included the student-teacher and student-teaching staff interaction inside and outside the classroom, the students' playing, and the communication among them, and the values being communicated through the formal and hidden curricula.

In the next section the researcher highlights the principles that were followed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

#### ***4.9 ENSURING THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA***

The quality of any empirical research can be judged according to its trustworthiness, credibility, conformability, and data dependability (Yin, 2009).

In case study research, especially with multiple case studies, the trustworthiness of the data can be ensured by the principles which envisage the use of case study protocol, by developing the case study database comprising interview recordings and transcriptions and by maintaining a chain of evidence. Case study protocol contains the instruments, data-gathering procedures and the general rules to be followed in using the protocol. Every case study project should strive to develop a formal and presentable case study database so that other investigators can review the evidence directly and not be limited to the case study reports. The principle of maintaining a chain of evidence allows an external observer or the reader of the research to follow the derivation of any evidence, ranging from initial research questions to ultimate conclusions (Yin, 2009). According to Soy (1997), *trustworthiness* in empirical study denotes the stability, accuracy, and precision of the measurement of the data-gathering techniques and instruments. This study used case study protocol (see Appendix I) which contained the instruments, data-gathering procedures and general rules followed in using the protocol and a case study database – which comprised notes, documents, tabular materials and narratives. To increase the reliability of information in the study, the principle of maintaining a chain of evidence was also applied. In addition, the study used all the data-gathering instruments, data-gathering procedures and general rules stipulated in the research protocol with consistency, accuracy and precision. The pilot study report was also presented to strengthen the integrity and trustworthiness of the study.

The next section deals with the analysis strategy used, and the ethical principles that served as guidelines for the study.

## **4.10 DATA-MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.10.1 Analysis strategy**

The main unit of analysis is likely to be at the level being addressed by the main study questions (Yin, 2009). The identified and explained cases above were studied by critically analysing how the indigenization approach is applied in the adopted constitutions, educational and cultural policies and implementation of educational strategy. Curriculum development and implementation had sub-units embedded in them, here referred to as *units of analysis* – policy adoption, curriculum planning, and curriculum implementation.

In a case study, be it a single or multiple study, the data can be analysed using either of the two types of analyses, known as a *holistic* analysis of the entire case or an *embedded* analysis of a specific aspect of the case (Yin, 2009). This study had embedded units within each case, which rendered it best for an embedded analysis.

A typical analysis strategy which is appropriate in a multiple case study, is first to conduct *within-case* analysis, followed by a *cross-case* analysis. In the end, assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the case study are conducted (Yin, 2009). Cross-case analysis is often conducted in order to enhance generalizability, and to deepen understanding and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interactive model, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) for qualitative data analysis, was used in order to avoid a confused merger of data, which consequently leads to insufficient analysis. In order to facilitate the cross-case analysis, a technique of placing the evidences in a matrix of categories was also used for Cases 2 and 3. A cross-case matrix display was developed for each of the critical issues underlying the research questions set. A cross-case matrix is a table which helps in categorizing the evidences from different cases in order to facilitate a cross-case analysis (see Appendix J for the cross-case matrix). The evidences from Cases 2 and 3 were displayed in the matrix and similarities and differences between the two cases were analysed along with literature reviewed.

*Data-interpretation* refers to developing ideas about findings and relating them to the literature and to broader concerns and concepts of the study. *Interpretation* involves explaining and framing ideas in relation to theory, other scholarship literature and action, as well as showing why the findings are important and making them understandable (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Therefore, the gathered data were interpreted in the light of the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework drawn. Figure 4.2 shows the analysis model employed in the study.

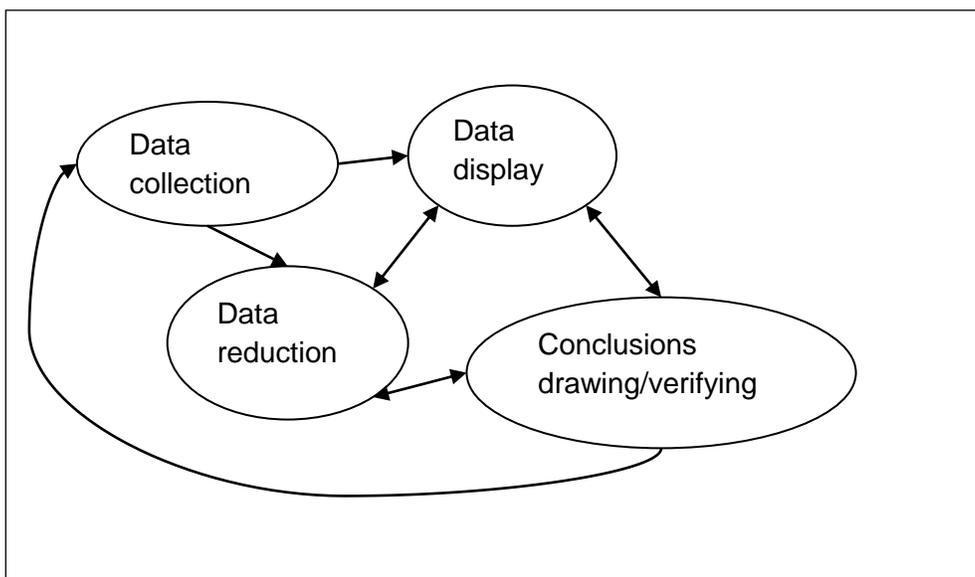


Figure 4.2: Interactive model of data analysis (adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994).

#### ***4.10.2 The ethical considerations of the research***

Ethics in research denotes the principles of right and wrong that a particular group accepts. Most academic specialties and professions have codes of ethics that indicate these rules. Currently two issues dominate the guidelines for ethics in research pertinent to human subjects. These are informed consent and the protection of the subjects from harm (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Yin (2009:73) also suggests the ways that a researcher who conducts a case study should follow in order to protect h the subjects.

The care of the researcher usually involves

- gaining informed consent from all the persons who may be part of the research study - in this study the participants were made to sign a form indicating their informed consent;
- protecting those who participate in the study from any harm - in this study the participants were made anonymous;
- protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in the study - in this study special codes were used instead of the names of the participants; and
- taking special precautions that might be needed to protect especially vulnerable groups- in this study teachers, the most vulnerable civil servants in our society, were asked to sign the consent form using codes instead of their actual names.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007:49-50) came up with general principles by which the majority of researchers abide in their research. They termed the principles *ethical approaches to fieldwork*. These are, namely

- avoiding research sites where the informants may feel coerced to participate in the research - places convenient for the participants were used;
- honouring the privacy of the participants - the participants were interviewed individually where there was no one else around;
- considering the difference in participants' time commitment to the study - the time duration of the interviews with the participants was made different;
- respecting the anonymity of the participants;
- treating the informants with respect - the participants were treated as equals the researcher;
- negotiating the terms of the agreement for permission for conducting the study and abiding by that contract - the directors/heads of the participant institutions were allowed to negotiate the contents of the consent form. The head of one

institution was allowed to revise the contents up on his request before signing on the consent form.

- reporting the truth in respect of the findings- the researcher took the utmost care. He prepared a data base for the interview recordings and their corresponding translations and transcriptions, so as to allow for checking these materials to determine that his reporting was truthful.

One of the most important ethical principles, the principle of informed consent, is based on the right of the individual to understand the project, and to give his or her consent in participating in the research. In order to make the relationship between the researcher and the researched concrete, individuals who participate in the research must sign a consent form (Smith, 2005). In this study the participants were made to sign the consent form (see Appendices K, L, M, and N) to affirm the principle of informed consent.

In order to ensure the ethical principle of the anonymity of the individuals who participated in the research, simple codes were used. The codes were prepared by merging letters and numbers. The representations of the designated codes are as follows:

- C1: The case of the Gamo Gofa Zone
- C2: The case of the Addis Ababa City Administration
- T1: Teacher interviewee number one
- T2: Teacher interviewee number two
- T3: Teacher interviewee number three
- D1: Director interviewee number one
- D2: Director interviewee number two
- E1: Curriculum expert interviewee number one
- E2: Curriculum expert interviewee number two
- E3: Curriculum expert interviewee number three
- P1: Parent interviewee number one

- P2: Parent interviewee number two
- P3: Parent interviewee number three
- C1T1: Teacher interviewee number one from the Gamo Gofa Zone
- C2T1: Teacher interviewee number one from the Addis Ababa City Administration

#### ***4.11 CONCLUSION***

The paradigm this study is situated in is critical theory. It employed a qualitative case study research approach and design. A diagram had been prepared depicting the research design by adapting from the design suggested by Yin (2009) so as to guide the process of the research work.

In order to select the cases and the participants of the study different sampling techniques were employed. The three cases were selected using purposeful maximal sampling. The first case represented the policy documents that underpin the curriculum development process in Ethiopia. These include the Constitution of the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy, and the 2002 Implementation Strategy Document of the Education Policy. The second and third cases included the Regional State, Zone, *Woreda* and one school where the planning and implementation of the curriculum are done. Case 2 included the Southern Nations, Nationalities and the People's Region, the Gamo Gofa Zone, Chenchu *Woreda* and Chefe Primary School. Case 3 included the Addis Ababa City Administration, the Gulele sub-city, *Woreda* 1 and Addis Zemen Primary School. Curriculum experts from the Regions and Zones and students' parents from the *Woreda* were selected by means of snowball sampling. The teachers and principals from the schools were selected, using purposeful sampling.

The sources of data in case study research are typically extensive and depend on multiple sources of information. In this study three types of data-gathering instruments were used, namely documents, interviews, and direct observations. The Constitutions

and Policy Documents were critically analysed to identify the conceptualization of indigenization advocated by the country's policy provisions. Interviews were conducted with curriculum experts, teachers, principals and the students' parents to elicit information on the application of the indigenization approach in curriculum planning and implementation. Observations were made to investigate the interaction between teachers and students, and among the students themselves, and in what manner it signifies alignment with the local culture.

In order to facilitate the smooth flow of the research activity the study followed coherent procedure for the collection of the data, which was applied strictly in each study case. Before directly applying the instruments and procedures of the study, a pilot test was done to check the utility of the procedures and the instruments, and to make adjustments wherever necessary.

Being a study which had embedded units within each case, an embedded analysis was used. First within-case analysis was conducted, followed by a cross-case analysis across the cases. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data a case study protocol, case study database, maintaining a chain of evidence and pilot study were employed. To protect the participants in the study from any harm related to their participation in the research ethical consideration was made and ethical guidelines were drawn and strictly adhered to. The convergence of the time for the gathering of the data with the time of the school's closure for the longest vacation hampered the researcher's effort to seek ethical clearance from the College of Education Research Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa. In order to compensate for that, a letter of consent was secured from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education before the commencement of the gathering of the data, giving confirmation that the research was free from any ethical dilemmas.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE PRESENTATION OF THE DATA AND THE WITHIN-CASE ANALYSES**

#### ***5.1 INTRODUCTION***

In this chapter the separate and independent within-case analysis for each case will be presented. First the information in the Federal and Regional Constitutions and important policy documents is presented, along with the within-case analysis. Here the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the 2001 Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the 2002 Implementation Strategy Document of the Education Policy will be critically analysed. The provisions of the Policies with regard to the indigenization approach will be sorted out first and critically analysed in the light of the research questions set and the theoretical and conceptual framework prepared to illuminate and underpin the study.

In the second place the data on curriculum planning and implementation on the Second Case, that is, the curriculum planning process by the curriculum experts at the Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, starting from the Regional to Zonal and Wereda level, and the curriculum-implementation process, taking one school as a case, is presented along with the within-case analysis of the separate case.

Finally, the data on curriculum planning and implementation on the Third Case, that is, the curriculum-planning process by the curriculum experts at the Addis Ababa City Administration, starting from the Regional to Zonal and Wereda level, and the curriculum-implementation process, taking one school as a case, is presented along with the within-case analysis of the separate case. Up on completion the presentation of the data of each separate case, and the within-case analysis therein; pave the way for

the cross-case analysis across all the cases to be undertaken. The meaning of local terms used in the chapter is provided in the glossary to the terms.

## ***5.2 IMPORTANT CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY PROVISIONS***

This section critically examines the Constitutional and Policy provisions which align with the approach of indigenizing the curricula. This is because of the fact that provisions which align with the approach of indigenizing the curricula are not found in one document only. They are dispersed in these different documents. The data obtained from the Constitutions and the important Policy documents, which signify the indigenization approach, are presented. The within-case critical analysis of the data is offered whereby the identified conceptualizations of the indigenization approach by the constitutional and policy documents is compared against the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Here the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the 2001 Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the 2002 Implementation Strategy Document of the Education Policy are critically analysed.

This section is organised in such a way that the provisions of the Federal and Regional Constitutions and the Education and Training, and the Cultural Policies and the Implementation Strategy Documents, with regard to the indigenization approach, are sorted out first. Then the data thus secured are critically analysed in the light of the theoretical and conceptual framework, and the research questions that were set. Finally, the implications for policy revision are highlighted in detail, with ample justification.

### ***5.2.1 The 1994 Education and Training Policy***

The 1994 Education and Training Policy was adopted by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia that succeeded the Derg regime. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia adopted the policy in order to address the complex educational problems that entangled

the country's education system, and to chart the right direction of development for the country by breaking the vicious circle of the complex problems.

The Policy firstly acknowledges the lack of relevance of the country's education system, besides the other deficiencies. This is stated in the introductory part of the policy document as follows:

To date, it is known that our country's education is entangled with complex problems of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity. The objectives of education do not take cognizance of the society's needs and do not adequately indicate future direction (TGE, 1994: 2).

The Education and Training Policy gives cognizance to the importance of relevant and appropriate education, and clearly states, in one of its Specific Objectives the country's commitment to promote relevant and appropriate education (Article 2.2.1). Though the Policy does not mention the concepts *indigenization* or *indigenous knowledge* overtly, it covertly refers to them. It indirectly shows its concern for indigenous knowledge and the indigenization approach in its various provisions/sections.

One of the salient provisions of the Education and Training Policy, which openly demonstrates the indigenization approach, is the golden opportunity accorded to the various nations and nationalities to use their languages as medium of instruction and textbook language in primary education and teacher training for kindergarten and primary education. The justification for the use of mother tongue is the realization of the pedagogical advantage to the child in learning in his/her mother tongue, and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages. This provision is stipulated in Article 3.5.1 and Article 3.5.3 of the policy.

In its bid to be fair and democratic, the Education and Training Policy gives special attention to the historically disadvantaged nationalities, with a view to increase their

participation and enrolment in education. This compensatory measure is clearly stipulated in Article 3.9.4 of the Education and Training Policy which reads,

Special financial assistance will be given to those who have been deprived of educational opportunities, and steps will be taken to raise the educational participation of the deprived regions.

The other area where the Education and Training Policy tried to show fairness and democracy is in educational management. The policy has vested the responsibility of the administration of primary and secondary schools, as well as of junior colleges in the hands of the regional states. It has also allowed parents or their representatives to play a prominent role in the administration of the schools.

In addition, in the introductory part of the Policy, the emphasis is placed on the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach. One of the aims of education envisaged in the Policy is to strengthen the culture, starting from basic education all through tertiary levels. Education is also seen as an enabler that can help man to identify harmful traditions, and replace them with useful ones. This provision is a noble one, and has provided wider room for fundamental change, both in the country's education in general, and in curriculum development in particular. It calls for the development of culture in the content, structure and approach of curriculum.

The Policy also calls for the development of the curriculum and the preparation of textbooks which are based on sound pedagogical and psychological principles, up to international standard, and gives due attention to concrete local conditions. From this provision it can be analysed that the indigenization approach the policy advocates is a blended approach which takes into consideration both concrete local conditions and international standards.

In Articles 2.2.8 and 3.6.7 the Policy views education as a supportive tool for developing traditional technology, and for utilizing modern technology. Traditional education will be improved and developed by being integrated with modern education. This is an important provision which grants due recognition to traditional knowledge and education. The Policy favours the blending of traditional knowledge and education with modern knowledge and education in the country's education system.

Though the Education and Training Policy has a number of salient provisions which support the indigenization approach, there are still provisions which are against indigenization. One of the major flaws of the Education and Training Policy is its ignorance of the development of local outlook in the students through education. Though the claim has been made that the present government gives cognizance to the ethnic groups' perspective, what is reflected in Article 2.2.14 of the Education and Training Policy is contrary to this reality. The country's education is geared towards producing citizens who possess a national and an international outlook on the environment, and who protect the natural resources and historical heritages of the country. This provision forgets the local outlook while focusing on the national and international outlook alone. In order to correct this contradiction, local perspectives have to be mainstreamed throughout the policy document. Students have to be enabled to develop a local outlook, which is the cornerstone for both the national and international outlooks.

Unfortunately, the Policy tries to uncritically accept all the cultures and values of the West in its call for maintaining international standards in the development of the curriculum and the preparation of textbooks. The standardization thesis propagated by the positivists is against the indigenization approach which falls within the heterogenization or diversity thesis. The standardizing approach is a system devised by the Western world to sustain its dominance and imposition on the marginalized and developing communities. Standardization is an antithesis to the indigenization

approach. Concrete local conditions cannot be properly treated in curriculum development and textbook preparation when the standardization thesis is applied.

### ***5.2.2 The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia***

The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was ratified by the Constitutional Assembly held on December 8, 1994. Members of the Constitutional Assembly were drawn from the elected representatives of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia.

The Constitution, in its preamble, expressed the conviction of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia that they have been living with their rich and proud cultural legacies in territories where they lived for a long period, and have forged common interests and a common outlook through their continuous interaction among themselves.

One of the remarkable provisions of the 1995 Constitution, which aligns with the approach of indigenization, is the provision accorded to the local languages, culture and history. In Article 5 Sub-article 1, all Ethiopian languages are accorded the entitlement of enjoying equal state recognition. In Article 39 Sub-article 2, every nation, nationality and all the people in Ethiopia are granted the right to write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history. This provision grants every nation, nationality and the people of Ethiopia equal opportunities to develop, promote and preserve their respective languages, cultures and histories, whereby there would be no dominant or subordinate groups. The provision also paves the way for the supremacy of social justice in the country.

Article 51 Sub-Article 3 of the FDRE Constitution gives the Federal Government the mandate to establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for education, as well as for the protection and preservation of cultural and historical legacies. The provision in Article 52 Sub-Article 2c confers powers on the Regional

States to formulate and execute economic, social and development policies, strategies and plans for their respective States. Therefore, this gives the Regional States the opportunity to formulate and execute an educational policy that aligns with their socio-cultural and structural context. In addition, the Regional States are expected to formulate and execute state policies, based on the national policy standards and criteria set by the Federal Government. The right which is conferred on the Regional States to formulate and execute regional policies has been systematically restricted by the national policy standards and criteria. Article 90 Sub-Article 2 of the FDRE Constitution assures the provision of education in a manner that is free from any religious influence, political partisanship or cultural prejudices.

The Federal Constitution, in Article 91 Sub-Article 1 and 2, also places a duty on the Federal Government to support, on the basis of equality, the growth and enrichment of cultures and traditions that are compatible with fundamental rights, human dignity, democratic norms and ideals, and the provisions of the Constitution. The Government and the citizens of Ethiopia have the duty to protect the country's natural endowment, historical sites, and objects.

Most of the constitutional provisions are noble, and openly favour the indigenization approach. Unfortunately, like the Education and Training Policy, the Federal Constitution tries to promote a standardization thesis in its provision, which gives the Federal Government the permission to implement national standards and basic policy criteria for education. This provision systematically restricts the right which is conferred on the Regional States to formulate and execute regional policies. By doing this, it paves the way for sustaining the dominance and imposition of some ethnic groups whose cultures are used to set the national standards on the marginalized and developing communities.

### ***5.2.3 The 1997 Cultural Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia***

The 1997 Cultural Policy was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the FDRE in October 1997, considering the necessity of putting into effect the constitutional rights of the people of Ethiopia that guarantee equal recognition and respect to the cultures of nations, nationalities and the people, as enshrined in Article 39/ Sub-Article 2 of the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Two of the objectives of the Cultural Policy are directed towards giving equal recognition, and promoting, preserving and passing on to the next generation, the culture and language of the different nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia. These are, namely the inclusion of cultural themes into the educational curricula, with the aim of integrating education with culture, and thereby to shape the youth with a sense of cultural identity; and the transmission of educational programs, reflecting the various cultures of the country by the mass media institutions, in order to promote the cultural knowledge of the people of Ethiopia.

The two objectives of the Cultural Policy are the following:

Objective 1. To enable the languages, heritage history, handicraft, fine arts, oral literature, traditional lore, beliefs and other cultural features of the various nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia to receive equal recognition and respect; to preserve and conserve these and to pass them on to future generations;

Objective 5. To promote the culture of the different nations, nationalities and people, and to develop these in harmony with modern education, science, and technology; and to create culture-conscious citizens who are proud of their culture and identity and are determined to preserve these.

One of the objectives of the Policy also provides an opportunity for intercultural dialogue on the basis of the equality of cultures for their mutual benefit. In such a way different

cultures may develop intercultural concepts for curriculum development and studies, which could be utilized by all the cultural groups. Unless and otherwise it is the concept of curriculum development and studies which is drawn either from the mainstream Western culture or the local dominant ethnic group which would dominate other cultural groups.

This provision would help in keeping internal cohesion in the country by allowing intercultural dialogue among the different cultures in the country, which are accorded equal recognition and respect and an equal opportunity for preservation and development. If implemented properly, it would provide an opportunity to the once marginalized cultural groups to develop their culture and language the same as the dominant cultural groups. By doing this it can promote mutual respect and social justice among the different cultural groups in the nation. The objective of the cultural policy that provides a room for intercultural dialogue is given below.

Objective 9: To establish cultural co-operation on national, continental and international levels on the basis of the equality of cultures and mutual benefit.

In section 9 of the General Strategies for the implementation of the Cultural Policy two strategies have been suggested with regard to the spreading of cultural knowledge. These are, the inclusion of cultural themes into the educational curricula with the aim of integrating education with culture, and thereby to shape the youth with a sense of cultural identity; and the transmission of educational programs reflecting the various cultures of the country by the mass media institutions, in order to promote the cultural knowledge of the people of Ethiopia. These strategies have a direct bearing on the education system and the curricula.

If there were integration on the activities of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of Ethiopia (MYSC), this strategy could have contributed much in the indigenization endeavour in Ethiopia.

The strategy of indigenization, indicated under Section 9.1 of the Cultural Policy, reflects the multicultural conceptualization of indigenization which emphasises adding contents/themes to the borrowed and inherited curricula. Although adding and integrating multicultural contents, concepts, themes, and perspectives is seen as a viable approach it could not result in fundamental change in the structure of curriculum.

#### ***5.2.4 The 2001 Revised Constitution of the SNNPR State***

The 2001 Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State was endorsed by the SNNPR State Council of Nationalities. Like the Federal Constitution, the Regional Constitution has a similar provision in Article 39 Sub-article 1, which grants every nation, nationality and the people in the Region equal opportunities to preserve their identities and have them respected; promote and preserve its heritage, artifact and history; and use and develop its own language and culture so that there would be no dominant and subordinate groups. It also paves the way for the reign of social justice in the region.

#### ***5.2.5 The 2002 Implementation Strategy Document of the Education Policy***

This Document begins by admitting the fact that the education system in general and the curricula in particular, of the regimes that preceded the present regime were borrowed or inherited either from the Western or Eastern world. As a result the curricula were designed without taking the concrete conditions of the country into account, and thus became non-responsive to the needs and problems of the country. This was explained in the following way:

The system was not designed with the concrete conditions of the country in mind. It was simply copied from the experiences of whichever country happened to be close to the government at any one given time. For instance, it could be America, England, East Germany...etc. Therefore, the curriculum was not structured to address the pressing needs and problems of Ethiopia (MOE, 2002:14).

The Implementation Strategy Document is one of the documents in the country which clearly spelled out the ethnic domination of the Amhara over the rest of the ethnic groups in the country during the previous regimes. The main evidence of this is the deliberate imposition of Amharic as the medium of instruction at primary education level throughout the country. The statement reads as follows:

At least in primary school, learning in the child's native language was totally ignored. Instead Amharic was deliberately imposed throughout the country as the official medium of instruction in all primary schools as a tool to deepen and broaden the pattern of ethnic domination. While this policy was undeniably harmful to the development of education, viewed from the vantage point of asserting the peoples' democratic rights, its antidemocratic nature was also glaringly obvious (MOE, 2002:13).

The Implementation Strategy Document also identified the content of education in the former regimes to be the area where ethnic domination was clearly evident. The content of the education of previous regimes glorified the attributes, contributions, customs, culture, and history of one group by downplaying the qualities and cultural attributes of other nationalities. This has been explained in the following way:

In general, every aspect of the content of the old education glorified the attributes, contributions, customs, culture, and history of one group .... Conversely it downplayed or altogether denied similar qualities and cultural attributes to other nationalities. In short, the system was one that did not accommodate the notion of gender or ethnic equality (MOE, 2002:13-14).

The Implementation Strategy also identified the anti-democratic nature of the educational content and administration during the former regimes. The administration of education was centrally directed, where the people had no role. A new approach was adopted which decentralized the organization of education and devolved responsibility to the various levels of the regional and local administrations. A strategy was set in place for the establishment of Boards and Committees, composed of the parents,

teachers, community members, and administration representatives, to direct the educational administration. The regional educational institutions were provided with the responsibility of designing a primary education curriculum that reflects the Region's specific needs and culture (MOE, 2002: 56-57).

The Implementation Strategy admits the lack of quality and relevance of the education system of the former regimes. Thus, the educational strategy made as one of its missions the removal of the fundamental obstacles that stood in the way of quality and relevant education. In order to accomplish this mission, the strategy focused on three components, namely the changing of the curriculum, sufficient provision of educational material and equipment, and the improvement of teachers' training in respect of quality and quantity (MOE, 2002:23).

In order to materialise the twin purposes of the democratization of educational content and the provision of quality and relevant educational services, the Strategy called for a changing of the curriculum. A new educational curriculum was developed whereby problems related to educational content were to be tackled. To this end, special attention was given to relate the content to the concrete conditions of the country. Based on this curricular principle, primary school textbooks were prepared, taking the realities of the specific region and the culture and achievements of the local populations into consideration (MOE, 2002:30). In addition, the contents of the curriculum were made to reflect the principle of respect for the identity of all nations, nationalities and people, in accordance with the principle of the equality of all citizens. This has helped to avoid the tacitly embedded messages of covert and overt chauvinist outlooks in the textbooks. Instead, the students were presented with textbooks that reflect the true realities and the values of the Ethiopian people, nations and nationalities, especially through subjects such as history and social sciences (MOE, 2002:33).

One of the indicators of quality education stated in the Implementation Strategy was education's connection with the society's cultural, economic, and political realities and

activities. Thus, *quality* is implicated in the students' learning in their mother tongue and in the enriching of their language, in the equitable distribution of educational services, and by the fact that the relatively poorer and backward areas are widely covered by such services (MOE, 2002: 71). In the light of critical theory, this is a good move that would ensure social justice and equal treatment, which are very crucial for maintaining social cohesion. A society where there are no dominant and marginalized groups is what the world needs today in order to ensure social justice and bring about durable peace.

The Implementation Strategy provides ample justifications for providing primary education by using the mother tongue as medium of instruction. In multi-lingual countries like Ethiopia, primary education can be equitably provided to their citizens by offering it in their respective mother tongues. According to the Strategy, some of the justifications for the use of mother tongue at primary school level, and even beyond, are as follows:

- a) Language is not only a medium of instruction for the people, but also an emblem of identity;
- b) learning in a mother tongue enables the student to understand lessons easily, and avoids problems associated with language barriers;
- c) using a language for instruction enables it to continue to be a living language and saves it from possible extinction;
- d) learning in one's own mother tongue reinforces identity and enables its users to be proud of their culture and identity;
- e) using the mother tongue makes the teaching and learning process interactive and efficient;
- f) learning in a mother tongue promotes equitable educational access to all citizens (MOE, 2002: 36).

Schools have been mandated with the responsibility of passing on to each new generation the values and thoughts of the society. If they fail in this task, they will end up in inculcating in the new generation values which clash with the social realities, and are useless to the society. Hence, schools are said to have fulfilled their central and chief mission only when they succeed in transmitting to the growing generation the political, social, and economic values of the society, and thereby producing citizens

capable of playing a positive role in their community (MOE, 2002: 35). This clearly shows the place accorded to making education relevant to the socio-cultural and structural context of the children's community.

There exists a contradiction between the provisions of the 1995 Federal Constitution and what has been stated in the Implementation Strategy of the Education Policy concerning the privilege of the formulation of policy. The 1995 Federal Constitution gives the Federal Government the responsibility to formulate policy criteria and standards, which would serve as a guide for regional states whenever they formulate their respective regional policies. However, the Implementation Strategy of the Education Policy tasks the Federal Government with the responsibility of formulating a nation-wide policy. What actually happened on the ground aligns with what is stated in the Implementation Strategy of the Education Policy. The 1994 Education and Training Policy was adopted by the Federal Government to be applied as it is by all the Regional States. The Regional States had the prerogative of designing their Policy, using the 1994 Education and Training Policy as a criterion and standard. This prerogative was not used by the Regional States. Had they used this privilege they would have been able to devise a policy which is more responsive to their respective contexts.

### ***5.2.6 Conclusion***

The provisions which align with the approach of indigenizing the curricula are not found in a single document, but are dispersed in different constitutional and policy documents. The major documents that embrace the provisions which align with the approach of indigenizing the curricula and underpin the curriculum development in primary first-cycle level in the areas under investigation are the 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the 2001 Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the 2002 Implementation Strategy Document of the Education Policy.

A critical analysis of the documents revealed that there are notable provisions which overtly and covertly support the indigenization approach. The use of local languages as medium of instruction and textbook language in primary education and teacher training for kindergarten and primary education, the compensatory measure geared towards increasing the participation and enrolment in the education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities, and the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach, are notable provisions of the Education and Training Policy worth mentioning.

One of the remarkable provisions of the 1995 Constitution which aligns with the approach of indigenization, is the right granted to every nation, nationality and the people of Ethiopia to write and develop its own language, to express, develop and promote its culture, and to preserve its history. Like the Federal Constitution the Regional Constitution also contains a similar provision which grants every nation, nationality and the people in the Region equal opportunities to preserve its identity and have it respected and promoted, and to preserve its heritage, artifacts and history, and to use and develop its own language and culture.

The Cultural Policy grants the culture and language of the different nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia equal recognition in promoting, preserving and passing it on to the next generation. Two of the Cultural Policy's strategies with regard to the spreading of cultural knowledge, have a direct bearing on the education system and the curricula. These are the inclusion of cultural themes into the educational curricula with the aim of integrating education with culture and thereby to equip the youth with a sense of cultural identity, and the transmission of educational programs reflecting the various cultures of the country by the mass media institutions in order to promote the cultural knowledge of the people of Ethiopia.

The Implementation Strategy identified the anti-democratic nature of educational content and administration during the former regimes. In order to materialise the twin

purposes of the democratization of educational content and the provision of quality and relevant educational services the strategy called for change of curriculum. A new approach was adopted which decentralized the organization of education and devolved responsibility to the various levels of the regional and local administrations.

The Implementation Strategy attached education quality to the education's connection with the society's cultural, economic, and political realities and activities. One of the actions where quality is implicated is the students' learning in their mother tongue. The strategy provided ample justification for providing primary education through mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

Though the country's policies and strategies include a number of salient provisions which support the indigenization approach, there are still provisions which are against the indigenization thesis. There are the standardized thesis, the blending approach, and the ignorance of the development of local outlook in the students through education. A stand-alone indigenization approach which calls for rooting curriculum studies and development on indigenous foundations and theories, principles and ideas derived from the culture first and then resorting to a blending approach which allows an intercultural dialogue among equals, is a viable approach to curriculum studies and development in Ethiopia that can ensure relevance in the education system. Therefore, there is a need for reconceptualising the indigenization approach in the country's policies and strategies, if ensuring the relevance of the curriculum to the structural and socio-cultural context of the country is to be achieved.

If the activities of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of Ethiopia (MYSC) were integrated, the strategy in respect of the indigenization approach could have been properly materialised in Ethiopia.

### ***5.3 CURRICULUM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN A RURAL SETTING***

In this section the data obtained from case two will be presented and critically analysed. This case study involved one school from the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Zone Education Department. It focused on the planning and implementation of the curriculum within the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each of the key interviewees, and did observations in the classroom and the school. He also reviewed important documents which are pertinent to the study, such as textbooks, mark sheets, name lists, announcements, and other forms of correspondence. The direct words of the interviewees were reported where necessary, but in some sub-sections the data were critically analysed.

This section is organised in such a way that the distinct features of the culture and the important value systems of the Gamo ethnic group are presented first. Following that the present curriculum planning and implementation processes are critically analysed. Finally the conclusions in respect of the issues addressed in the section will be presented briefly.

#### ***5.3.1 The distinct features of the Gamo ethnic culture and value systems***

The Gamo ethnic group has a distinct ethnic culture and unique value systems, which make it distinct from the other ethnic groups in the country. The most important features of the material and spiritual culture of the ethnic group identified in this research are the administrative system, which it carries out through *dubusha*, an initiation ceremony to the political position of *halaqa*, the celebration of the *mesqel* festivity, the feeding style, the dressmaking and dressing style, farm implements, and dispute resolution. The ethnic group has its own unique history and heritages.

As one of the interviewees stated, the Gamo ethnic cultural practices are similar to that of the Jewish people. He was informed of this by a Jewish scholar who visited the Gamo territory to conduct research. Based on the cultural similarity between the Jewish and the Gamo people, she made the inference that the Jews might have either gone

from here to Israel, or the Gamo people might have come here from Israel. However, the delineation of the cultural similarity between the Jews and the Gamos is beyond the scope of this research, and needs further research to verify the conjecture.

### ***5.3.1.1 The Gamo administrative system and the initiation ceremony***

One of the most important aspects of the Gamo culture which distinguishes this ethnic group, is the administrative system, which it uses by means of the institution called *dubusha*, and the initiation ceremony of members of the ethnic group to the political position of *halaqa*.

The Gamo ethnic group has an administrative system which is used through its own institution, called *dubusha* or 'the assemblies'. The *dubusha* is held every week to discuss security and peace matters. Persons who have disagreements settle them in these assemblies. The *dubushas* are presided over by the political leaders, called *halaqas* and *hudugas*. The decisions passed by the assembly leaders are obeyed by all the members of the community. These decisions passed by them are final, and not even the government overrides them.

Appointment to the title of *halaqa* (political leader) requires the demonstration of hard work by the prospective candidate. The person being initiated to the position of *halaqa* invests the money he collected for the initiation ceremony. For the initiation ceremony the candidate is required to sponsor a huge feast. The feast involves slaughtering cattle and providing food and drinks, like *borde* and milk, for the community members. The candidate wears traditional hand-woven clothes made of *dunguza*, in the form of shorts or a tunic, and a heavy shawl known as *leleshe buluko*, and the skin of a sheep. He also carries a ceremonial staff, known as *hororso*, and smears butter on his head, which epitomises the fact that his tenure will be peaceful or wet.

In expressing the civility and strong social system of the Gamo ethnic group a participant stated,

Now in big towns a woman cannot travel alone for a long distance, but in the Gamo community women can travel long distances even carrying goods. Women can travel from Chenchä to Bonke and Boreda alone without any problem. This is due to the fact that the different areas within the Gamo ethnic group are intertwined, and if a woman is looted in one area the people in that area as a whole would pay back the property along with compensation without the woman providing any evidence C1E1.

### ***5.3.1.2 The celebration of the mesqel festivity***

Another most important aspect of the Gamo culture, which distinguishes the ethnic group, is the celebration of the *mesqel* feast which marks the beginning of the New Year.

The *mesqel* feast is celebrated in the Gamo ethnic group as a cultural holiday commemorating the onset of a New Year, without, though, losing its religious undertone. It is the most recognized holiday in the Gamo ethnic group. *Mesqel* is the only holiday celebrated by all the people from different walks of life in the community, irrespective of their religious differences. Other holidays such as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and others, involve only a section of the population.

Most members of the Gamo ethnic group live outside the Gamo highlands, wanting to secure a better income to support their families. The members come together once every year during the *mesqel* holiday to celebrate with their families. Even those who live in Addis Ababa come home every year to celebrate the *mesqel* feast. The celebration of *mesqel* lasts for a week, and people sing, dance, and enjoy special food and drinks.

Preparation for the feast is mostly done throughout the year. People save money by means of a traditional saving scheme known as *equub* to be able to buy cattle to be slaughtered during the celebrations. The *mesqel* celebration is so important that grazing ground, known as *qoro*, will be reserved for the cattle. In *qoro* the grass is not cut for at

least three months until it grows high, and then the cattle are let in to graze throughout the celebration of the *mesqel* feast.

As part of the preparations for the holiday, persons who lived in conflict are reconciled before the *mesqel* feast. For example, a woman who left her husband to go back to her parents' home because of conflict, will be reconciled with her husband with the elders' intervention before the *mesqel* feast. A woman who has not settled her dispute with her husband before the *mesqel* feast will be subjected to divorce from her husband. In addition, both the wife and husband fear *gome*, which is traditionally known as the wrath of God on the person who refuses to be reconciled.

The celebration in the Gamo community is unique because of the custom that, for example in the Dorze community, the street slaughtering of cattle in a market place takes place on market days. The meat is sold just there, and those members of the community who could not afford to buy meat, are given the opportunity of sharing with others. This demonstrates the unity and love within each community of the Gamo ethnic group. Unlike the Dorze, the rest localities within the genius Gamo slaughter the cattle in a common place for relatives and neighbours. During the slaughtering the people divide the meat among themselves. Before they take the meat home those who were involved in the slaughtering eat a portion of the meat together on the site of the slaughtering. After bringing the meat home, they eat it with their families and neighbours.

Different kinds of songs and dances are sung and performed throughout September for the celebration of *mesqel*. The singing and dancing does not cease even in the event of mourning. People mourn for the dead for a while, and immediately resume their singing. This shows the importance of the *mesqel* celebration in the community.

### ***5.3.1.3 Important values of the Gamo ethnic group***

The Gamos have a culture of living together – a communal life. Every aspect of the ethnic group's life activities are performed communally. They eat together and share joy together, mourn together, and comfort those who lost their loved ones. This ethnic group is different from other ethnic groups in that its members live together even in areas outside the Gamo highlands. Even in terms of settling in the city of Addis Ababa, the living together of the Gamos is clearly evident. They settle in different parts of the city together.

The Gamos are very strong people who live on a difficult terrain. As a result, they have developed resilience towards different natural hazards, like drought and famine. They also know the value of hard work. They are hardworking and proud of their dignity. They do not like begging; they consider it a shame. Even people with disabilities strive to earn their daily bread by doing work which is compatible to their disability. They do not beg. The following quotation serves to illustrate this:

The Gamo ethnic group participated in the construction of a road from the town of Chenchu up to Zozo. On the completion of the construction of the road the then Relief and Rehabilitation Commission brought wheat as food aid to the people. However, the people told the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission that they should send the food to other famished people. 'We do not want your relief and we do not need any kind of support'.

Truthfulness is an important value of the Gamo ethnic group. People always speak the truth. In the *dubusha* no false reports will be presented by the members of the ethnic group to win a case. The assembly leaders strongly interrogates a person suspected of telling a lie, and he will tremble before them, and if he persists in lying he will either become sick or die. Whenever a person falls sick for telling lies in *dubusha*, he will return to the assembly leaders, and reveal the truth.

In the Gamo ethnic group women and elderly people are highly respected. The people who are well-versed in the Gamo culture and not influenced by the imported mainstream culture, show due respect towards elders and women. In the Gamo culture a man may not ride on horseback while a woman is walking on foot.

#### ***5.3.1.4 The eating and dressing style of the Gamo ethnic group***

The Gamo ethnic group has unique cultural practices which distinguishes it from other ethnic groups in the country. These include the eating style, dressmaking and dressing style, and their farm implements.

Their most staple diet is an imitation banana called *enset*. However, different kinds of cereals are also eaten. Different kinds of food are prepared from *enset*. The Gamos have a traditional food called *shendera*, which is a kind of porridge. The *shendera* is made of flour, milk, yeast and butter. Milk is a staple drink in the culture of the Gamo ethnic group. Meat is also eaten, although it is not a staple food. The other traditional food is *qinche*, which is made of barley, milk and butter.

Dinner has a special place in the Gamo community. People may enjoy lunch wherever they spend the day, but in the evening all the family members are supposed to come together to enjoy dinner. Dining together was given special respect in the past. As a result, the women even removed their shawls when the food was served.

The members of the Gamo ethnic group are known for their weaving, using the hand loom. Most of the Gamo people reside in Addis Ababa, and make money by weaving, and then sending the money they make to their families in the Gamo highlands. The weavers make traditional handwoven clothes, such as *gabi*, *netella* and *qamis*. In the embroidery part known as *tibeb*, the weavers incorporate the design of a house and the names of the person, depending on the customer.

In addition, the Gamo ethnic group practises a distinct art, namely traditional hand-woven coloured material called *dunguza*. The art of making this coloured material became so important that it was later copied by the Wolayta and Sidama ethnic groups. The *dunguza* used to be worn only by people who had been initiated to be *halaqas*. But today *dunguza* is being worn by all people. Another cloth, named *assera*, is worn as a towel rounded under the waist. The *buluko*, a special handwoven shawl, serves as a blanket and is usually used on the bed.

To cultivate their lands the Gamo people use a traditional axe which is unique to them, called *tsoyle*. Most of them till the land by hand, using this tool, while rich people make use of a plough and oxen.

### ***5.3.1.5 Mourning and wedding ceremonies in the Gamo ethnic group***

The Gamo ethnic group has its own mourning ceremony. In each *kebele* there are fields located centrally where the funeral ceremonies take place. When in mourning, the skins of a lion and a leopard, ostrich feathers, and spears are used by the people. These materials are used, depending on the service rendered to the community by the deceased person. The mourners praise the deceased person during the mourning ceremony through songs and dances. If a renowned person or a hero died, all the people in that community go out up to the border and perform a ceremony known as *guche*. The ceremony involves riding a horse and holding a rope made of the *enset* plant. An outsider, who sees the singing and dancing being performed by the Gamo people, may be tempted to say that they are not mourning, but rejoicing.

The Gamo people have their own wedding ceremony. Traditionally a marriage takes place through the mediation of the elders, known as *lazantse*. If a man wants to marry a girl, he sends the elders to the parents of the woman whom he wants to marry. The elders will be invited to the house of the parents of the woman only on their third trip. When they go the first time they carry the leaves of a tree, and sit on the leaves in front of the woman's family home for a while, and then return home without saying anything.

The woman's family then becomes aware that they have come to ask for their daughter's hand in marriage, but they ignore the elders. The elders go the second time and sit on those leaves, and adding fresh ones on them. When they are asked by the woman's parents they will explain their case. On that day the woman's parents will make an appointment with the elders when to come again. On their third trip the elders will be allowed to enter the house of the woman's parents and fix the date of marriage. After that the relatives of the bridegroom and the bride start making preparations for the wedding. A special feast will be prepared in both the bride's and the bridegroom's houses. Traditional food will be served, and there will be much singing and dancing,

Unfortunately, all the Gamo's traditional practices have been considered as old and harmful traditions, and have been highly criticized and publicly attacked by the former regimes in Ethiopia. In addition, the introduction of modern western education compelled the people to embrace the modern cultures and to forget their own cultures. The cumulative effect of these actions was so pervasive that most of the cultural practices have already ceased to function.

### ***5.3.2 The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group***

The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was developed in the post-1991 era. Like the curricula of the rest of the ethnic groups the curricula of the Gamo ethnic group had suffered different problems during former regimes in Ethiopia, such as the denial of the mother tongue as medium of instruction and textbook language, and the non-responsiveness to culture and values of the ethnic group. The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was developed being guided by the Education and Training Policy adopted in 1994.

This section is devoted to the curriculum development process of the present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group, and the merits and demerits of the curriculum in terms of socio-cultural, structural and value responsiveness.

### ***5.3.2.1 The process of curriculum planning***

The present primary first-cycle curriculum was developed based on the internationally acclaimed rights of nations and nationalities to use and learn through the medium of their mother tongue. This principle is fully accepted by UNESCO. The curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was prepared, using the language of the ethnic group as medium of instruction. All the subjects, except the English and Amharic languages, were to be given in the *Gamotso* language from grades 1-4.

The educated elites of the ethnic group played a major role in materialising the use of the *Gamotso* language as medium of instruction. They prepared the language for education by adopting the new script for the language. After preparing the script it became crucial to train the teachers who could implement the curriculum in the schools, and the educated elites are the ones who organised and did the training. The teachers were drawn from the ethnic group and from other ethnic groups who were able and willing to implement the curriculum. The educated elites also pilot-tested the curriculum in some schools to find out the favourable conditions for success and the hampering conditions that pose challenge in the implementation process. At last the new curriculum was implemented in all schools, phase by phase, starting from grade one.

The curriculum planning process had flaws, and this made the curriculum non-responsive to the Gamo culture and heritage. The National Curriculum Development Institute set the standards, which contained the content standards and the profile of the students who completed each grade level. The Amharic versions of the curriculum were prepared by the Regional Education Bureau, using these standards. The curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was prepared by means of translation from the Amharic versions. Language teachers from the ethnic group translated the textbooks into the *Gamotso* languages. The *Gamotso* language textbooks were prepared at Zone level by language teachers from the ethnic group. As a result there was a clear distinction between material which was directly translated and that which was directly prepared by

members of the ethnic group. The translated curriculum was more non-responsive to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group than the locally prepared curriculum.

In expressing the curriculum planning process and its consequential effect on making the curriculum non-responsive to the Gamo culture and heritage, interviewee C1E1 said:

What has been carried out here is the translation of the Amharic version into the *Gamotso* version. Whenever a direct translation takes place it is the raw word that is translated and there is no possibility of mixing cultural elements in it. Therefore, the primary first-cycle curriculum is not prepared based on our culture.

However, two of the curriculum experts, C1E2 and C1E3, indicated that the curriculum was not only a translation, because there were attempts at preparing its own material in the Zone. When the *Gamotso* language textbooks were prepared, language teachers who were thought to be knowledgeable were drawn from each *woreda*. They prepared the textbooks based on the culture, heritages and environmental settings in the Zone so that students could comprehend them in their surroundings. In explaining the preparation of own material, interviewee C1E2 stated,

I was the person who coordinated the process of preparing own materials because by then I was the head of the Zone Education Department. Such locally prepared materials reflect the Gamo culture such as its handweaving, patriotism, mourning and joy ceremonies. Because of this the results of the students in the *Gamotso* subject were very high. Though an attempt has been made this process is far from complete.

A short review of the textbooks for the primary first-cycle education disclosed that the *Gamotso* language textbooks were prepared by the Gamo Gofa Zone Capacity Building Co-ordination Main Department, Education Desk. The textbooks for the rest of the subjects were prepared by the Regional Education Bureau. Therefore, the textbooks for

the primary first-cycle were prepared by translating them from the Amharic version and preparing the own material by teachers from the Gamo ethnic group.

In order to verify the difference between textbooks which were translated from the Amharic version prepared by the Regional Education Bureau and the language textbooks prepared by the Zone Education Department, a brief comparative review was made on the grade one *Gamotso* language and *Herra Sayinsi* textbooks. The review revealed that the *Gamotso* language textbooks, which were prepared by the Gamo Gofa Zone Capacity Building Co-ordination Main Department, Education Desk better reflected the culture of the ethnic group than the *Herra Sayinsi* text book which was a translation of the Amharic version, prepared by the Regional Education Bureau. However, the *Gamotso* language textbooks were not perfect, and still suffered certain deficiencies.

The other flaw in the curriculum development process, as identified by the participants in the research, was that it was not participatory. The members of the local community were not even made aware of the importance of the mother tongue in education, let alone to be involved in curriculum development. Due to the skipping of this step in the creation of awareness, members of the local community viewed learning through the medium of the *Gamotso* language as restricting mobility to other areas and of communication with others in Amharic. Because of this they insisted that their children be taught in Amharic.

The education system in general, and curriculum-planning in particular, was suffering from self-contradiction. The education system openly allowed children to learn in the mother tongue. However, the medium of the pre-primary curriculum was Amharic, while for the first-cycle primary curriculum it was the *Gamotso* language. A student who started his or her schooling in Amharic did not have the opportunity to continue in Amharic. This created discontinuity in the education of students and could lead to confusion.

### ***5.3.2.2 Level of cultural-responsiveness***

There is no unanimity among the teachers and the school directors on the responsiveness of the present primary first-cycle curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group. Some view the present primary first-cycle curriculum to be to some extent responsive to the culture and heritage of the ethnic group, while others view it as an imposition from above that does not cater for the culture and heritage of the ethnic group. However, all the interviewees agreed that the responsiveness of the present primary first-cycle curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group is far from complete.

Those who argue in favour of the partial responsiveness of the present primary first-cycle curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group try to justify their claim that some traditional heritages and material, such as *hororso* and *gondale* (traditional shield) are included in the curriculum. However, these groups admit that the curriculum is flawed in that it does not speak deeply about the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group. One of the interviewees (C1T1) indicated the limitation in the following way:

For instance it is silent about the initiation of *halaqa*, the celebration of the *meskel* festivity, our mode of dressing, work, and heritages... a local trumpet known as *zaye* which is made of animal horn. This instrument is important and should have been incorporated in the curriculum but it is not.

Those participants who hold the view that the curriculum is entirely non-responsive to the culture and heritage of the ethnic group argue that the only new development in the new curriculum is the change of the language of the textbooks from Amharic to *Gamotso*. The language of the textbooks invites students to speak the language at school. However, the culture of the ethnic group is not properly reflected in the textbooks. The curriculum is imposed from above, and refers to modernity which aligns

with science and technology. In order to justify this, one of the interviewees (C1T3) argued that

The environmental science known as *Herra Sayinsi* is translated from the Amharic version into *Gamotso*. The mathematics textbook is translated into *Gamotso* from the Amharic version...when the environmental science introduces a concept it directly translates it from the Amharic version... In environmental science there is a section where it speaks about heritages which totally refers to national heritages as a whole but not the heritages of the Gamo which show the identity of the ethnic group. It is directly copied from others, and does not cater for the culture of the Gamo.

There is disagreement among the curriculum experts on the articulation of the culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum. One of the curriculum experts argued that the curriculum does not articulate it. For him making the *Gamotso* language the medium of instruction is an important development but cannot be taken as the articulation of the culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum. He further indicated that,

Unfortunately, the school subjects addressed issues which contradict the traditional life and ignore the contribution of the Gamo people to the nation state. Children were taught about the northern dynasties rather than their local governments known as *deres* which were ruled by ritual kings. The curriculum ignores the role played by the Gamo ethnic group in the handicrafts in the country. In addition, there were people in the Gamo area that went to the warfront to fight against the Italian forces but you do not find anything about these people in the curriculum (C1E1).

The other two curriculum experts (C1E2 and C1E3) argued that the culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group are articulated in the curriculum, even if its articulation is not one hundred percent complete. Interviewee C1E2 justified his claim in the following way:

The greatest wealth of the present system is that it gave us pride in our Gamo identity. The skeleton of the curriculum sent from the centre is the same but you will make the content reflect the culture, language, history and identity of your own people. If you do not reflect it the students and even other members of the community will not leave you alone.

In order to prove her argument interviewee C1E3 said that:

There are efforts which were made to be included in the form of illustration. Here the culture, language, mourning ceremony and wedding ceremony were included in the curriculum. I could not say the curriculum is perfect in this regard and many things could be done to this end. The articulation of culture, language, history and the identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum is in its incipient stage and a lot remains to be done to fully articulate them.

The participants who argued supporting the view that the translated curriculum is non-responsive to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group, attribute the failure of the curriculum to respond to sociocultural context to the process of preparing the curriculum. One of the interviewees said:

Those who were involved in the preparation of the curriculum are only those who had an academic qualification. It could have been best if deep research involving the local wise men had been carried out before preparing the curriculum...There was per diem for those who involve in the preparation of the curriculum and the preparation was carried out hastily in order to get more money individually (C1D2).

Another interviewee expressed the lack of proper research before the preparation of the curriculum as a major flaw in the curriculum planning process, in the following way:

Had the curriculum been developed after proper research it would have been flawless. For instance, in science textbooks different renowned people at national level such as

runners, artists, singers have been mentioned. However, the curriculum does not mention at all renowned people from the Gamo ethnic group (C1D1).

The lack of detailed study prior to the curriculum development process was so detrimental that most material which reflects the Gamo culture was not included in the curriculum. An important example which could best illustrate the issue is the relic of a wall which was built along the Gamo and Wolayta border. The wall was built to control the movement of people from one area to the other, and to protect the territory from enemies. However, so far no one has spoken about it, and it has never been entertained in the curriculum.

### ***5.3.2.3 The level of responsiveness to the socio-cultural and structural context***

One of the curriculum experts interviewed, C1E1, argued that the curriculum was a mere translation; as a result it has no relation to the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group. The personnel who were involved in translating the curriculum had limited knowledge about the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group, and were unable to contextualize the curriculum. In order to back his argument the interviewee further illustrated that,

The Gamo ethnic group has its own cultural and administrative values and there were people within the ethnic group who have tirelessly strove to make positive contributions to their community. However, none of these were incorporated in the curriculum and the curriculum directly talks about people from northern Ethiopia (C1E1).

However, two of the curriculum experts, C1E2 and C1E3, to the contrary argued that the curriculum was prepared, taking the socio-cultural and structural context into account. Unfortunately, the contradiction in their argument is clearly evident from the fact that both have admitted the incompleteness and non-responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group. A curriculum which

was drawn, taking the socio-cultural and structural context of the community into account did not have the likelihood of incompleteness and non-responsiveness to the culture and heritage of the community for whom it was prepared.

#### ***5.3.2.4 The level of responsiveness to the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group***

Almost all the interviewees indicated that the values of the Gamo ethnic group were partially reflected in the curriculum. The values were partially reflected in the curriculum, but better reflected by the teachers in the teaching-learning process. The fact that the subjects were being given in the *Gamotso* language provided a better chance for reflecting the Gamo values in the teaching-learning process. In order to teach the *Gamotso* language the teachers used examples which reflect the values of the Gamo people.

Though the Gamo culture was partially catered for in the curriculum, a lot still remains in terms of depth. The curriculum was a direct copy and translation of the curriculum prepared for other regions which did not reflect any of the values of the Gamo ethnic group. For example, the Environmental Science curriculum discusses in detail the stele of Aksum and other historical heritages, which purely portray the culture and values of the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara. But not a single topic is found which deals with the historical heritage of the Gamo ethnic group.

In order to justify their argument on the partial reflection of the values of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum, the interviewees argued that the most important values, such as the dislike of begging, was not incorporated in the curriculum. They attributed the causes for the partial reflection of the Gamo values in the curriculum to the process of curriculum development. Firstly, the process did not involve the local people who were well aware of the values. Secondly, deep research had not been conducted on the values before delving into the process of curriculum development.

### ***5.3.3 The culture, language and identity-responsive pedagogy for the Gamo people***

Teachers have tried to reflect the culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in a better way in the teaching-learning process. Different strategies have been used by the teachers in order to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture and heritage.

Each strategy will be discussed in detail in this section.

#### ***5.3.3.1 Giving local examples***

One of the methods of teaching used by teachers in order to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture and heritage is by giving examples from the ethnic group's culture (C1E3). In explicating this further an interviewee argued that,

The way our family members respect and obey the *halaqas* is an example I use to explain the extent to which we obey and respect the constitutional order of the country. Again in the Environmental Science textbook there is a topic about historical heritages known in the local language as *buqurata*. In this section I am forced to refer to my Gamo culture for elaboration to the students (C1T1).

In the school premises the researcher observed the model for Aksum stele in the front of one of the classes. However, there was no model which represents the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group in the school compound. One participant explained the reason for this as follows:

I have already told you before that the curriculum speaks little about the Gamo culture; as a result it does not invite us to prepare a model of Gamo heritage to be erected in the school premises. You know we teachers strive to make our school compound attractive to visitors. In order to do that we prepare models taken from the textbooks (C1T1).

### ***5.3.3.2 The reduction of prejudice and the creation of awareness***

The other method of teaching used by teachers to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture and heritage is the reduction of prejudice and the creation of awareness.

In the past people held the prejudiced view that speaking the Gamo language does not help an individual to cross a river, which means it does not help him or her to live outside the Gamo area. But now, since they have been taught through the Gamo language, it helps them to discuss and enrich the Gamo culture. The teachers teach the children that the Gamo culture can help in modernizing the community life if the students continued learning it. In order to show them the merits of learning the Gamo language, the teachers illustrate the issue by taking the students' academic results as an example.

When the school teachers teach they indicate to their students that the *Gamotso* language is not inferior or superior to other languages. In the past students from the Gamo ethnic group were ashamed of communicating in *Gamotso* outside the Gamo Gofa Zone. As is the case with the other ethnic groups, learning through their mother tongue would be beneficial to the Gamo people in shaping their pride in their language and identity. Even if this idea is not treated in the curriculum, the teachers do make their students aware of it in the teaching-learning process.

One of the interviewees indicated the efforts being made by the teachers to reduce the prejudices towards the Gamo culture and language which prevailed and still prevails in their area, as follows:

Now we do not find the Gamo language in the courts and government offices, but we strive to develop the language in schools. We teachers conduct action research on how to develop our language and create awareness in our students so as to encourage them to develop their culture and language. We remind them to use the Gamo language so that other languages could not dominate our language. We also make them aware that

the Gamo ethnic group has its own history, and the history of others alone should not be taught in schools (C1D1).

However, the school observation conducted revealed that the message being communicated by means of the hidden curriculum is contradictory to what teachers are doing in their classrooms during the teaching-learning process. The language used at school office is Amharic; as a result the teachers communicate among themselves and in the rest of the school community in Amharic. This still covertly communicates to the students the inferiority of the *Gamotso* language to Amharic. Thus, what the teachers build in the classroom is being shattered by the hidden curriculum being transmitted outside the classroom.

### ***5.3.3.3 Engaging students in a group debate on cultural issues***

Teachers also make use of the method of engaging students in group debates on cultural issues in the classroom so as to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture and heritage.

Sometimes the teachers ask their students to compare the traditional and modern lifestyles during a group debate. Even then the students argue in favour of western style modern life. However, when they are asked if all things related to the past should disappear, they express their disagreement. They indicate the necessity of preserving the positive aspects and doing away with the negative aspects of culture. The argument of the students concerning one of the important cultural heritages of the Gamo ethnic group is stated by an interviewee in the following way:

For instance, the students argue that the initiation ceremony to be *halaqa* is a harmful tradition in that it impoverishes people and creates division and disrespect among people. However, they also admit that things that reflect their identity have to be retained (C1T2).

#### ***5.3.3.4 Using cultural heritages as teaching aids***

Another method used by teachers to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture and heritage is by bringing the cultural artefacts to the classroom and using them as teaching aids. The teachers also encourage the students to bring the artefacts to the classroom. The students then bring different material heritages such as sword, *gimo*, and *catressa*. The *gimo* and *catressa* are bracelets and armlets respectively, made of rhinoceros horn, and worn by individuals who own many heads of cattle.

#### ***5.3.4 The consideration of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of the students***

The heart of a culturally-responsive pedagogy is the validation and affirmation of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students.

The curriculum and the textbooks do not take the cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of children into consideration. The curriculum is prepared based on globalization which provides no space for cultural knowledge. The content of the curriculum still represents global issues. At school students come into contact with science, since all subjects are sciences. Science, in turn, disregards traditional knowledge; as a result, students are compelled to completely ignore their culture.

The regional curriculum, though non-responsive to the Gamo culture, gives some opportunity for teachers to discuss the local culture in class under general topics such as the wedding system, singing, and mourning. In commenting on the constraint of the curriculum one participant said,

It should have discussed the Gamo mourning system and the things involved in the process. As a teacher we have a national and professional obligation to explain the mourning system in the Gamo ethnic group. Of course we discuss not only the Gamo

mourning system but also the system of the Amhara, Oromo, and other ethnic groups in the country. However, these things have to be reflected in the curriculum (C1T1).

The teachers use their own initiative in preparing products that reflect the culture and customs of the students. The teachers also try to relate the lessons to the prior experiences of the children. They may ask the students to bring their experiences into the classroom by asking them questions and then they try to anchor the lessons on these experiences. The teaching-learning process uses student-centred methods which give the students the chance to speak out what they have. The school pedagogical centre prepares different teaching aid materials on hard papers and canvases and curve outs from woods. The teachers use these teaching materials in the classroom so as to address all styles of learning.

As teachers explained and the review of students' results revealed the *Gamotso* language subject considers the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of students in a better way than the other subjects. This is evident from the fact that children learn in their vernacular language comfortably without any difficulty and score high result. Subjects such as Herra Sayinsi and mathematics are also being given in the *Gamotso* language at primary first-cycle level and they are easy for students to understand. However, students fail the other subjects that are given in Amharic and English. This is, according to the teachers, due to the fact that the subjects are given in non-native languages and are difficult for the students to understand.

### ***5.3.5 Indicators of the link between school knowledge and the local culture***

Different yardsticks are used to measure the level of responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and values of the students. Students learn best, become highly motivated, succeed academically and demonstrate pride in their culture and identity when the school curriculum is linked with their own cultures, experiences and perspectives.

In this section the responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and values of the Gamo ethnic group is measured, based on some benchmarks sorted out by literature review.

#### ***5.3.5.1 The students' motivation to learn the new curriculum and their overall achievement***

At the present time the students are highly motivated to learn the curriculum, and they are also achieving good results. When the curriculum was introduced the students, the parents and the educated elite within the ethnic group had a hard time in identifying the English and the Latin alphabets used for writing the *Gamotso* language. The new script for the *Gamotso* language was in Latin. At this stage the students have started to clearly identify the two alphabets. The use of the mother tongue for education is deep-rooted. The educated elite within the ethnic group became well aware that their language can be used for writing, and have indicated their full support in the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction.

However, there was a marked difference in the students' level of motivation and overall achievement in subjects being given in the vernacular language and the other subjects not presented in the vernacular language. Children from grades 1 to 4 learn all the subjects, except English and Amharic, in the *Gamotso* language. Their motivation to learn the subjects being given in the local language is very high, where the teacher's presentation is not de-motivating.

In fact, whenever they learn the subjects through the medium of the *Gamotso* language, the students do not face any difficulties. There are, though, some kinds of limitations in the teaching-learning process. The children are unable to speak about the cultural practices and artefacts which they see in their neighbourhood and *kebeles*. They do not go beyond calling a cultural practice or an artefact by its name. They are unable to explain them in detail. This is because the curriculum does not discuss the cultural practices and artefacts in detail. The subjects are translations of other cultures in the

*Gamotso* language, and the students understand the cultural concepts with great difficulty.

In addition, the present primary first-cycle curriculum uses old fashioned and archaic words, which are difficult for both the learners and teachers to understand. Those who introduced the curriculum did not take the current context of development of the community into consideration. Thus, these old fashioned and archaic words create problems for the new generation.

The students' results in subjects where the medium is the vernacular language are very high. This is because they do have prior experience of what they learn and they know the contents of the lessons very well and the lessons are part of their day-to-day activities. For example, students' results in the *Gamotso* language subject are higher than in English and Amharic, because the language is their mother tongue, spoken by the family members, and is the medium of communication in their daily activities in the community. The *Gamotso* language subject is easy for them, and they score high marks.

At present the drop-out rate at the schools is low. Different factors may have contributed to the decline in the drop-out rate. However, the effect of the level of simplicity of the curriculum to the decline in the drop-out rate has to be taken into consideration. In explaining this, one of the participants said,

I am a home room teacher for 45 students and no one has dropped out so far. That is, no child misses the tutorial class. You can get the exact figure from the school principal but there isn't a drop-out of more than one student from each class. Even those who dropped out, were because of family problems beyond their command, illnesses, and distance from school, but not because of problems with the subjects or the curriculum (C1T1).

### ***5.3.5.2 The children's level of pride in their culture, language and identity***

In Ethiopia the present educational policy provisions guarantee all nations and nationalities the right to learn in their mother tongue, at least in primary first-cycle classes. Students view their learning through the medium of their mother tongue as an important development, and are happy about it. Students from the Gamo ethnic group speak their own language openly, and study the school material in their own language at school. The students are aware of the equality of their Gamo identity, language, culture and history to those of others. However, despite these positive developments, the children from the Gamo ethnic group are not very proud of their identity, language, culture and history.

In the past the Gamo ethnic group was considered inferior, and speaking the Gamo language publicly was considered shameful. The effects of the negative developments in the past are so pervasive, that the feeling of inferiority by the Gamo people still exists. Even nowadays the Gamo people consider the Amhara as better developed than their own ethnic group. This is clearly manifested by the use of Amharic as a working language in offices at the expense of their *Gamotso* language. Children who attend primary first-cycle education are between 6 or 7 and 10 or 11 years of age, and their attitude is a reflection of their community's attitude. The children in this stage would prefer it if all their subjects are given in Amharic, and the Amhara culture is reflected in the schools.

The data from observation has also revealed that some things show the students' pride in their culture. Students are free to use the *Gamotso* language in their communication on the school premises, and they sing and perform the Gamo cultural songs and dances freely at school. However, the media of communication outside the classroom, and the working language in office and in the school premises is Amharic. This, in turn, communicates a negative message to the children that their language is still inferior to the other languages in the country, and cannot be used for wider communication and

working language in offices, apart from its use as medium of instruction in the classroom.

### ***5.3.5.3 Compatibility between what the students are being taught and the local culture***

There is a mixed view among the parents of students on the relation between the knowledge, skills and attitudes the children acquire at school and in the community. Some support the view that there is an alignment between the knowledge, skills and attitudes the children acquire from the curriculum and from the community. The justification they provide to support their view is the reflection of the knowledge, skills and values of the Gamo people in the curriculum, though insufficiently. But they admit that there exists a problem in the implementation of the intentions of the curriculum by the teachers. In commenting on the problems experienced by the teachers, an interviewee said,

For instance, weaving is one of the cultures of our community. There are teachers in this school who are skilled in weaving. I do not have the skill of weaving. I am not from this area, and my community is named Boreda, which is one of the Gamo communities in the Gamo highlands. The staff members weave *dunguza* during their spare time to earn an additional income, but they are not willing to equip the students with this skill in the handcrafts class in the school (C1P1).

Some support the view that there is no alignment between the knowledge, skills and attitudes the children acquire at school and in the community. However, observations and a review of the curricular material revealed that there is some alignment between the knowledge, skills and attitudes the children acquire from the curriculum and from the community. The level of alignment also varies in respect of the curricular material which was compiled by means of translation, and the material which was directly prepared by the Zone Education Department.

### ***5.3.6 Suggestions for making the curriculum and the pedagogy culture-responsive***

In order to make the primary first-cycle curriculum responsive to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group and thereby make it best serve the purpose of preserving and developing the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group, different measures have been suggested by the participants in this study.

This section discusses these suggestions in detail.

In order to avoid the contradiction in medium of instruction between the Kindergarten (KG) and primary first-cycle education, the KG curriculum has to use the local language. If a good foundation is laid at pre-primary level it would be easier to teach the history and culture at primary level. Unless this measure is taken the discontinuity in the medium of instruction, and the subsequent confusion in the children's education will undoubtedly undermine the preservation and development of the *Gamotso* language as medium of instruction.

Secondly, in order to preserve the Gamo culture and heritage, the curriculum should cater for the cultural traits of the Gamo ethnic group. Normally, this could be done whenever the curriculum is developed from the culture. In addition, if the curriculum is to be culture-responsive, it has to be delivered by cultural (culture-conscious) teachers. Teachers have to be well-versed with the culture by means of the provision of continuous training on the culture.

In narrating how the modern system detached him from his ethnic culture, and how he could return back to his roots so as to contribute in the endeavour to preserve the Gamo culture and heritage, one interviewee said the following:

Though I descend from the Gamo ethnic group I was born and brought up in the town of Chench. The area where I had been raised forced me to adopt the city culture at the

expense of the local culture. This should not have happened. Now I am a teacher and I have a role to play to preserve the Gamo culture. In order to carry out this responsibility I need to have a deep knowledge about the culture. If not, I cannot keep contact with the Gamo community (C1T1).

The incorporation of culture in the curriculum requires joint-effort and joint-planning. Concerning traditional knowledge, an awareness-creation campaign has to be launched with the parents of the students. Even the students can play the role of creating awareness in their parents. If the children are told in their classes about the need for preserving the old traditions, they can inform their parents when they get back home. Food prepared from grain, ground using a hand-mill has a special smell and taste, and so the hand-mills have to be preserved. Even when the electricity goes out, people can make use of the hand-mills.

The Gamo people have a history and a language, but they were and are still being considered as people without a history and a language. The Gamo people also do have heritages and values, but due to their failure to take proper care, they caused them to disappear. But now they have to go and dig out them before they disappear completely. The revitalisation of the culture could be done by means of the teaching-learning process, in public gatherings, on parents' days, and in the celebration of holidays.

In order to preserve and develop the useful, and eradicate the harmful aspects of the Gamo culture, the work of convincing students, parents and administrative bodies about the worth of incorporating culture in the curriculum have to be done. It would help if places like the pedagogical centres are prepared on the school premises for collecting material heritages. Each school should have a place where traditional items such as the *dunguza*, *horoso*, *susule* (flute) and *ditsa* (*kirar*) could be kept. Each *woreda* needs to have a centre where the heritage items from the schools, which can both attract tourists and reflect the identity of the ethnic group, are exhibited.

In order to preserve the culture, language and way of life, all the stakeholders should share their responsibilities. The scholars have to conduct studies on the culture and heritage of the ethnic group. Researchers need to reach out to each *kebele*, and adopt the culture and values of the people, which could later be incorporated in the curriculum. Each school should strive for the incorporation of content which demonstrate the culture and values of the Gamo people. Government officials have to use the language in their offices as a working language.

Language is the basis for the preservation of the culture, language and history of an ethnic group. To this end a dictionary of the *Gamotso* language has to be published. The dictionary will assist the new generation and the Gamo elite by referring to it and charting the direction of the language. The dictionary could be prepared with the help of the community members who may be able to make important inputs. It is important to collect as much inputs as possible before those people who know about them, disappear. In addition, reference material, which can enrich the curriculum have to be prepared.

The heritage material and the traditional practices of the Gamo ethnic group which could serve as learning experiences have to be collected or compiled and saved before they disappear. It would be the ideal to interview the renowned people in the community, known as the *halaqa*, *huduga*, *bitene*, and *demutsa*, and preserve the information received from them. At present a cultural centre is being constructed at Zone level at Arba Minch, the capital of the Gamo Gofa Zone. Similar cultural centres have to be erected in each *woreda*, *kebele*, and *gote*. Pedagogical centres in each school should be responsible for collecting and preserving these cultural heritage items, besides having the duty of preparing teaching aid materials. Students should be allowed to organise the cultural artefacts in different categories that reflect their identity at school level in collaboration with parents, teachers and the school administration.

It would be a good thing if the detailed explanations about the cultural artefacts along with their pictures and traditions are incorporated in the curriculum so as to hasten students' understanding of their surroundings. Children may go up to the extent of sensitising their family based on what they learnt at school when they are provided with home take assignments. If we take the work implements as an example, people in the past used hand-mills for grinding wheat, and if the children are taught about it by looking at this tool, if they see how people played traditional musical instruments such as the *kirar* and the flute, they may develop the skills and demonstrate it to others.

Curriculum development is an endless process which involves periodic improvement. Research which involves the local people has to be conducted periodically on students, teachers, the curriculum, medium of instruction, and teaching methodology. Periodic evaluation has to be carried out in respect of the textbooks. The curriculum has to be revised, based on the research findings and the feedback received on the evaluation of the textbooks.

The prevalence of cultural diversity is important for social sustainability where people could lead a peaceful life like before, without disturbing one another. The notion of cultural diversity has to be accorded recognition if the Gamo ethnic group wants to survive with its unique identity without being assimilated, and peacefully co-exist with others. Fortunately all the constitutional and policy provisions in Ethiopia today favour cultural diversity. The curriculum development process needs to base itself on the notion of cultural diversity.

If the important cultural traditions are to be preserved the content of the curriculum has to be aligned with the traditional lives and social structures of the community. There exists a difference in perspective between the Gamo ethnic group and that of the ethnic groups from the north regarding certain issues. As a result, a curriculum developed on another's perspective could not be culture-responsive. Concerning this difference in perspective a participant stated,

In the northern part of Ethiopia the Italians were considered as enemies but in our area they were considered as friends. This is due to the fact that the governance of the Amharas was so harsh and bitter that when the Italians came the people enjoyed relative freedom. Even today people in our area do not blame the Italians as the Northerners do. Since those who wrote the history of Ethiopia descended from the North, they bitterly blame the Italians for their invasion of the country, but the contrary is true at grassroots level in our area (C1E1).

The present curriculum development process is not participatory and the process ends either in Region or Zone level without involving the people. It is inappropriate not to involve the peasantry, the vast majority of the Ethiopian population, under the pretext that they are uneducated and depend only on few educated experts to prepare the curriculum. As a remedy one interviewee suggested,

We need a curriculum which is drawn with the involvement of the peasantry, who is considered as backward but has the proper knowledge about the culture. Educated people can put the curriculum on paper, but the source needs to be the peasantry. Opportunity has to be given for the community members, including the educated elite, to participate in the process of curriculum preparation. It would be crucial to involve the elders and concerned individuals from the ethnic group in the curriculum development process. The curriculum development should not only involve the translation of the material which comes from the centre, but also incorporating the contents which can best fit the setting. The curriculum needs to be developed based on the prevailing economic, social and historical context (C1E1).

There is a great awakening at grassroots level to contribute towards the process of preparing culturally responsive curriculum but still the people are held back from enriching their initiatives by the lack of capacity and the disregard for their initiative by the education offices. Many teachers prepare reference material and conduct educational action researches on their own initiatives, but due to economic problems those initiatives could not go further and bear fruit. The teachers conduct textbook evaluation and send their feedback to the education offices. They also do action

research on different topics and send their findings to the Gamo Gofa Zone Education Department. Unfortunately, their findings and feedback are merely shelved. The independent initiatives of the teachers have to be backed by allocating money for research, and by granting regard for their findings and feedback. The graveness of the lack of resources has been explained by a participant as follows:

Now it has become difficult to move forward. For example, this is reference material prepared by one teacher for *Gamotso dona*, or the vernacular language subject which has three volumes. However, the teacher has been visiting our office so as to get funding for publishing his work, but in vain. Now he has brought the manuscript to the Gamo Gofa Zone Education Department in the form of soft copy in a data traveller. The economy is unable to support such kinds of initiatives (C1E2).

The lack of ample training for teachers is another problem which is hampering the use of culture-responsive pedagogy. When evaluating the teachers who teach the *Gamotso* language at Arba Minch town, you will find that they volunteered to teach the *Gamotso* language in order to get transferred to the town from the rural areas where they used to teach. A number of teachers do not know the *Gamotso* language very well, and mock the language that has been assigned to teach.

The worth of the mother tongue as medium of instruction has to be held strongly, and all the sector offices should conduct their day to day activities in the ethnic group's language. The body which is responsible for planning the curriculum should conduct an awareness-creation campaign so that the people may become aware and convinced of the fact that the use of the culture and language in the curriculum is an indication of the ethnic group's development and pride.

The teachers, parents, government offices, and the educated elite do not indicate good faith in the use of *Gamotso* language as a medium of instruction. As a result, the students are less motivated to learn and to score better results. The parents inherited and accepted the belief that their language is unfit as a medium of instruction;

consequently they do not encourage their children to learn by means of the local language. The teachers also do not support the present curriculum, and this in turn, creates problems in the teaching-learning process. When the policy was first adopted by the government, all government offices including the courts, were using the *Gamotso* language. But now all the offices gave up using the *Gamotso* language, and have started using the Amharic language instead. Even the educated elite say that it is unnecessary to be taught in the *Gamotso* language, and they defend the relevance of being taught in Amharic. These acts cause the students to view and believe the Amharic language is being superior to their mother tongue.

The hidden curriculum at school is still communicating the message that the *Gamotso* language is inferior to Amharic. This is because all the communication on the school premises, except in the classroom is in Amharic. This problem has been perceived and stated by an interviewee in the following way:

The *Gamotso* language has stayed in the classroom for teachers and students alone. At the schools the directors and unit leaders speak to the teachers in Amharic and all the written communication is in Amharic. The textbooks are prepared in the *Gamotso* language. Such kind of move is a weakening one. Schools, offices and other sector offices should use the *Gamotso* language as a working language (C1E2).

The teachers have to demonstrate the fact that the Gamo language and culture is equal to other languages and cultures. There is no language which is inferior or superior to any other. Language is a medium of communication. The role of the teachers in this regard has to be highlighted. There is division among the ethnic group members in *kebele* level. Some support diversity and the ethnic policy, and others support the policy of homogeneity of the Ethiopians and *Ethiopianness*. This in turn is creating disruption among the teachers, resulting in problems in implementing the ethnic policy in education at school level. One interviewee indicated the problem in the following way:

The teachers on their part have not been involved in the process of delivering education using the mother tongue as medium of instruction with strong conviction. The ethnic policy in Ethiopia granted equal rights to us with all other people. However, people resort to selfish interest and the unity and love in the community are weakened. As a result it has become difficult to effectively implement the policy. Although there are teachers who are determined to implement the policy most teachers lack the determination (C1P2).

Unless the Gamo people make some effort towards making efficient use of the policy provisions, no other people would do it for them. The significance of the provisions of the policy is clearly understood by those who work in Education Departments, starting at Zone to *Woreda* level. Since they are drawn from the ethnic groups they have to foresee the mechanisms which would help materialise the provisions of the policy. They have the responsibility of incorporating the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum so that it should not be forgotten, and be passed on from one generation to the next effectively. If they do not discharge this responsibility of incorporating the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum, in the long run the ethnic group will end up becoming a cultureless one that lost its identity and cannot tell its origin.

The Zonal Education Department is working specifically on the education sector and has to develop a curriculum which will enable the students to have a deep knowledge of their culture and language. By doing this, a big influence could be exerted on the community because there is no child who does not attend school today. The role of the education department is far greater than any department in the civil service sector since its main preoccupation is running the education system.

However, the education sector is working on students alone and its sphere of influence is very limited. There are other sectors like the Culture and Tourism Department which can contribute a lot in preserving the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group. Therefore, the education sector should work in concert with the other relevant sectors in the civil service, in order to effectively design strategies which would help in preparing culture-responsive curricula and pedagogy.

### ***5.3.7 The problems that entangled the primary education of the Gamo ethnic group during former regimes***

The primary education delivered during the former regimes in Ethiopia was entangled with a number of problems that instigated the adoption of the Education and Training policy in 1994 in the country.

In this section the problems that constrained the primary first-cycle education for the Gamo ethnic group leading to the adoption of a curricular and pedagogy change shall be analysed in detail.

One of the problems that entangled the curriculum during former regimes is that it did not give recognition to ethnic diversity. The dominant rhetoric was about Ethiopianness or a common national identity, unity and unitary state. Speaking about diversity was considered as dismembering the nation state. Every ethnic group was forced to be assimilated to the dominant culture, which was being propagated as the national culture. As a result, the majority of the Gamo ethnic group members were made to consider everything which belongs to the ethnic group as worthless, and to adopt the culture and values of the dominant Amhara ethnic group.

The Amharic language, due to the status it enjoyed during the reign of Emperors Menelik II and Haile Sellassie I, was considered as the only language with a written script or alphabets and viable for education. As a result, the other languages were downgraded and discouraged to be used in education and communication. The schools imposed the Amharic language on the students of the Gamo ethnic group, whether they knew or did not know the Amharic language. However, the Gamo ethnic group had its own language and culture which were the bases for the ethnic group.

The social, psychological and cultural impositions from the dominant groups highly damaged the dignity of the ethnic group, and impoverished the people. This is to say that, if for instance you were eating *kurkuffa*, which is Gamo traditional food, you were

made not to be proud of it. You were insulted as *kurkuffa*-eaters and drinkers of skimmed milk or *arera*, in Amharic. By doing this, the Amharas stripped the Gamos of their culture and heritage. In expressing his personal experience, an interviewee said:

I was one of the individuals who tasted the bitterness of the system, and we suffered a lot. You speak, play and tell a joke in your vernacular language as a kid, and using that language was seen as shameful. Even I suspected that most of the teachers who promoted the superiority of Amharic were not Amharas. Most of the teachers were Oromos, but they compelled us to speak Amharic (C1E2).

The onslaught from the imposed culture was so pervasive that there was no order and respect for elders among the Gamo people, and criminal acts became rampant in the society. The ethnic group was spoiled by telling lies and giving false witnesses in courts. There was no settlement of dispute and reconciliation, even in the event of going to the Federal Supreme Court (the Higher Level Court in the country). The youngsters considered the culture as old and out-of-date, not worthy of emulation.

### ***5.3.8 The policy provisions in the post-1991 era***

The new Education and Training Policy which was adopted in the post-1991 era resolved the problems which shackled the Gamo ethnic group during the former regimes in Ethiopia, by granting recognition and respect for the ethnic group as a people. The Policy also granted to the different ethnic groups in Ethiopia the right to reflect the culture and identity of the Gamo people in the primary first-cycle curriculum. However, the intentions of the policy documents were not properly implemented by the various government structures. One of the participants sadly stated the failure of the government officials to implement the intentions of the policy like this:

I worked as a teacher and office worker but I never came across government officials encouraging us to hold on to our cultural values, for they are useful. What the government bureaucrats in the area did was just to pass on to the people what had been

sent from the central government. Because of this the people are forgetting the very crucial things in the Gamo culture (C1E1).

The policy provision was a scientific one which is aligned with internationally accepted principles. It was also a problem-solver. The medium of instruction for the children of the Gamo ethnic group became the *Gamotso* language, and that was a success or victory by itself. This was because learning in the language one knows well rather than struggling to learn through a language which one did not know lightened the burden of learning. In addition, the mother tongue helped the children to know their environment, and thereby easily read, listen and understand, and thus facilitate their learning. Now it was the responsibility of the people to avail themselves of this opportunity provided by the policy and to take steps to develop their own culture and language (C1E1).

The policy provision was an affirmation of the inalienable right which is granted to human beings by nature. It is not something which should be considered as a gift from anybody. In the past many people fought for this right in Ethiopia. The right given to the Gamo ethnic group to learn through the medium of its vernacular language was a proper right. However, Gamo ethnic group have not made proper use of the provisions of the policy. They are the ones who should develop their education system, based on this noble provision. They have to make comments when they see problems in it (C1E2).

In expressing the elegance of the policy provisions for the Gamo ethnic group by drawing a distinction with the problems which prevailed during former regimes, one of the informants argued:

Now we are granted the right to use our language publicly as a working language in offices and to preserve our culture. In the past a person who spoke *Gamotso* was not seen as equal to a person who speaks the Amharic language, due to the prevailing perception. The policy provided us with the opportunity to publicly demonstrate our identity. It also gave the Gamo ethnic group the opportunity to clearly identify and reflect

on the historical contributions of the ethnic group to the country and the prevailing culture in the community. By the time the use of the vernacular language as a working language in the offices was initiated, a unified language drawn from the languages of four ethnic groups akin to each other, that is, the Wolayta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro people. The language was known as the *Wogagoda* language. However, after the separation of these ethnic groups into different Zones, the use of the vernacular language as a working language in offices had been terminated and replaced by Amharic (C1E3).

### **5.3.9 Conclusion**

The Gamo ethnic group has a distinct ethnic culture and unique value system, which makes it distinct from the rest of the ethnic groups in the country. The most important features which stand out are the administrative system, which it carries out through *dubusha*, an initiation ceremony to the political position of *halaqa*, the celebration of the *mesqel* festivities, the eating style, the dressmaking and dressing style, the farm implements, and dispute resolution. The most important values which represent the Gamo people are, namely living together, working hard, hating begging, truthfulness, and a high respect for women and elders.

Despite the prevalence of these visible cultural elements within the Gamo ethnic group, none of them are well catered for in the present primary first-cycle curriculum. This problem arose from the process of curriculum planning which was not participatory. The curriculum was prepared either by translating the curriculum prepared by the SNNPR Education Bureau, or by writing *Gamotso* language textbooks by the Zone Education Department. Individuals from among the Gamo people who specialized in linguistics participated in the translation of material from Amharic into *Gamotso*. Language teachers took part in the preparation of the *Gamotso* language textbooks.

The whole process of curriculum planning was flawed in that there was lack of proper research involving the local wise men who very well know the culture before the preparation of the curriculum. Those who had been involved in the development of the

curriculum were only those who had an academic qualification. In addition, people who developed the curriculum carried it out hastily, with a lack of commitment and determination.

However, there was a marked difference in the level of catering for the Gamo culture and heritage in the curriculum, between the curricular material developed by translating it from Amharic into *Gamotso*, and directly developing their material by the language teachers. As a result, the *Gamotso* language textbooks better reflect the Gamo culture than the *Herra Sayinsi* (Environment Science) and Mathematics textbooks, which are translations of the Amharic versions developed by the Regional Education Bureau.

The teachers used different kinds of methods to make the pedagogy responsive to the students' culture. They used strategies such as giving local examples, the removal of prejudice and the creation of awareness, engaging students in group debates on cultural issues, and using cultural heritages as teaching aids in the classroom.

The provision of the education policy is a scientific one which aligns with internationally accepted principles. It is an affirmation of the inalienable right, the right to identity, which is granted to human beings by nature, and not by anybody. The responsibility of incorporating the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum primarily hinges on the Education Departments starting from Zone to *Woreda* level. However, the Education Departments alone could not accomplish the task. Therefore, a participatory approach in curriculum development should be applied whereby all the stakeholders should be involved in the curriculum development process. The curriculum experts should go to the community and reconstruct the culture of the Gamo, before trying to develop a culture-responsive curriculum. The local wise men are the main reservoirs of the local culture, and their input is very crucial for enriching the curriculum.

## ***5.4 CURRICULUM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN A CITY SETTING***

In this section the data obtained from case three will be presented and critically analysed. This case study involved one school from the Addis Ababa City Administration, Gulele Sub-city and the City Education Bureau as study sites. The case study focused on the curriculum planning and implementation within the Gamo ethnic group in the Addis Ababa City Administration. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each of the key interviewees, and did classroom and school observation. He also reviewed important documents pertinent to the study. The direct words of the interviewees are reported directly where necessary, but in some sections the data were analysed.

The section is organised in such a way that the distinct features of the culture and the important value systems of the Gamo ethnic group are presented first. Following that, the curriculum planning and implementation processes are presented consecutively. Finally, the conclusion of the issues addressed in this section is presented briefly.

### ***5.4.1 Distinct features of the ethnicity of the Gamo culture and value systems***

Addis Ababa is a city where people from all over the world live, since it is the centre for continental and international organizations. The culture of the Gamo ethnic group in the city is mixed with the cultures of other ethnic groups, and is distinct from the Gamo culture which prevails in the countryside. However, the cultural practices being performed in the city by the uneducated members of the Gamo ethnic group is the same as that in the countryside. The educated people, however, demonstrate a culture alien to the ethnic group.

The Gamo ethnic group has its own identity, culture, language and eating style, which reflect the uniqueness of the ethnic group. The main reflections of the ethnic group's culture, which are clearly demonstrated in the city, are the mourning ceremony for

deceased persons, the cultural hand-woven clothing produced by traditional looms, and the unique eating style.

These aspects which reflect the uniqueness of the Gamo culture are discussed below.

#### ***5.4.1.1 The mourning ceremony***

This mourning ceremony differs from the mourning ceremonies of the other ethnic groups, in that traditional singing and dancing take place during the funeral ceremony for the deceased person. The singing and dancing is in the vernacular language. The traditional singing and dancing during the mourning ceremony does not seem like a mourning ceremony to a stranger, but it takes place whenever the ethnic group members become very sad that they perform the ceremony. For instance, you can see a man singing and dancing when either his mother or father dies. An observer from other ethnic groups may exclaim, “How can this man sing and dance when his mother or father has died?”

The dress code during the mourning ceremony is different depending on the status of the deceased person. For example, whenever heroes and old people die, the mourners (family members and close relatives) wear the traditional dress, called *dunguza*. That is an expression of deep respect and sorrow for the deceased person. When a hero dies, the family members and close relatives carry spears and swords during the mourning ceremony. *Dunguza* is not worn, and a spear and sword is not carried when a child or a youngster dies.

The mourning ceremony of the Gamo ethnic group involves actions performed by men and women. For example, if a child older than eight years dies, and if the family is not a follower of the Protestant religion, there is a special event. When a child older than 8 years dies, the mourning ceremony takes place at a place called *balle*, where a traditional songs and dances will be performed by the community members, along with the families of the deceased. When a youngster who is unmarried dies, the mourners

sing and dance, saying *Ohoo lacho mige*, which literally means 'the deceased is like a blaze of fire that is exciting'. When a young person who is newly married and who does not have any children dies, they have a different way of expressing their grief. There is a special acrobat the mourners perform, known in the *Gamotso* language as *umbursa* or *hirtse*. When the wife of a famous person, like *halaqa* or *kawo*, dies they sing saying *Ohoo esse* which means 'the deceased is like honey'.

When a *halaqa* or *kawo* dies, the mourning ceremony is very special. The mourning ceremony lasts for many days, sometimes up to four days. Since they were the leaders of the people, the song of mourning and dancing is unique. The mourners wear skins of lions and leopards, with an ostrich feather in their hair. They also carry a stick called *tsambaro*, spears and swords. This is to remember their contribution in battle fields, assemblies, and other social affairs. All the contributions are recited during the singing and dancing in the mourning ceremony. On the third day the mourners go around the borders of the territory that was under the leadership of the *halaqa* or *kawo*.

During a time of adversity people support one another. If a person does not attend the mourning ceremony, a social sanction is imposed on him. If a person does not visit a sick person he will be cast out of the community. One of the participants, who belongs to the Amhara ethnic group and is an outsider to the Gamo ethnic group, explained the mourning ceremony like this:

When I saw the mourning ceremony for the first time it was unique to me. I know the culture of the northern part of Ethiopia and when an individual dies, there is no clapping of hands, but here among the Gamo ethnic group there is a clapping of hands and special traditional dances. The mourning ceremony of the Gamo ethnic group has its own artistic quality. There are people who hold spears and shields and lead the mourning ceremony. For a person who does not know the Gamo culture and who watches the mourning ceremony for the first time, the ceremony is surprising (C2D1).

Another participant who does not belong to the Gamo ethnic group expressed the mourning ceremony performed by the Gamo ethnic group living in the school vicinity like this:

Though I am not from the Gamo ethnic group I have been working in this area for the past eight years. I have come to realise their unique mourning ceremony by looking at it in the area. Whenever a family member dies they express their grief by means of a cultural dance. Men and women form different groups and sing and dance separately. I saw spears and shields held by the mourners in the ceremony. The male relatives of the deceased person wear special clothes made of leather (C2D2).

#### ***5.4.1.2 The eating style of the Gamo ethnic group***

The eating style of the Gamo people in Addis Ababa is the same as that of the Gamo people residing in the Gamo Highlands, despite the fact that some people change their style after entering the city. The uneducated people from the Gamo ethnic group residing in the city, especially, kept the cultural practices of the ethnic group intact.

A difference exists between the eating style of the Gamo ethnic group and that of other ethnic groups in Addis Ababa. Certain foods distinguish the Gamo ethnic group from the other ethnic groups. The members of the Gamo ethnic group in the city prepare different kinds of foods, such as *kashka*, *fetela*, *uketsa* and *moydee* (porridge) from maize and wheat flour, and *enset* or imitation banana products like *unchaa* and *bulaa*. There is a food rich in carbohydrate known as *kashka*. They also prepare a special drink known as *borde*, from wheat flour. The *borde* is also prepared in different forms of drinks, like *zaka* and *mara* (which is a mixture of *borde* with barley flour called *besso*). The *borde* is served with a course prepared from a mixture of garlic, ginger and pepper.

Some of the cultural foods of the Gamo people are so widely used, and became so popular in Addis Ababa that even people who do not belong to the ethnic group know them well. Some people have even started to use the cultural foods of the Gamo ethnic group for food. The staple food and drink of the Gamo ethnic group, which enjoy

widespread popularity in Addis Ababa among different ethnic groups, are *kashka* and *borde* respectively. One of the interviewees' stated,

I know food which is prepared from maize flour known as *kashka*. This has become a common foodstuff, which is even shared by other ethnic groups surrounding the ethnic group. Our students bring this food to school and eat it during lunch hour. I also know a traditional drink of the ethnic group known as *borde* (C2D1).

Meat is commonly eaten by the Gamo people in Addis Ababa. The ethnic group members slaughter cattle for *mesqel* celebrations, and enjoy the meat in a group. The meat which is taken to the family household from the public area where the cattle was slaughtered is also eaten by people from the ethnic group in rounds, moving from one person's house to the next.

#### ***5.4.1.3 Dressing and dressmaking styles***

The Gamo ethnic group has a distinct way of dressing and dressmaking which differs from the rest of the ethnic groups. The mode of dress is based on the traditional hand-woven clothes. These traditional hand-woven clothes of the ethnic group are worn by both the men and the ladies during holidays and mourning ceremonies.

The members of the Gamo ethnic group make traditional hand-woven clothes. The main means of livelihood for the Gamo ethnic group members is weaving by using traditional hand-looms. They make fine embroidered material known as *tibeb*, *kuta*, *netella*, *qamis*, *gabi* and *buluko*. A special kind of colourful traditional cloth, known as *dunguza*, is made by the ethnic group members. If we take *netella* and *qamis* people prepare them in different kinds of *tibeb*.

In the past *dunguza* was worn by *halaqa* or *kawo* alone. But nowadays it has become a common item of clothing worn by all the members of the ethnic group, to show the revival of the Gamo culture. Some people regret this, because the new style has lost the original style of dress. The *dunguza* is made by combining it with the modern styles of

dress. The *dunguza* is now being sewn in different modern styles, in the form of a suit, a pair of trousers, a patterned waistcoat, and hats and shirts.

#### ***5.4.1.4 Important values of the Gamo ethnic group***

The first important value of the Gamo ethnic group is the notion of *gome*, which is a misfortune which afflicts a person for the transgression of a traditional rule. A person does not dare to do wrong even if no one sees him. The person does not refrain from bad deeds in fear of law or of being seen by other person, but because doing wrong towards others is seen as taboo, and may result in bad luck.

Refraining from going to work is seen as a sin, thus work enjoys high respect among the Gamo people. There is a strong belief that each person should work hard and depend on his income alone for livelihood. Another important value of the Gamo ethnic group is the value of helping each other in the time of adversity. If a person falls sick people would not simply wait until he dies; instead they collect money for him for when he gets well. This act is known in the Gamo language as *ertsiban*. It is a kind of social medical care programme.

There is a mechanism of resolving conflicts which arises among members of the ethnic group but it varies from community to community. The conflicts are resolved by the famous people in the community called *halaqas*. Whenever a person offends another, the offended person would go and report the case to the *halaqa*. The *halaqa* would hear the story from both sides, and resolve the conflict. In addition, there are community elders who are leaders of the community assemblies, known as *dubusha*. In the assemblies both the offender and offended would present their cases and then the elders passes a decision on the person who was proven to be guilty.

The people also do communal farming work known as *debo* and *jigge*. A community member is allowed to miss doing the communal work on the farm, known as *debo* and *jigge*, only if he has a problem beyond his control. But, due to the introduction of modern

systems of education and administration, people have started to quit the traditional practices.

#### ***5.4.2 The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group***

This section is devoted to the curriculum development process of the present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group, and the merits and demerits of the curriculum in terms of socio-cultural, structural and value responsiveness. The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was developed in the post-1991 era. Like the other ethnic groups' curricula, the curricula of the Gamo ethnic group during the former regimes in Ethiopia suffered different problems. The present primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group was developed being guided by the Education and Training Policy adopted in 1994.

##### ***5.4.2.1 The curriculum planning process***

The primary first-cycle (grades 1-4) curriculum was developed based on the curriculum framework prepared for national use by the Ministry of Education. In the Addis Ababa City Administration the mother tongue was not used as medium of instruction. The textbooks were developed in the Amharic language. This was because there were different ethnic groups in the city. The general curriculum framework which comprises the students' profiles, checklists, flow charts and the syllabi came from the Ministry of Education. It was merely a guideline which indicated what was to be done in the primary first-cycle level. The textbooks and other teaching material were developed by the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau. Other material was prepared at Federal level. The English and Amharic textbooks for the primary first-cycle level for all regions were now being developed by the Federal Government.

The Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau developed textbooks, teachers' guides and material for radio lessons, based on the curriculum framework. The development of the curricular material was done on the basis of the profiles of the

students. The curriculum framework also included a standard for selecting the content which reflected the environmental context of each area. The development of the textbooks was done, based on the standards set in the curriculum framework. The selection of the content was done in collaboration with the school community. Thereafter the scope and sequence for all subjects were determined, depending on the content selected.

Different views exist among the curriculum experts on the responsiveness of the curriculum development process to the socio-cultural and structural context of the different ethnic groups in the city. One of the interviewees argued in favour of curriculum responsiveness to socio-cultural and structural context in the following way:

The textbook drafts are prepared by the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, using the contents selected by means of community participation. The social, economic and political contexts of the ethnic groups were taken into consideration during the involvement of the stakeholders in providing their feedback on the textbook drafts. The stakeholders drawn from the different ethnic groups in the city were allowed to identify the elements omitted and the shortcomings of the draft textbooks. The textbooks were rewritten by incorporating the feedback from the stakeholders before they were dispatched to the schools (C2E1).

Another interviewee held a view contrary to the view presented above. This interviewee argued the absence of room for responsiveness to the socio-cultural and structural context of the different ethnic groups in the city in the curriculum planning process like this:

The materials were prepared based on the curriculum framework and the guidelines, and there was no possibility to add or subtract from what had been suggested. If attempts were made to be responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the different ethnic groups in the city, there may be deviation from the framework and the guidelines. However, attempts have been made to reflect the culture of the ethnic groups

in the subject environmental science though it is not complete and free from limitations (C2E2).

The non-responsiveness of the curriculum development process to the socio-cultural and structural context of the different ethnic groups in the city was clearly evident from the fact that the culture, eating style, customs and language of the ethnic groups were not represented in the curriculum at all. Unlike in the Regional States, children from the different ethnic groups in Addis Ababa city were not taught in their vernacular languages.

#### ***5.4.2.2 The level of cultural responsiveness***

The culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group were not reflected in the present primary first-cycle curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration. This was because it was thought to be difficult to incorporate the culture of all the ethnic groups in the primary first-cycle curriculum (grades 1-4). The ethnic group's language was not used as a medium of instruction and communication. Even in the school being studied the teachers and the students who belong to the ethnic group, though they make up the majority, did not use the *Gamotso* language for communication, let alone for instruction. This was because the Amharic language which is the working language of the Federal Government was used as medium of instruction and communication.

The cultural practices which distinguish the Gamo ethnic group are not incorporated in the curriculum. When you look at the textbooks you do not find anything which speaks about the Gamo ethnic group. It is also hard to find these practices in the schools. However, we see these cultural practices only during the celebration of holidays in the community. The *mesqel* holiday is highly celebrated by the ethnic group, and you see the traditional dresses of the ethnic group worn by its members for the holiday.

There exists a range of opinions on the incorporation of the culture and heritage of the ethnic groups and the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in the primary

school curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration. Some of the interviewees embrace the opinion that the setting of the Regional States lends itself to the incorporation of the culture and heritage of the ethnic groups in the curriculum. However, the context of the Addis Ababa City Administration comprises diverse ethnic groups and represents national setting rather than the setting of a single ethnic group. As a result, the curriculum was developed in the Amharic language and reflects national issues. In justifying the act of the Addis Ababa City Administration about the curriculum not catering for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group an interviewee argued that,

The children who attend our school are not only the children from the Gamo ethnic group. For instance, there are children who come from the Oromo, Amhara, Sidama, Tigre and other ethnic groups. Thus, the curriculum embraces the culture of all these ethnic groups by taking samples from each. Concerning heritage it encourages the teachers to discuss the heritages of different cultures just by presenting the culture of some ethnic groups under the topic (C2T3).

Another interviewee held the same opinion where he attributed the failure to properly implement the policy provisions in the curriculum development process by the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau to the diversity of the ethnic groups situated in the city:

The Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau prepares textbooks based on the curriculum framework prepared by the Federal Ministry of Education for national use. Since there are many ethnic groups in the city it is difficult to cater for the culture, language, and identity of the ethnic groups in the process of curriculum development in Addis Ababa. The working language of the Federal Government is Amharic, and this is a major problem that hinders the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction for primary education in Addis Ababa (C2E1).

However, other interviewees held different views. They argued that an attempt has been made to cater for the culture and heritage of some of the ethnic groups especially in environmental science and civic and ethical education subjects at primary first-cycle education. The content of the curriculum tried to reflect at least the cultures of some of the ethnic groups, though not the cultures of all eighty ethnic groups that reside in the city. It is true that the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction has not materialised for all ethnic groups. One interviewee explained how the Gamo culture is systematically dominated by other cultures in the Addis Ababa City Administration in the name of promoting a common national curriculum:

I teach aesthetics and environmental science subjects and there is a topic which discusses heritages in grade 4. However, under 'heritages' it is only the culture of the three majority ethnic groups like Amhara, Oromo, and Tigray that are reflected in the curriculum. We do not find the Gamo culture specifically in the curriculum but it is mingled with the other ethnic groups within the SNNPR (C2T2).

The Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau simply prepared the teaching material, based on the curriculum framework and guidelines set by the Federal Government. The Education Bureau could not prepare the material differently to what was suggested in the curriculum framework. This is due to the fact that it did not have the mandate to alter anything suggested in the curriculum framework. Even when the need for curriculum revision arose, it could be carried out by the Ministry of Education. If incorporating the culture and heritages of the ethnic groups was thought to be necessary and feasible, it could be done only at the Federal Government level when the curriculum framework is prepared.

#### ***5.4.2.3 The level of responsiveness to the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group***

One of the curriculum experts, C2E1, argued that the specific culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group were not articulated in the curriculum. This was

due to the fact that the curriculum development process was not properly informed by the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group.

The pretext used for not catering for the specific culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum was the argument that the Addis Ababa City Administration is a place where members from the eighty ethnic groups in the country lived, even if some ethnic groups were represented by very few residents. Some people called the city a mini Ethiopia. However, the curriculum treated the cultures of the major ethnic groups, and by doing so it promoted impartiality to cultures. This was proof for the feasibility of incorporating the cultures of the ethnic groups in the curriculum.

One of the curriculum experts interviewed indicated the impartiality of the curriculum in catering for the cultures of the ethnic groups inhabiting the city, in the following way:

I had the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the grade 4 textbook. In grade 4 Environmental Sciences the cultures of the Amhara, Oromiyya and the SNNPR are reflected to a certain extent under the topic 'Ethiopia our country'. However, the textbook does not specifically reflect the culture of the Gamo ethnic groups in detail (C2E2).

A brief review of the Environment Sciences textbook confirmed the argument of the curriculum expert. The grade 4 Environmental Sciences textbook has one chapter which is devoted to Ethiopian peoples, cultures, civilisations and heritages. The chapter covers ten pages and discusses the cultures, civilisations and heritages of the ethnic groups of Northern Ethiopia. Four pages in the book are devoted to introducing the great Ethiopian thinkers, among whom no one is from the Gamo ethnic group. All the individuals who are presented as great Ethiopian thinkers are those who belong to the ethnic groups of Northern Ethiopia.

#### ***5.4.2.4 The level of responsiveness to the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group***

The Gamo ethnic group has its own specific values. However, these values are not reflected in the curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration. The curriculum reflects neither the culture nor the values of the Gamo ethnic group. An interviewee stated how only one event in the school is assigned for children to reflect their community culture like this:

There is a day assigned for celebrating the cultures of the ethnic groups in the country, every 29th day of the month of November. During this celebration every aspect of the cultures of all the ethnic groups are presented, including the eating style, and the singing and dancing of the ethnic groups. During the *mesqel* and Epiphany celebration, the dress styles and the singing and dancing of the ethnic groups are reflected, and our children know these things just by looking at the actions performed during the holidays. We look at the children performing the cultural activities which they imitated from the elder members of their ethnic groups (C2T3).

In the absence of a single topic which speaks about the Gamo ethnic group we cannot say that the curriculum is responsive to the specific values of the ethnic group. When we make a careful examination of the textbooks we do not find the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group, such as honesty, hard work, and respecting your elders. This is due to the fact that members of the ethnic group were not involved in the curriculum planning process. There will not be any chance for incorporating the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group unless people who know the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group well participate in the curriculum planning process and contribute their knowledge of the culture of the ethnic group.

Addis Ababa city is the home of all ethnic groups of the country. The primary first-cycle curriculum of the region focuses on the common national values which are supposed to be shared by all ethnic groups rather than the values of a single ethnic group. Therefore, there is no chance for reflecting the Gamo ethnic group's values in the

curriculum. The failure of the curriculum to incorporate the values of the ethnic group has a devastating effect. In Addis Ababa city today the Gamo ethnic group's values are non-existent, not only among the students but also among their parents. The researcher could find these values with the grandparents, and they are on the verge of extinction. Therefore, the only way is to cater for the Gamo ethnic group's values in the curriculum.

#### ***5.4.3 The culture, language and identity-responsive pedagogy for the Gamo people in Addis Ababa schools***

The curriculum is highly prescriptive and does not have room for making use of culture-responsive pedagogy by the teachers in the classroom. The teachers are obliged to work according to the curriculum. If the curriculum allows for a culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom it would have been easier to materialise it through inclusive ways or mainstreaming. Thus, the pedagogy used by teachers is not responsive to the culture, language and identity of children who belong to the Gamo ethnic group. In the subject Aesthetics, which consists of music, art and sport, there is a better prospect of making use of a culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom. Students sing and dance the songs and dances of their culture in the Aesthetics class. However, there are teachers who take the initiative of teaching students about the Gamo ethnic group as one of the ethnic groups in the country. They tell the students about the distinct features of the Gamo culture under general topics in the curriculum. For instance, there is a topic on heritages in the subjects Aesthetics and Environmental Science. Although nothing is stated about the Gamo culture and heritage in the curriculum, the teachers teach the students about the Gamo culture and heritage.

In addition, a number of teachers resort to the extra-curricular activities (clubs at school, specifically the music and drama clubs) in order to teach the Gamo culture and heritage. Children who come from the families of the Gamo ethnic group make great things in these clubs. The students bring traditional clothes to school and perform cultural songs and dances. These performances are so appealing that teachers who descend from the ethnic group sometimes join the students. The clubs also serve as a forum for sharing

concerns between the teachers and students. An interviewee remembers one event like this:

At one time a rumour was heard that the heritages of the ethnic group are smuggled into the city and are being sold. As a result, our school passed a message to the students that they should notify the police if they found the heritages of the Gamo ethnic group being sold illegally. For example, there are heritages being sold, such as a shield, a kind of stick known as *tsambaro*, and spears and swords are being smuggled by illegal traders from the Gamo highlands to the city (C2T3).

The teachers from the ethnic group also allowed the students to bring from their homes the heritages, cultural food, clothes and materials used in hand-weaving and exhibit them at concerts and exhibitions. The school that was visited for purposes of observation in this study is situated in the area widely inhabited by members of the Gamo ethnic group. As a result, more than eighty percent of the students come from this ethnic group. Since most of the students belong to the Gamo ethnic group they perform these cultural activities at school with ease.

#### ***5.4.4 The consideration of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of the students***

The crux of a culturally-responsive pedagogy is the validation and affirmation of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students.

Students receive different experiences from their homes through the ethnic group's language, but in the classroom their education is being delivered in the Amharic language. Therefore, there is discontinuity between prior-experiences and the teaching-learning process. The teaching-learning process is based on the experiences students have from their environment. However, the teachers do not base their instruction on the language and cultures which the students acquire at their homes.

In terms of cultural experiences, what students receive at school is completely different from their experiences at home. This is because the students in the school come from different ethnic groups, and there is no way to address the prior-experiences of all the students in the classroom. The Gamo ethnic group enjoys a despised status, and is considered as a minority group in the country, and consequently, no attention is given to their culture and heritage in the curriculum and pedagogy.

When you teach you do not directly start from what has been written in the curriculum. The teachers just listen to the students to know their experiences at home, and base the teaching-learning process on these experiences. When a curriculum is developed it is based on the experiences of the students obtained in their families and their environments. Thus, those who would benefit at school are the ones who come from ethnic groups whose cultures and heritages are catered for in the curriculum. This is due to the fact that the cultural experiences that children bring from home align with their learning experiences in the curriculum.

At school the students use the language which all the students can understand, and they ignore the language they speak at home. It would be better if the students were allowed to communicate in the language they know well. The students should be allowed to explain things in the language they use to explain those things at home. The students are exposed to new concepts when they come to school. At times they are allowed to share the concepts they use and take from others the concepts they use at home and in the environment.

Education begins in the family, and what students do at school is to widen what they have received from their families at home. The first-cycle of primary education curriculum introduces the children to the things which are in their environment. The teachers who teach in the school being studied were born and brought up in the area where the school is situated and have graduated from colleges. The teachers also belong to the Gamo ethnic group and when something is difficult for the students, the

teachers can support them because of their intimacy to the students. Therefore, it is easier for teachers who come from the Gamo ethnic group to communicate with the students. But the teachers argue that they cannot help the students in the *Gamotso* language at school because the curriculum does not allow the use of other ethnic groups' languages as media of instruction, and school-wide communication.

#### ***5.4.5 Indicators of the link between school knowledge and the local culture***

There are different yardsticks which help to measure the responsiveness of curriculum to the culture and values of the students. Students learn best, become highly motivated and demonstrate pride in their culture and identity when the school curriculum is developed, based on their cultures, experiences and perspectives. Adversely, students face high levels of educational difficulty and failure, and often drop out of school when the education at school is not linked with their own cultures, experiences and perspectives.

In this section the responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and values of the Gamo ethnic group is measure, based on some benchmarks prepared based on the literature reviewed.

##### ***5.4.5.1 Compatibility between what students are being taught and the local culture***

In the Addis Ababa setting, what children learn at school actually does not align with the Gamo ethnic culture. This problem stems from the curriculum which is non-responsive to the Gamo culture. The curriculum had not been prepared by involving people who know the culture of the Gamo ethnic group. For example, there are cultural elements which typically reflect the Gamo culture in the city, such as handweaving, the mourning ceremony, conflict resolution, arbitration, and respect for elderly people. These cultural elements are not included in the curriculum. The problem in respect of the curriculum has been best explained by one interviewee as follows:

As a matter of chance I had the opportunity to teach children who come from households of the Gamo ethnic group, and they learn the subjects in the name of the Ethiopian culture. Among the subjects they learn is a subject called Aesthetics, which integrates the three subjects Music, Sport and Art together. These integrated subjects emphasise in teaching students through play about their environment and the culture of the ethnic group from which they descend. Unfortunately, you do not find anything and any topic about the Gamo culture in this subject (C2P1).

Another interviewee expressed the incompatibility between the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the children acquire from their ethnic culture and school using this illustration,

There is incompatibility between the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the children acquire from their ethnic cultures and their schools. In the Gamo culture there are common sports such as acrobatics, *gebexa* [*hircho* in the Gamotso language] and horse-riding. However, the curriculum does not cater for these sports (C2P1).

The effect of the non-alignment between what children learn at school and the Gamo culture is so detrimental to the students who come from Gamo households that it hampers their involvement in the process of preserving and developing their ethnic culture. One of the parents expressed what she has experienced as a teacher in the following way:

I had the opportunity to teach all the subjects in these grades. In Environmental Science it asks the students to speak about their culture, but apart from this, it does not say anything about Gamo culture. In this subject the teacher is asked to make the students perform their cultural dances, and to tell how the cultural foods of the ethnic groups are prepared. But how can a student from the Gamo ethnic group do this freely? From my experience I saw children from other ethnic groups speaking boldly about their culture, but not the children from the Gamo ethnic group. This is due to the fact that nothing has been taught at school about the strong Gamo culture. The children from the Gamo

ethnic group tell about other cultures, and perform the cultural dances of other ethnic groups comfortably (C2P3).

The incompatibility also creates the problem of discontinuity in the students' learning and development. This is clearly evident from the children's performance at home and in the community. At home the children learn how to spin and weave while supporting their parents, but the school does not provide an opportunity to develop these skills. The children get good marks in written tests, but when they are examined in practical things at home and in the community they fail dismally.

Another area of the non-alignment between school knowledge and the local culture is language. The medium of instruction for all subjects and the medium of communication at school is the Amharic language. The language widely used in the community is the *Gamotso* language. As a result, the students become well-versed in Amharic, at the expense of their ethnic language.

#### ***5.4.5.2 The students' level of motivation to learn the new curriculum and their overall achievement***

There is a difference among students depending on the home from which they come. There are home-related and environment-related causes that place restrictions on the motivation and achievement of the students. Most students support their families in domestic works such as weaving, spinning, and running errands. A student's motivation to learn may be good, but they may have problems at home and the environment, and even at school. The result is low academic achievement.

One of the interviewees explained the difficulty the mismatch between the cultural experiences children come to school with, and the learning experiences at school, in the motivation and achievement of the students, namely

When we base on language it will create a problem in the student's motivation and overall results. If the parents communicate with their children at home in the *Gamotso* language, children will know the name of something in their vernacular language, but when they learn about that thing at school they are confused. This can cause a decline in their overall academic achievement. A contradiction is created in the students' minds when the name of a thing which they know in their vernacular language has a different name at school in another language. The students are evaluated, not in terms of what they know in their own language, but based on what is in the curriculum and what they have been taught in class (C2T1).

The students who attend formal primary first-cycle education are younger in age and are born and brought up in the city of Addis Ababa. As a result they know the language used at school and in the wider communication in the city. They can easily communicate with their neighbours and friends in Amharic, even if they communicate with their families in the *Gamotso* language. Therefore, when they come to school they can easily learn through the medium of instruction assigned for the schools in the city. They are motivated and achieve good results. It is not probable that these students will drop out of school because of language difficulty.

However, there are students who come to school without knowing the language of instruction. These are students who come from the countryside and belong to the Gamo ethnic group. These students experience difficulty in communicating in Amharic and do not understand the subjects being taught at school in Amharic. It is not only the students who face difficulty, but also the teachers who do not belong to the Gamo ethnic group who are involved in teaching the students. One interviewee who belongs to the Gamo ethnic group narrated her experience like this:

When I get students who experience problems in communicating in Amharic I speak to them in the *Gamotso* language. I give them advice in *Gamotso* on how they should study, and identify what their problems are. There are students who have shown significant improvement after the advice. Whenever I support students from the Gamo

ethnic groups in this way I take great caution that the students from the other ethnic groups do not hear. This is because such kind of action is prohibited at school because all students should be treated equally. I talk to students from the Gamo ethnic groups separately and guide them on how to learn to communicate in Amharic (C2T2).

Children who come from the Gamo highlands are subject to many difficulties in learning the primary first-cycle curriculum. This is because the subjects they learn do not reflect their culture, but they simply introduce the children to new cultures. This creates a problem in engaging the students in their learning, because they rather become passive and distant observers than participant learners. Instead of playing, working and learning with the other students, they become silent bystanders, and demonstrate incapability. One participant illustrated this problem using the following example:

If we take the *gena* game from the Aesthetics textbook as an example, children from the Gamo ethnic group do not know this game and its rules. This is because the game is not played in their neighbourhood. Thus they become confused when they have to play this traditional game. As a matter of chance, I also taught children who belong to the Amhara ethnic group, who came from the countryside. When they were taught the same *gena* game they could easily understand it. This is because the game is being played in their locality (C2P1).

Another participant observed the problem which children who come from the Gamo highlands face because of the non-responsiveness of the curriculum to the Gamo culture and heritage from a different angle. The participant indicated this problem using the example:

For example, there may be concepts which are difficult for the students to understand in class, and if they want clarification on the concepts from their parents/guardians at home, the parents/guardians could not explain it because they do not know the concepts due to cultural difference between school education and the ethnic culture (C2P2).

The other problem children who come from the Gamo highlands face is a language-related one. The students do not understand the subjects because they are taught in a language they do not understand. Because of this problem the students do not actively participate in the teaching-learning process and do not learn what they are supposed to.

The primary first-cycle is a stage where the children are supposed to know their identity. But at this stage education is still imposing the identity of others on the children from different ethnic groups. The children from the Gamo ethnic group imitate and adopt others' identity at the expense of their own at school. This causes the children not to get answers to the question of who they are, and where they come from. In the long run this will have an adverse effect on the students, leading to psychological disorders, and them developing a feeling of inferiority.

The overall results of students who experience difficulty in communicating in Amharic in the first-cycle primary education cannot be seen as satisfactory. The students reach grade 4 without clearly developing the skills of reading and writing. As a result the administration of the school being observed in this study has prepared a plan to improve the reading, writing and arithmetic skill of these children, by convincing language and mathematics teachers to give make-up classes.

Usually there is high a drop-out rate in the school being studied, due to a variety of reasons. During the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013, of the 2 270 students who were registered, 111 students dropped out. A detailed investigation is necessary to identify the reasons why. However, the school identified child labour-abuse, a lack of nutrition, and problems with the curriculum as the main reasons. The school director explained the situation like this:

Most children who attend the school come from the countryside and do not live with their parents. These students work at night and attend classes during the day. Since they do not get enough sleep at home they sleep in class while being taught. There are also students who come to school hungry due to the low economic status of their parents.

These students think of what they could eat while attending classes. There are also students who come to school without knowing the language of instruction. These children cannot get acquainted with the curriculum easily, and drop out of school (C2D2).

#### ***5.4.5.3 The students' level of pride in their culture, language and identity***

Students who come from Gamo households consider the school-world as a better one than their community as a result they are not proud of the world where they live in. They are embarrassed by the food of their culture, their clothes, their language, and their identity. These embarrassments emanate from the fact that they are not taught their culture, language, history and identity. If the curriculum presents the opportunity for and magnifies the culture, language and history of the ethnic group, the students will demonstrate pride in their culture and identity. When the students play together and communicate among themselves at school, those from the Gamo ethnic group demonstrate submissiveness to the others who dominate them.

The observation made in the school compound confirmed that students from the Gamo ethnic group who are not well-versed in the Amharic language do not easily socialise and integrate with students from the other ethnic groups on the playgrounds. They become shy and keep to themselves, away from the other students playing games. The students from the Gamo ethnic group could not use the Gamo ethnic group's language at school and they do not play any kinds of games played in their community. In their community the students play games related to the culture of their ethnic group, such as pseudo-weaving, using leftover threads which were discarded by their parents, and practice the dances and acrobatic tricks performed by the grown-ups during mourning ceremonies.

There is an activity at school that encourages the students to be proud of their culture, language and identity which happens once a year in the month of November. During the celebration the children from each ethnic group are allowed to come to school wearing

traditional clothes, they perform their traditional dances, and bring to school their traditional food. However, equal opportunities are not granted to all the cultures. Some cultures are given the chance to present a play in the form of a drama. Sometimes the children from the Gamo ethnic group come to school wearing the traditional clothes of other ethnic groups. They do this just to present themselves as members of another ethnic group, and to avoid being despised.

One interviewee who belongs to the Gamo ethnic group narrated her personal experience like this:

Both the members of the Gamo ethnic group and the other ethnic groups do not see the Gamo culture as equal with others. I had the personal experience as a teacher, namely that when I tried to speak to a student in the classroom in the Gamotso language, the child brought his parents to school, and I was warned not to speak the language in class again. The parents feared that their child would be despised and mocked by the other students if he speaks the Gamotso language (C2P3).

#### ***5.4.6 Suggestions for making the curriculum and pedagogy culture-responsive***

In order to make the primary first-cycle curriculum responsive to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group, and thereby making it best serving the purpose of preserving and developing the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group, different measures were suggested by the participants.

This section discusses these suggestions in detail.

When a curriculum is developed it should be based on culture, else it has the likelihood result of lower outcomes in education. One of the cultural elements is language. Every ethnic group needs to learn through the medium of its mother tongue. This is also an issue of human rights which has an international backing. Learning through the mother

tongue has the great potential of preserving culture. A relevant curriculum will be more responsive to the mother tongue.

It is advised that an opportunity be provided for students from the Gamo ethnic group to learn through the medium of their vernacular language, and be exposed to the values of the ethnic group. This in turn, would create a favourable condition for the development of the language and culture. Though the delivery of education through the medium of the *Gamotso* language throughout the city is improbable, there has to be special schools where the language can be used. This will provide the people who want to learn this language with the opportunity, so that it can develop. One of the interviewees said in this respect,

I have a stand that the Gamo language should be given as a subject in the curriculum in a special class. The subject should teach the language, culture and values of the ethnic group. In addition, it will be helpful if newspapers and magazines are available in the Gamo language. The Gamo language uses the Latin script, and only those who live in the Gamo Gofa Zone know the script. Therefore, if the language is given as a subject it will give us the opportunity to learn the new script (C2P3).

It is the ideal that the written material such as books and journals be developed in the *Gamotso* language. It is also the ideal that reference books are written, which refer to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group. This in turn, may arouse the interest of the members of the ethnic group to learn the language, and lead it to development.

It would be good to make use of teachers who belong to the Gamo ethnic group in teaching children from the Gamo ethnic group. This is because these teachers would be mindful of the students' needs, and provide them with the necessary support. If the teachers are from the Gamo ethnic group, they will no doubt take care of the students. In order to make schools considerate of the culture of the ethnic groups, special training on the culture and values of the ethnic group should be offered for school teachers and

administrators. After the training, a mechanism should be developed in order to bring about change in the methodology of teaching.

However, some people argue the improbability of devising a curriculum which specifically caters for the Gamo culture in Addis Ababa, because the city houses different ethnic groups. Nevertheless, if the matter is considered, it may be possible to make the education suitable to the culture, language and identity of the children of the Gamo ethnic group. The present curriculum caters for the culture of some of the ethnic groups, while the culture of the Gamo ethnic group is neglected. The Gamo culture can be included, to some extent, in the subjects Environmental Science and Aesthetics. In Environmental Science topics which help the students to understand the Gamo culture can be treated by providing equal opportunities for all ethnic cultures found in the city.

If presenting the Gamo language as one subject is difficult in the Addis Ababa setting, the curriculum, at least, needs to address the culture of all the ethnic groups equally . The curriculum should not only address the cultures of the Amhara, Oromo, and Tigre. It is a vague implication when we simply say our unity is our strength, and our diversity is our beauty.

The culture of the Gamo ethnic group can be incorporated in the subject Aesthetics in such a way that the students are allowed to sing and perform the Gamo cultural songs and dances. They should also be permitted to learn to play the different musical instruments of the ethnic group. All this should be incorporated in the curriculum and in the teaching-learning process, so that the children may get the opportunity to develop the skills they acquired from their culture. The traditional sports of the Gamo ethnic group, such as acrobatics, *gebexa*, and horseriding should be incorporated in the curriculum. In the development of the textbooks an explanation of these traditional sports should be included in detail.

The co-curricular activities involve singing and dancing, preparing cultural food, knitting traditional clothes, etc., in various clubs in the schools. The different clubs include an arts club, a culture club, a knowing-the-environment club, and the culture of the ethnic group could be integrated with these activities. The co-curricular activities provide an opportunity for the students to build on the lessons they receive from the formal curriculum.

The personnel who plan the curriculum should involve people from the ethnic group which include teachers, educationists, and others who know the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum-planning process, and incorporate their input about culture in the curriculum. If culture is incorporated in the textbooks and taught in the schools the culture, language and identity of the ethnic group will be preserved. Responsible bodies should study the history, culture and identity of the Gamo ethnic group and present the findings to the Gamo people so as to allow them to make them aware of their culture and heritage and help them identify things which could be incorporated in the curriculum. If awareness is created among the members of the ethnic group they may exert pressure on the elites for the incorporation of the history and culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum.

Members of the Gamo ethnic group should participate in the process of planning and implementing the curriculum. These also include the stakeholders in education such as students, teachers and parents. This will help to produce citizens in the students who will publicly declare their identity.

The teaching-learning process can be made culture-responsive. Members of the Gamo ethnic group can be invited as guest teachers into schools and teach children from the ethnic group about the Gamo ethnic group through drama. If the Gamo language is given as a subject, the teachers should be drawn from members of the ethnic group. When the Gamo language is presented as a subject there will be wider opportunities to address many topics about the culture, language and identity of the ethnic group, like

dressing, mourning, and the administrative system of the Gamo ethnic group. At school the children should be allowed to prepare commentaries and distribute leaflets which explain the culture, history and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group.

Preserving the culture, language and identity of an ethnic group is crucial and beneficial, not only to the ethnic group itself, but also to the country at large. This is because the culture, language and identity of an ethnic group are the property of the country as a whole. An awareness creation campaign and promotional activities should be done, since the culture, language and identity of an ethnic group may disappear because of a lack of awareness. One of the interviewees expressed the viability of catering for these aspects like this:

The curriculum needs to be fully responsive to our context. It needs to incorporate the values of all the ethnic groups in the country. It is possible and easy to incorporate the culture, language and identity of the ethnic groups. Thus, it is possible to address the issue in each subject, especially in history and in English, in the form of passages (C2E2).

The cultures and values of all ethnic groups in the country are not given fair treatment in the curriculum of Addis Ababa City. Some traditional games of the Amhara ethnic group are included in the curriculum, but you do not find anything about the Gamo ethnic group and its culture in the curriculum. The problem emanates from the process of curriculum planning which shows partiality to dominant groups. Thus, the curriculum development process needs to be free from domination and impartiality. It should not indicate favouritism towards one language, one religion, one culture, and even one subject. Equal treatment should be given to all languages, religions, and cultures in the curriculum, in the form of pictures, words and its history.

Instead of merely writing a narrative about a given language in a textbook, it is ideal that students learn the language by speaking it. Instead of putting a picture to illustrate a given culture on a textbook or blackboard , it would be better to have the students wear

the traditional clothes of the culture and to perform their traditions in shows, in order to promote the culture. These aspects could be treated in different ways, such as field trips, role playing and mock performances.

#### ***5.4.7 The problems that entangled the basic education of the Gamo ethnic group during former regimes***

The curriculum and pedagogy of the pre-1991 era is entangled by different problems that are against the culture. One of these problems, which entangled the curriculum and pedagogy of the Gamo ethnic group prior to 1991, is language. There was no place for the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction. This was a problem in itself, because the culture, history and custom of an ethnic group could develop when the language of the ethnic group is used as medium of instruction.

Amongst the other problems that shackled the curriculum and pedagogy of the pre-1991 era, are disparity and irrelevance. A problem of disparity existed in terms of serving all the ethnic groups in the country. The lack of relevance was manifested in terms of the non-relatedness of the education to the political, social and economic development levels of the ethnic groups. In addition, the educational policies are also blamed for not being responsive to the students' needs. Another problem was the lack of community and stakeholder participation in the education system. If there is no community and stakeholder participation, the context of the ethnic group for whom the education is destined cannot be properly identified and treated in curriculum and pedagogy.

#### ***5.4.8 The policy provisions in the post-1991 era***

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy adopted in 1994 is a policy which won the admiration of professionals internationally. The policy is accorded international recognition, and is free from problems.

One of the pillars of the Policy provisions is the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary first-cycle education. This provision deviated from the policies of

the previous regimes. The provision of learning by means of a vernacular language is a fundamental right, in terms of social, economic and political equity. This Policy also supports responsiveness to the culture, language, and identity of ethnic groups in the process of curriculum development.

However, weaknesses exist in the implementation of the intentions of the Policy. The curriculum framework, at least theoretically, provides room for the provisions of the Policy. Unfortunately, these provisions have not been fully materialised in the curriculum development process in the Addis Ababa City Administration. Our country has an economic constraint which hinders the full implementation of these noble policy provisions.

#### ***5.4.9 Conclusion***

In Addis Ababa City the Gamo ethnic group demonstrates its own identity, culture, language and eating style, which reflect the uniqueness of the ethnic group. The most important features which reflect the ethnic group's culture are their traditional handwoven dresses and dressing style, the mourning ceremony, and their eating habits. The Gamo ethnic group has different values, such as *gome*, which is a misfortune which befalls a person for transgressing a traditional rule working hard; and depending on one's own income alone for a livelihood; helping one another in adversity through a scheme known as *ertsiban*; and showing high respect for women and elders.

Despite the prevalence of these visible cultural elements within the Gamo ethnic group, none of them are well catered for in the present primary first-cycle curriculum developed for Addis Ababa City. This problem arose from the process of curriculum planning, which was not participatory. The curriculum was developed without the involvement of people who know the Gamo culture. The medium of instruction and textbook language is Amharic. This directly contradicts with the fundamental rights enshrined in both the country's constitution and its educational policy.

The other obstacle for not catering for the Gamo ethnic culture and heritage in the curriculum is the pretext expressed by the curriculum experts of the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau. In the name of promoting national culture and common national values, the curriculum has not indicated impartiality in the treatment of the culture and values of the different ethnic groups residing in the city. The culture and values of the largest ethnic groups such as Oromo, Amhara, and Tigre are catered for in the curriculum, while the culture and values of a nationally minority ethnic group, such as the Gamo were not given any recognition.

Like the curriculum, the pedagogy is non-responsive to the students' culture and heritage. The use of the mother tongue as media of instruction is ignored. Although the teachers who are drawn from the ethnic group have tried to take personal initiatives to use a culture-responsive pedagogy, they have been discouraged by a curriculum which is prescriptive, and the school administration which is prohibitive. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to use extra-curricular activities as avenues to promote the culture and heritage of the ethnic groups. Even here the activities are limited to allowing children from each ethnic group to come to school wearing traditional clothes, performing traditional dances, and bringing culture-specific food to school. In addition, these activities have clearly demonstrated partiality towards the biggest ethnic groups whose cultures receive more publicity.

The provision of the education policy is a scientific one which aligns with internationally-accepted principles. The responsibility of incorporating the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum primarily is the responsibility of all the stakeholders of education. A participatory approach in curriculum development should be applied where all the stakeholders should be involved in the curriculum development process. The Federal Ministry of Education, who is responsible for presenting the National curriculum framework, and the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, who is responsible for the development of the textbooks, should involve people who know the

culture of the Gamo ethnic group, so as to make the curriculum responsive to the culture and heritage of the specific ethnic group.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### ***6.1 INTRODUCTION***

In this chapter the researcher will present the cross-case analysis of the three separate cases treated in the previous chapter. The cross-case analysis anchors on data secured from the three cases, that is, the important policy provisions, which is a stand-alone case and the two similarly-defined cases on curriculum planning and implementation. In order to facilitate the cross-case analysis the evidences from the two similarly-defined cases have been placed in a cross-case matrix (see Appendix J). The cross-case analysis also involved the interpretation of data from both the review of related research on the problem, and the conceptual framework drawn on the one hand, and the empirical investigation on the other. This approach helped in drawing agreements and disagreements between the theoretical and empirical enquiry.

The chapter is thus organised around the key issues or themes which emerged from the three case studies, along with the literature review and the conceptual framework of the study. The key issues or themes are arranged underlying the research questions of the study. The evidence from the two similarly-defined cases is critically analysed by drawing similarities and differences in the key issues or themes between the cases. Finally, all the major issues addressed in the chapter will be presented in a conclusion.

#### ***6.2 THE SALIENT FEATURES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY PROVISIONS***

The critical analysis of the constitutional and policy documents singled out both notable provisions which overtly and covertly support the indigenization approach, and limitations which are the antithesis of the indigenization approach.

Therefore, this section is devoted to critically analysing these salient features and limitations in the light of the literature that was reviewed and the theoretical and conceptual framework.

### ***6.2.1 The salient features of the constitutional and policy provisions***

The country's constitutions and policies have a number of salient provisions which support the indigenization approach. The salient features of the constitutional and policy provisions include the use of local languages as medium of instruction and textbook language, the compensatory measure to increase the participation and enrolment in education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities, and the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach.

These features are discussed in detail subsequently.

#### ***6.2.1.1 The use of the local languages as medium of instruction and textbook language***

The use of the local languages as medium of instruction and textbook language in primary education and teacher training for kindergarten and primary school education is one of the salient features of the Education and Training Policy that support the indigenization approach. The Cultural Policy also contains the similar provision which grants the different nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia the right to the equal recognition of their languages, and of promoting and preserving them, and passing them on to the next generation. The Implementation Strategy considers the students' learning in their mother tongue as crucially important. The Strategy provides ample justification for providing primary school education by means of the mother tongue as medium of instruction.

A review of related research on the problem conveys the message that language is the medium by means of which the content of the ethnicity, culture and identity of a group is formed and transmitted to its offspring (Banks, 2006). One's language is vital for

understanding the cultural reality that surrounds one's life, and for reflecting one's attitude toward your physical environment (Shizha, 2005; Banks, 2006). It has been proven that there is no language which can replace the child's mother tongue in providing her/him with a proper education. The production and transmission of knowledge in one's own language promotes the transformation of a community (Bekele, 2007). Shizha (2007) asserts that language is an important component in incorporating indigenous knowledge and culture into the school curriculum.

However, African schools are presently blamed for using a medium of instruction which lacks Africanness and African rationality, alienates the students from their local communities, disrupts the teaching and learning process, and hampers students' cognitive development and learning outcomes (Shizha, 2005, 2007).

Thus, the policy provision which allows the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction is a critical one, in that it would facilitate the indigenization approach in curriculum studies and development, and thereby help the incorporation of the culture and heritage, and the subsequent transformation, of the marginalized Gamo ethnic group. The language policy of the Imperial and Derg regimes denied the various ethnic groups in the country the use of their indigenous languages as medium of instruction. The language policy of the Imperial and Derg regimes also promoted the domination of the Amharic language over the languages of the rest of the ethnic groups, leading to ethnic insurgencies in the country, which ended the rule of both regimes.

The policy provision which allows the use of the mother tongues as the medium of instruction has been applauded by the interviewees from the Gamo Gofa Zone. They viewed the provision in the policy which grants the right to the Gamo ethnic group to learn through the medium of its own vernacular, as a scientific one which aligns with internationally accepted principles. The Gamo people were granted the right to use their language publicly as working language in offices. The provision is noble for the Gamo

people because in the past a person who spoke the *Gamotso* language was not seen as equal to a person who speaks the Amharic language.

However, the interviewees reflected that the intentions of the policy documents were not properly implemented by the various government structures assigned for this purpose. The medium of instruction for the children of the Gamo ethnic group became the *Gamotso* language, and that was a success or victory in itself. But the message being communicated to the schools by means of the hidden curriculum was so pervasive that it would destroy the confidence of the students to publicly speak and develop their local language. The working language in offices and medium of communication at the schools was Amharic. A unified language drawn from the languages of four ethnic groups akin to one another, that is, Wolayta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro people, known as the *Wogagoda* language, was introduced as a working language in offices during the early years of policy implementation. Unfortunately the use of the vernacular as a working language in the offices was terminated and replaced by Amharic, after the separation of these ethnic groups into different Zones.

The policy provision which allows the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction has also been praised by the interviewees from the Addis Ababa City Administration. The interviewees viewed the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy adopted in 1994, as a policy which won the admiration of professionals internationally, and which was free from problems. They viewed the right given to all ethnic groups in the country to use their mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary first-cycle education as one of the pillars of the provision of the policy.

However, the interviewees argued that weaknesses existed in the implementation of the intentions of the Policy in the Addis Ababa City Administration. The curriculum framework at least theoretically, provided room for the provisions of the Policy. Unfortunately the provisions of the Policy have not been fully materialised in the curriculum development process in the Addis Ababa City Administration. The use of the

mother tongue as medium of instruction and textbook language in primary first-cycle education has not been implemented. If left unresolved the problem would undermine the right of ethnic groups to preserve and develop their language, culture and heritage.

### ***6.2.1.2 The compensatory measure to increase the participation and enrolment in education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities***

The second important provision of the Education and Training Policy, which is an affirmation of the critical theory, is the anticipated compensatory measure which would increase the participation and enrolment in education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities. The Implementation Strategy also adopted a new approach which decentralized the organization of education and devolved the responsibility to the various levels of regional and local administrations.

The post-modern critical perspective advocates that the main task of the curriculum development researchers in this era is the empowering of teachers, peasants, students, and labourers to become leaders in emancipatory education and liberating community. It also envisages a democratic education system which provides hope for all teachers and students, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, language, ability, ethnicity, or age (Slattery, 2006).

Indigenization projects seek to eliminate all types of oppression, to counteract assimilative education, and to ensure the equal representation of all groups in the curriculum (Ismailova, 2004). Thus, the enhancement of the participation and enrolment in education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities covertly affirms the indigenization approach.

The redress of structural inequalities related to identity groups so as to counter the deep-seated structural injustices and systemic patterns of dominance and suppression that privilege dominant groups while denying the marginalised groups economic and

political equality in a society, is a central principle which underpins multicultural education (Bennet, 2011).

Thus, the provision is consonant with the tenets of multicultural education and the indigenisation approach, and very necessary for ensuring social justice in a given society.

### ***6.2.1.3 The development of culture in the content of education, curriculum-structure and approach***

The development of culture in the content of education, curriculum-structure and approach is another notable provision of the Education and Training Policy which is worth of great admiration. The Cultural Policy's strategies call for the inclusion of cultural themes into the educational curricula with the aim of integrating education with culture, and thereby shaping the youth with a sense of cultural identity; and the transmission of educational programs reflecting the various cultures of the country by the mass media institutions in order to promote the cultural knowledge of the people of Ethiopia. The Implementation Strategy attaches education quality to the education's connection with the society's cultural, economic, and political realities and activities. It also suggests the democratization of educational content, and the provision of educational services, by changing the existing curriculum.

Gay (2000) asserts that a relevant curriculum is supposed to include information about the histories, cultures, contributions, experiences, perspectives, and issues of the students' respective ethnic groups. Multicultural curricular projects are ideal for students who come from different ethnic groups, because they are attentive to the students' own culture, history and identity (Pinar, 2003; Bennett, 2011). The multicultural curriculum conceptualizes students and their respective communities as sources and producers of knowledge, and a foundation on which to build new academic knowledge (Sleeter, 2005). The approach of indigenizing the curricula also calls for anchoring the curriculum on traditions, in order to develop locality-specific paradigms (Dominelli, 2005).

This provision in the Policy is noble, seeing that it goes beyond the common approach of adding or infusing cultural contents which had been strongly criticised by Banks (2006). The provision calls for the development of culture in the structure and approach of the curriculum. Thus, the provision could help in countering the basic assumptions, perspectives, paradigms, and values of the dominant mainstream curriculum. If its intentions are properly translated in its implementation it could also promote the development of relevant curricula, which aligns with the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group in the country.

The remarkable provisions of the Federal and Regional Constitutions which aligns with the approach of indigenization, is the equal right granted to every nation, nationality and the people of Ethiopia to preserve its identity and have it respected, and promoted and its heritages, artefacts and history preserved; and the use and development of its own language and culture. The provision of equal right is a noble provision, which would ensure the social justice and equality to which critical theory is committed.

### ***6.2.2 Limitations in the provisions of the constitutions and policies***

Some of the provisions in the country's Constitutions and Policies are against the indigenization thesis. The first provision which is anti-thetical to the indigenization approach is the call for maintaining international standards in the development of the curricula and textbooks.

The Federal Constitution gives the Federal Government the mandate to establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for education, as well as for the protection and preservation of cultural and historical legacies. At the same time the Regional States are expected to formulate and execute state policies, based on the national policy standards and criteria set by the Federal Government. The right which is conferred on the Regional States to formulate and execute regional policies has been systematically restricted by the national policy standards and criteria. Even the Federal Government went beyond the right and duty conferred on it by the Federal Constitution,

and adopted the 1994 Education and Training Policy and the 1997 Cultural Policy, which were seen by the Regional Governments not as policy criteria or standards but as policies which should be implemented as they are. By doing this the Federal Government denied the Regional Governments the right to adopt policies appropriate to their local context.

Another tool which has been used to maintain the standards, and thereby to show strict adherence to the standardization thesis in the country, is the curriculum framework. As both interviewees from the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration argued, the standard of the curriculum has been maintained through the curriculum framework, which is prepared at Federal level by the Ministry of Education. The interviewees further reiterated that catering for the Gamo culture and heritage in the curriculum could be possible only during the time of the development of the curriculum framework. This is due to the fact that the Regions could not entertain issues which have not been set in the national standard. Their role is only to develop textbooks by strictly aligning them with the curriculum framework.

The standardization thesis which was propagated by the positivists and which advocated for a 'one size fits all' approach is an anti-thesis to the indigenization thesis which aligns with the heterogenization or diversity thesis. The standardization approach is non-responsive to the learners' context, and creates a mismatch between what pupils learn and what they live. As a result, the approach leads pupils from marginalized backgrounds to high levels of educational failure by delinking school education with their own experiences (UNESCO, 2009).

The standardization approach is a system devised by the Western world to sustain its dominance and imposition on the marginalized and developing communities. Concrete local conditions could not be properly treated in curriculum and textbook development if the standardization thesis is applied. Therefore, there is a need for the reconceptualization of the indigenization approach in the country's policies and

strategies to ensure that the relevance of the curriculum to the structural and socio-cultural context of the country is to be achieved.

The other limitation of the Education and Training Policy is its call for the blending of traditional knowledge and education with modern knowledge and education in the country's education system. Though the provision is important in its own right, it contains limitations.

Different African scholars favour the blended approach, which integrates indigenous knowledge and education with the relevant aspects of Western knowledge and education as a viable approach which would serve as a stimulant for economic growth in Africa (Bekele, 2007; Tedla, 1992, 1995; Mkapa, 2004; Salia-Bao, 1989; Shibanda, 2006; Shizha, 2006; Teklehaimanot, 2000). However, as Amare (1998) contemplates, for synthesis or blending to take place there has to be similarity in the strands of the two cultures, or a narrower gap between the cultural content of the borrower and the recipient.

A stand-alone indigenization approach, which calls for rooting curriculum studies and development on indigenous foundations and theories, principles and ideas derived from the culture first, and then resorting to a blending approach, which allows an intercultural dialogue among equals, is a viable approach of curriculum studies and development in Ethiopia that can ensure relevance in the education system. The researcher holds this view due to the fact that the indigenous knowledge is not well-established, and is not on par with the dominant mainstream knowledge, and blending under such conditions would not result in proper blending. As the researcher has tried to justify earlier by using the analogy of blending water and oil, which have different densities, the blending approach is not feasible. Thus, the country's policies and strategies have to be rectified in line with the indigenisation approach in order to accommodate the new indigenization approach.

## **6.3 THE INDIGENIZATION OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GAMO ETHNIC GROUP**

### **6.3.1 The distinct features of the Gamo ethnic culture and value systems**

The Gamo ethnic group has a distinct ethnic culture and unique value systems, which makes it distinct from the other ethnic groups in the country. This unique ethnic culture and value systems are clearly evident both in the Gamo Gofa Zone and in the Addis Ababa City Administration, though there is variation in the degree of manifestation.

The Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone has distinct features which reflect the ethnic culture and value systems. These include the administrative system, which it carries out through *dubusha*, the initiation ceremony to the political position of *halaqa*, the celebration of the *mesqel* festivity, the eating habits, the dress-making and dressing style, farm implements, and dispute resolution. This ethnic group has its own unique history and heritages. Some of these features are on the verge of extinction because of the onslaught on them during former regimes.

The main reflections of the Gamo ethnic group's culture in the Addis Ababa City Administration are the mourning ceremony for deceased persons, the hand-woven clothing, produced by means of traditional looms, the wedding and the mourning ceremonies, and the unique eating style. Though these practices are strictly upheld by the uneducated members of the Gamo community, they are given up in favour of the dominant culture by the educated members of the ethnic group in the city.

Banks (2006: 79) portrays a cultural ethnic group as a group that shares a common set of values, experiences, behavioural characteristics, and linguistic traits, that differ substantially from those of other ethnic groups within a society. Membership in such a group is derived not by choice, but through birth and early socialization. The members of the cultural ethnic group are likely to take collective and organised action to support public policies that enhance the survival of the group's culture and ethnic institutions.

Bennett (2011:50) defines an *ethnic group* as a community of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of racial and/or cultural characteristics, such as religion, language, and tradition. According to Falola (2003:9), an *ethnic group* is a cultural group which doubles as a source of identity affirmation, and as a cultural unit, and an agency of power politics. What sustains the group is history and tradition. Established cultural habits in food, attire, literature and music are put to good use to socialize members into a group, to encourage marriages among group members, and to generate a feeling of respect.

The classification of people into various cultures signifies differences among them. The fact that people live in one country and have one national identity does not make all the cultural groups the same. In this sense, any commonalities become secondary, as they are not the major defining factors of each cultural group (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011). This justifies the indigenization from the ethnic group's perspective.

### ***6.3.2 The process of planning, and the level of responsiveness of the curriculum to the socio-cultural and structural context***

The development of the curriculum both in the city and the rural setting have been directed by the national curriculum framework prepared by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone was developed both at Regional and at Zonal level. The curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration was developed both at Federal and Regional level.

The curriculum of the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone is partially responsive to the culture and values of the ethnic group. The curriculum which was developed at Zonal level caters for the culture and heritage of the ethnic group in a better way than the curriculum developed at Regional level. The main reason for this variation emanates from the process of curriculum development. The curriculum for the Gamotso language subject was developed at Zonal level by teachers who have been selected from the ethnic group. The curriculum for the rest of the subjects was developed by translating

the Amharic versions developed by the Regional Education Bureau into the Gamotso language by language professionals. However, the Gamotso language curriculum does not fully reflect the culture and heritage of the ethnic group.

The curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration was developed for all the ethnic groups inhabiting the city. As a result, the Gamo culture and values were completely ignored in the curriculum. The medium of instruction and the textbook language in the city is Amharic. The pretext used to justify the failure to cater for the Gamo culture and heritage in the curriculum, is the fact that the city is the house of more than eighty ethnic groups found in the country. However, the cultures of the biggest ethnic groups have been catered for in the curriculum. This shows how the domination of the dominant ethnic groups over the smallest/marginalized ethnic groups was systematically sustained, despite the provisions in the Constitution and the Policies which advocate for equal treatment of the culture and heritage of all the ethnic groups in the country. Bennett (2011) argued that serious omissions of the culture and values of ethnic minorities in the curriculum has been the technique used by mainstream-centric curriculum development in order to systematically maintain the dominance of the major ethnic groups.

The failure of the curriculum of the Gamo Gofa Zone to fully reflect the culture and heritage of the ethnic group emanates from the non-involvement of community members who are knowledgeable of the Gamo culture in the curriculum planning process, and the lack of research into the culture of the ethnic group prior to the curriculum development process. Those who were involved were the educated elite who were totally detached from the culture and heritage of the ethnic group. The true Gamo culture and heritage rest with the elder wise men living in remote rural areas. Unless research in the culture of the ethnic group is carried out prior to the curriculum development process, the culture and heritage could not be incorporated into the curriculum. The danger of cultural extinction is eminent, namely if the wise men who have served as a reservoir of the culture, pass away.

The problem in the curriculum emanates from the process of curriculum development, which never involved the real reservoirs of the culture and heritage of the ethnic group. As Vilakazi (1999) indicated, the educated Africans became so Europeanised and alienated from the mass base of the African society and culture due to the modern education they acquired. As a result, a wedge has been driven in between the educated society and the principles and patterns of African civilization. African intellectuals have completely lost their knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilization, whereas the ordinary and uneducated Africans, especially those in the rural areas, became reservoirs of knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilization. Thus, the revitalisation and consequent incorporation into the curriculum of cultural knowledge could not be successful without the involvement of the ordinary, uneducated people living in the rural areas. This is due to the fact that the actual knowledge of the principles and patterns of African civilization resides with them.

In addition, Lawton (1984), in his model for catering for culture in the curriculum, suggested a step prior to curriculum planning, known as *cultural analysis*. *Cultural analysis* is a systematic way of analysing the culture of a given society before a selection from the culture is prescribed. Lawton's main considerations in the process of cultural analysis are, namely viewing culture as a historical as well as a contemporary process, and viewing the cultural lag and curriculum inertia. Janetius et al. (2008) also suggested the indigenization of the knowledge-base in order to make the curriculum and education consequential/relevant to the context. They suggested a model which has four parts or stages – identifying the key cultural constructs; Afro/Ethiocentric qualitative research, which uses paradigms and methods relevant to the context; the creation of local theories and a knowledge base; and, incorporating the theories and knowledge base in the curriculum.

What the researcher suggested in this regard, is the indigenization of the foundations of the curriculum, where the educational researchers conduct cultural studies, and come up with their findings, and the cultural constructs. The identified findings and the cultural

constructs in turn, would pave the way for the curriculum planners to set educational aims and goals that fit the context and identify culture-specific contents and learning experiences that could be incorporated into the curriculum.

The total non-responsiveness of the Addis Ababa City Administration's curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group is a result of the disregard of the ethnic group, under the pretext that the context of the Addis Ababa City Administration comprises diverse ethnic groups and represents a national setting. Had this justification been a genuine one, the curriculum should have reflected the common culture of all the ethnic groups inhabiting the city. However, in the name of a common national culture, the curriculum reflects the culture of the major dominant ethnic groups of the country such as the Amhara, Tigre and Oromo. In the sub-city, where this study was done, the children who come to school from the households of the Gamo ethnic group amount to eighty percent, but their culture and heritage have not been catered for in the curriculum. It is therefore unfair and unjust not to cater for the Gamo culture and heritage in the curriculum which is being delivered in a setting where the majority of the student population belongs to the Gamo ethnic group.

It is a centric curriculum like the mainstream Eurocentric curriculum which the developing nations borrowed from the West and the mainstream national curriculum that promotes the perspective of the dominant group at the expense of the marginalised groups' perspectives, which results in ethnic polarisations, and disrupt the internal cohesion. Adversely, an indigenized curriculum which is built on the foundations of the reality, traditions, values and beliefs of the marginalised groups, gives the marginalised groups the capacity of conducting intercultural dialogue with equal partners to forge an inclusive curriculum.

Malewski (2010) argued that schools are institutionalised mechanisms that produce and reproduce the racial, class, and gender inequities between the powerful and the marginalised. Banks and Banks (2010) also contend that the mainstream-centric

curriculum poses a negative influence on students outside the mainstream culture by marginalising their experiences and cultures, and neglecting their dreams, hopes and perspectives. Shizha (2006:26) also indicated how the mainstream-centric curriculum and pedagogy silenced the voices of the marginalized groups, as follows:

The Western culture, the colonial and postcolonial curriculum, and pedagogical practices are deeply implicated in one another, and continue to render formerly colonised, marginalised and repressed indigenous voices partially, and in some cases, totally silent. School knowledge continues to imprison the voices of the 'voiceless' that are not actively involved in decisions affecting the schooling of their sons and daughters.

Slattery (2006) sees the best prospects to undo this marginalisation of mainstream-centric curriculum in critical theory whose central goal is the creation of a democratic educational vision that provides hope for all the teachers and students, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, language, ability, ethnicity, or age. He reiterates that the recent variant of critical theory, known as the postmodern critical perspective, advocates that the main task of the curriculum development researchers in this era is the empowerment of teachers, peasants, students, and labourers to become leaders of emancipatory education, and liberating community.

Multicultural curricular projects are the ideal ones for students who come from different ethnic groups because they are attentive to the students' own culture, history and identity (Pinar, 2003; Bennett, 2011). The multicultural curriculum conceptualises students and their respective communities as sources and producers of knowledge and a foundation on which to build new academic knowledge (Sleeter, 2005). Indigenizing the curriculum provides hope for redressing the problem posed by the mainstream curriculum. The approach of indigenizing the curricula, which calls for anchoring the curriculum on traditions in order to develop locality-specific paradigms (Dominelli, 2005), eliminating all types of oppression, counteracting assimilative education and ensuring equal representation in the curriculum (Ismailova, 2004), is the feasible approach to

undo the unequal representation of the major ethnic groups' culture and values by disregarding those of the marginalized ethnic groups in the curriculum of Addis Ababa.

In addition, the non-involvement of members of the Gamo community in the curriculum planning process/during content selection, and commenting on the draft textbooks, is another major obstacle which hampered catering for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration. A curriculum-planning process which fails to involve members of the ethnic group who are well-versed with the culture of their ethnic group is likely to be non-responsive to the culture and heritage of the ethnic group.

Though some kind of attempt has been made, the curriculum of the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone was not developed by fully taking the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo community into account. As a result, it is incomplete and only partially responsive to the culture and heritage of the community. A curriculum which has not been developed taking the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo community into account, could not be fully responsive to the culture and heritage of the community, and thus becomes less relevant and functional to the ethnic group.

The curriculum development process in the Addis Ababa City Administration was not properly informed by the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group residing in the city. As a result, the specific culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group are not completely articulated in the curriculum. The curriculum does not cater for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group, and is thus totally irrelevant and non-functional to the ethnic group.

The relevance and functionality of a curriculum is dictated by its relation to the culture, livelihoods, value schemes, and psychological makeup of the society (Amare, 2009b); its rootedness in the culture, environment and needs of the people; its grounding on the philosophy, politics, and economy of the society (Salia-Bao, 1989); and its alignment to

the social structure to which the students belong (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). As Bennett (2011) argues, a curriculum development which fulfills the criteria of attentiveness to the students' own culture and history as a context for learning is a multicultural curriculum development.

Thus, the present primary first-cycle curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration is irrelevant and non-functional to the Gamo ethnic group, while the present primary first-cycle curriculum developed for the Gamo Gofa Zone is partially relevant and partially functional for the Gamo ethnic group. If the curriculum development makes use of indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum approach, the deficiency in the curricula of the two settings to address the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group would be resolved/overcome. That in turn, would increase the relevance and functionality of the curriculum for the ethnic group.

### ***6.3.3 A cultural-responsive pedagogy for the Gamo people***

The theory of culturally-relevant pedagogy was first articulated by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995), and thereafter by researchers such as Gay (2000, 2001) and Nieto (2002). This pedagogical approach calls for teachers to intentionally connect teaching to the lived experiences and knowledge frameworks of their students and the students' communities. It also views teaching as a process of contextualizing and embedding students in their community and culture. It allows students to have proper grounding in their socio-cultural context in order to make them thrive (De Lissoyov, 2008:109).

Gay (2000) explicated that the validation and affirmation of the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically-diverse students as channel for effective teaching, is the crux of culturally-relevant pedagogy. Academic knowledge and skills are more likely to be personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and learned more easily and thoroughly using this approach. This pedagogical approach has the power of making the teaching-learning process comprehensive,

transformative, emancipatory (Gay, 2000) and relevant for all the students, especially for those who are ill-served by the school because of their ethnicity, mother tongue, or low-income background (Bennett, 2011).

Contradiction exists between what the culturally-relevant pedagogy advocates and what actually exists on the ground both in the Addis Ababa and Gamo Gofa settings. There is discontinuity between the cultural knowledge, prior-experiences and learning styles of the students on the one hand, and the curriculum and the teaching-learning process on the other, in the Addis Ababa City Administration. Both the curriculum and pedagogy do not treat the cultural knowledge, prior-experiences and learning styles of the students from the Gamo ethnic group. However, some teachers tried to apply culturally-responsive pedagogy on their own initiative.

There is a difference between the *Gamotso* language and the other languages in treating the cultural knowledge, prior-experiences and learning styles of students in curriculum and pedagogy in the Gamo Gofa Zone. The curriculum and pedagogy of the *Gamotso* language subject considers the cultural knowledge, prior experiences and learning styles of the students in a better way than the other subjects in the Gamo Gofa Zone.

Thus, the curriculum and pedagogy of the Addis Ababa City Administration and of the Gamo Gofa Zone are contradictory to the major tenets of culturally-relevant pedagogy. As a result, the curriculum and pedagogy of the Addis Ababa City Administration and of the Gamo Gofa Zone could not be comprehensive, transformative, emancipatory and relevant for the students who belong to the Gamo ethnic group. The students from the Gamo ethnic group were ill-served by the education system of the different regimes in Ethiopia, and could not be compensated by an education system which still contradicts the educational theories which have corrective principles.

Gay (2001) forwarded five essential elements which pedagogues need to have in order to qualify as culturally-responsive teachers. These are, to develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity; to have the ability to design culturally-relevant curricula; to demonstrate caring and build learning communities; to have the confidence to communicate with ethnically diverse students across cultures; and, to have the ability to respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), in order for pedagogy to be considered as culturally-relevant, it must meet three important criteria. These are: an ability to develop students' academic achievement; willingness to nurture and support cultural competence; and the development of a socio-political or critical consciousness that challenges the structural inequities maintained by schools and other institutions. Cultural competence refers to the proficiency of students in the local language and interaction styles, and exhibiting pride in their identity and cultural heritage.

In order to make the pedagogy responsive to the culture, the language and the identity of the Gamo ethnic group, different strategies have been employed in the Gamo Gofa Zone. Even in the Addis Ababa City Administration, although the curriculum is prescriptive, which leaves no room for using culture-responsive pedagogy; the teachers who belong to the Gamo ethnic group have made appreciable efforts to use different strategies of making the pedagogy responsive to the culture, the language and the identity of the Gamo ethnic group, by taking personal initiatives.

In the Gamo Gofa Zone the teachers used different pedagogical strategies, such as giving local examples, the reduction of prejudice and the creation of awareness, engaging the students in a group debate on cultural issues, and using cultural heritages as teaching aids. The curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration is prescriptive, and does not allow the teachers to make use of culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom. However, the teachers of the Gamo ethnic group have taken the initiative of teaching culture under general topics in the curriculum. Some teachers have resorted to

extra-curricular activities (clubs at school, specifically the music and drama club) in order to teach the Gamo culture and heritage.

Though far from complete, the culturally-relevant pedagogy applied by the teachers in both settings, is consonant with the three criteria of culturally-responsive pedagogy forwarded by Ladson-Billings (1995). The strategies have the capacity of enhancing the students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and socio-political or critical consciousness.

An astonishing development in the Addis Ababa setting is the initiative taken by teachers in the prevailing inhibiting situation. This can add to the list of the five essential elements which pedagogues need to have in order to qualify as culturally-responsive teachers, as forwarded by Gay (2001). Thus, the teachers need to have the determination to take personal initiatives even in an inhibiting situation which is dominated by mainstream approaches.

In the Addis Ababa City Administration there does not exist any compatibility between what the children are being taught and the culture of the Gamo ethnic group, because the medium of instruction is the Amharic language. In addition, there is nothing which makes mention about the culture of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum, because the process of curriculum planning is biased for its favouritism to dominant groups.

There is a partial link between what the children are taught at school and their Gamo culture in the Gamo Gofa Zone. However, the curriculum does not fully represent the Gamo culture and heritage. Even here, there is a clear difference between the curriculum for the *Gamotso* language, and other subjects. The curriculum of the *Gamotso* language has a better link with the Gamo culture and heritage than the curricula of the other subjects.

### ***6.3.4 Indicators of the link between school knowledge and the local culture***

Different yardsticks are used to measure the level of the responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and values of students from Gamo households both in the rural and the city settings. Research indicated that students learn best, become highly motivated, succeed academically, and demonstrate pride in their culture and identity when the school curriculum is linked to their own cultures, experiences and perspectives.

In this section the responsiveness of the curriculum to the culture and values of the Gamo ethnic group is determined, based on the benchmarks drawn from the review of related literature.

#### ***6.3.4.1 The children's level of motivation to learn the new curriculum and their overall achievement***

The first indicator of a link between school knowledge and the students' local culture is the level of the students' motivation to learn the new curriculum, and their overall academic achievement. Banks and Banks (2010) argue that students learn best and become highly motivated when the school curriculum is developed, based on their cultures, experiences and perspectives. These authors claim that many students of color in the US are alienated at school, due to the cultural conflict and discontinuity that arise from cultural differences between their school and the community. As a remedy, Banks and Banks (2010) suggested a curriculum which reflects the culture of the ethnic groups and communities from which students come.

American researchers came up with a pedagogy which could resolve the contradiction between school education and the students' culture, known as *culturally-relevant* pedagogy. This pedagogical approach allows the students to have proper grounding in their socio-cultural context in order to make them thrive (De Lissovoy, 2008). Academic knowledge and skills are more likely to be personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and learned more easily and thoroughly, using this approach (Gay, 2001).

Contrary to this, classrooms where the students' cultural context is different from that of the teacher and/or the subject matter does not necessarily activate the students' prior knowledge and do not allow the students to bring their cultural knowledge to the classroom (Sleeter, 2005). In addition, an ability to develop students' academic achievement is one of the criteria by means of which the success of a culturally-relevant pedagogy is measured (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Unlike the approaches to curriculum development and pedagogy discussed above, the standardization approach of curriculum development advocated by the dominant groups creates a mismatch between what the students from marginalized backgrounds learn at school and what they live in their community, resulting in high levels of educational failure, by delinking school education with their own experiences (UNESCO, 2009).

In the Gamo Gofa Zone there is a marked difference in the students' level of motivation and overall achievement in the subjects being given in their vernacular, and the other subjects where the medium is not their vernacular. The students' results in the subjects where the medium is their vernacular are very high. This is because of the fact that the students do have prior experience on what they learn, they know the subjects well, and the lessons are part of their day-to-day activities. At present the overall drop-out rate at this school is low.

In the Addis Ababa City Administration there exists a marked difference in the motivation of the students who were born and brought up in the city compared to students who come from the countryside. The motivation of the students who were born and bred in the city, to learn is very good, but the students who came from the countryside are less motivated to learn. This is due to the fact that the students who were born and brought up in the city are well-versed with the medium of instruction, while the students from the countryside became very confused when taught in Amharic, because their mother tongue is *Gamotso*. The result is that the academic achievement of the students who came from the countryside is unsatisfactory and disappointing.

The subject *Gamotso* language takes the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of students more into account than the other subjects. Thus, the students in the Gamo Gofa Zone are highly motivated to learn, and score high grades in the subject *Gamotso* language. It is not astonishing if the students' level of motivation and overall achievement in this subject is high, because of the curriculum's responsiveness to the students' cultures, experiences and perspectives.

Discontinuity exists between the cultural knowledge and prior-experiences on the one hand and the curriculum and teaching-learning process on the other, in the setting of the Addis Ababa City Administration, especially for students of the Gamo ethnic group who came from the countryside. The students' level of motivation and academic achievement could not be higher under such circumstances.

The cross-analysis of the review of the related literature on the issue, and the data from the field study reveals that the motivation to learn and academic achievement depends on the link between school knowledge and the students' culture. Since the subject *Gamotso* language for the Gamo people in the Gamo Gofa zone and the Addis Ababa curriculum for students who were born and brought up in Addis Ababa motivated the students and led them to better academic achievements, we can conclude that the *Gamotso* language subject and the Addis Ababa curriculum for students who were born and brought up in Addis Ababa demonstrate a stronger link between school knowledge and the students' culture.

#### ***6.3.4.2 The children's level of pride in their culture, language and identity***

Another indicator of the link between school knowledge and the students' local culture is the indication of pride by the students in their culture, language and identity. According to Banks (2006), cultural heritages, such as the symbols and the language of the cultural ethnic groups which are handed down from generation to generation, serve as a source of pride and of group identification in its individual members. Bennett (2011) also contends that the incorporation of contents which build in each student a sense of

ethnic pride in to the curriculum is central to multicultural curriculum development projects.

In addition, cultural competence is the criterion by means of which the success of a culturally-relevant pedagogy is measured. *Cultural competence* refers to the proficiency of the students in the local language and interaction styles, and taking a demonstrated pride in their identity and cultural heritage (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Most of the students from the Gamo ethnic group in the Addis Ababa City Administration were embarrassed by the food of their culture, their mode of dress, their language and their identity on the school premises though some students from the ethnic group demonstrate boldness in doing the reverse. Most of the students from the Gamo ethnic group often imitated the cultural food, cultural dresses, language and identity of the dominant ethnic groups. This imitation emanated from the fact that they were not taught about their culture, language, history and identity.

The students in the Gamo Gofa Zone were free to use the *Gamotso* language in their communication on the school premises, and they sang and performed the Gamo cultural songs and dances at school. However, they were not very proud of their identity, language, culture and history. The curriculum for the rest of the school subjects should cater for the cultural heritages such as symbols and language of the Gamo ethnic group, and the pedagogy should be directed towards developing cultural competence in students in order to avert the problem. As Bennett (2011) recommended, the content should be incorporated in ways that would encourage students to get at the underlying values and patterns of socialization of the ethnic culture, rather than focusing only on the more superficial cultural appendages such as food and holidays, heroes, and historical events.

McLaren (1989) argues that the hidden curriculum is used as a bureaucratic and managerial imposition, by which the students are induced to comply with the dominant

ideologies and social practices related to authority, behaviour and morality. Thus, the covert messages being communicated through the hidden curriculum at school and in the government institutions are highly damaging to the self-esteem of the students. The medium of communication and working language in offices is Amharic, and the covert message it is communicating is detrimental. In order to take pride in their culture, their language and their identity, the students have to be provided with the opportunity to be exposed to the values and heritages of their ethnic group's culture in the curriculum, both written and hidden, and pedagogy.

#### ***6.3.4.3 The difficulty children from Gamo households face when taught the present primary first-cycle curriculum***

The difficulty in learning and the subsequent drop-out from school is the other indicator of the lack of a link between school knowledge and the students' local culture. Nieto (2002) contends that teachers who make use of culturally-relevant pedagogy provide their students with opportunities to draw on their cultural and linguistic knowledge and resources to foster more meaningful learning experiences. This pedagogical approach has the power to make the teaching-learning process comprehensive, transformative, and emancipatory (Gay, 2000), and also relevant for all the students, especially for those who are ill-served by the school because of their ethnicity, mother tongue, or low-income background (Bennett, 2011).

An irrelevant curriculum, which fails to create a proper link between school knowledge and the students' local culture, causes the loss of excitement and interest in learning, and also alienation (Gay, 2004), leading to high drop-out and repetition rates, and the juvenile delinquency (Salia-Bao, 1989) of the students who could not cope with the school system.

In the Addis Ababa City Administration children who come from the Gamo highlands faced many problems in learning the present primary first-cycle curriculum, more than the students who were born and brought up in the city. This is because, in the first

place, the subjects they learn do not reflect their culture, and simply introduce the children to new cultures. In the second place, the medium of instruction used in the schools is not their mother tongue. Though academic problems were not the only cause indicated by the participants in the study, the drop-out rate was also very high in this setting.

In the Gamo Gofa Zone the students do not face difficulties when they learn the subjects through the medium of the *Gamotso* language. However, the subject *Gamotso* language uses new words which create problems or are difficult for the new generation. The drop-out rate was very low in this setting, and participants attributed the prevailing rates to causes other than academic.

### ***6.3.5 Problems in the primary education of the Gamo ethnic group that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy***

The Policy and Implementation Strategy Documents adopted and issued by the Transitional Government and the Federal Government of Ethiopia clearly specify the deficiencies in the education systems of the country in general and the curriculum in particular during both the monarchy and military periods, with respect to relevance and quality (TGE, 1994; MOE, 2002).

The Implementation Strategy Document clearly states that the curricula were directly copied from nations which are friends of the Government, without taking the context of the country into consideration. In order to solve the problem of educational quality and relevance, the curriculum was changed by aligning the content of the curriculum to the context of the country. To this end, primary education textbooks were developed taking the reality of the environment, the activities, cultures, and way of living of the local communities into consideration (MOE, 2002).

By means of an empirical study it was ascertained that the prevailing education system in the country during former regimes supported the homogeneity, which did not give

recognition to the existence of the Gamo ethnic group as an ethnic group in the country. The dominant rhetoric was about Ethiopianness or common national identity, unity and a unitary state. Speaking about diversity was considered to be dismembering the nation state. Every ethnic group was forced to be assimilated into the dominant culture, which was propagated as the national culture. As a result, the majority of the Gamo ethnic group members were forced to consider everything which belonged to the ethnic group as worthless, and to adopt the culture and values of the dominant Amhara ethnic group.

All the cultural practices of the ethnic group were completely ignored, because they were seen as harmful practices. Instead, the cultural practices of the Amhara ethnic group was epitomised as a useful culture, and was imposed on the rest of the ethnic groups in the country. The damage incurred by the social, psychological and cultural impositions was so serious, that it affected the dignity and pride of the Gamo ethnic group, and impoverished the people. The members of the Amhara ethnic group insulted the members of the Gamo ethnic group for performing their cultural practices. By doing this, the Amharas stripped the Gamos of their culture and heritage.

At school the medium of instruction and the textbook language was Amharic, which was either the second and third language for the students, or totally unknown to them. There was no room for the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and the textbook language. The result was that the children were not allowed to learn through the medium of their mother tongue.

The curricula were non-responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the ethnic group's and the learners' needs. There also existed a lack of community and stakeholder participation in the process of curriculum development, and the education system as a whole.

### ***6.3.6 Suggestions for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in primary schools in Ethiopia***

In critical epistemology the investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of the situated 'others') inevitably influencing the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, the ontological position of this study is that there will be a strong link and interaction between the Gamo ethnic group which is the object of the study, and the researcher.

Thus, it is imperative to give room for the voices of the marginalised people, because the true knowledge of the principles and patterns of the civilization of the culture remained with ordinary and uneducated members, especially those in rural areas. Vilakazi (1999) also argued in favour of this idea. He recommends that non-certificated men and women who live largely in rural areas should be taken as full participants in the construction of the high culture of Africa. He reiterated that African intellectuals must engage in a serious process of re-educating themselves in respect of the principles and patterns of the African civilization. In this process of re-education, the only teachers the African intellectuals have are ordinary African men and women.

The participants in this study forwarded their suggestions which could facilitate the successful indigenization of the curriculum development process in the Gamo Gofa Zone.

They are as follows:

- Conduct different studies, targeting the culture and heritage of the ethnic group before developing the curriculum.
- The researchers need to reach out to each *kebele*, so as to revitalize the culture and values of the people, which would later be incorporated in the curriculum.

- Have the curriculum delivered by cultural (culture-conscious) teachers. The teachers have to be well-versed with the culture by means of the provision of continuous training in respect of the culture.
- Convince the students, parents and administrative bodies about the worth of incorporating culture in the curriculum.
- Pedagogical centres are to be prepared on the school premises and *woredas* for collecting material heritages.
- Publish a dictionary and other reference material in the *Gamotso* language.
- The teachers have to indicate the fact that the *Gamotso* language and culture is equal to the other languages and cultures. Due attention should be given to the hidden curriculum.
- Use the *Gamotso* language as a medium of instruction at kindergarden level in order to solve the contradiction of the medium of instruction at kindergarden and primary school level.

The participants forwarded their suggestions to successfully indigenize the curriculum development process in the Addis Ababa City Administration.

These are as follows:

- Responsible bodies have to study the history, culture and identity of the Gamo ethnic group, for their subsequent incorporation in the curriculum.
- The curriculum-planning process should not show favouritism to one language, one religion, one culture, or even one subject. It needs to be free and impartial.
- Involve teachers, educationists and others from the ethnic group who know the culture of the ethnic group, in the curriculum-planning and implementation process.
- Make use of teachers who belong to the Gamo ethnic group to teach the children from the Gamo ethnic group. Provide special training for school teachers and administrators.

- Opportunities should be provided for the students to learn through the medium of their vernacular language.
- Written material, such as books and journals, should be prepared in the students' language.
- Include the Gamo culture in the subjects Environmental Science and Aesthetics.
- Make use of co-curricular activities, which involve activities in various clubs at school.
- The creation of awareness among the members of the Gamo ethnic group living in Addis Ababa should be the measure to incorporate culture and heritage in the curriculum.

#### ***6.4 CONCLUSION***

In this chapter the cross-case analysis across the three separate cases was done. The analysis involved the interpretation of the data collected by means of a review of the related literature on the research problem and the conceptual framework, and the empirical investigation.

The critical analysis of the constitutional and policy documents indicated remarkable provisions which overtly and covertly support the indigenization approach, and the limitations, which are the antithesis of indigenization approach. The salient features of the constitutional and policy provisions, which are aligned with the indigenization approach and multicultural education, are the right given for ethnic groups to use their local languages as medium of instruction and their textbook language, the compensatory measure to increase the participation and enrolment in education of the historically disadvantaged nationalities, and the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure, and approach.

One of the constitutional and policy provisions which is antithetical to the indigenization approach, is the call for maintaining the international standard in the development of the curricula and the textbooks. In order to materialise this provision and ensure the

standard, the curriculum framework for nationwide use was prepared by the Federal Ministry of Education. In addition, the Federal Constitution gave the Federal Government the mandate to establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for education. The Federal Government even went beyond the right and duty conferred on it by the Federal Constitution, and adopted the 1994 Education and Training Policy and the 1997 Cultural Policy, which were considered by the Regional Governments, not as policy criteria or standards, but as policies which should be implemented as they are. By doing this, the Federal Government denied the Regional Governments the right to adopt policies appropriate for their local context.

As a cultural ethnic group, the Gamo ethnic group has a distinct ethnic culture and unique value systems, which differ substantially from those of other ethnic groups in the country. This unique ethnic culture and the value systems are clearly evident both in the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration, though there is a certain degree of variation in the two settings. Unfortunately, the curriculum of the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone is only partially responsive to the culture and values of the ethnic group, while the curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration completely ignored the Gamo culture and values, and thus is entirely non-responsive to the culture and values of the ethnic group.

The curriculum-planning process, both in the city and in the rural setting, has been underpinned by the national curriculum framework prepared by the Ministry of Education. The reason for merely partially catering for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum for the Gamo Gofa Zone, emanates from the non-involvement of the community members who are well-versed with the Gamo culture in the curriculum-planning process, and the lack of research on the culture of the ethnic group, prior to the curriculum development process. The total non-responsiveness of the Addis Ababa City Administration's curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group, is attributed to the disregard for the ethnic group's culture and heritage, under the pretext that the context of the Addis Ababa City Administration

comprises diverse ethnic groups and represents a national setting. In addition, the non-involvement of members of the Gamo community in the curriculum-planning process during the selection of the content and their not commenting on the draft textbooks, were other major obstacles in catering for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Students learn best and become highly motivated when the school curriculum is developed, based on their cultures, experiences and perspectives. Academic knowledge and skills are more likely to be personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and learned more easily and thoroughly, when using a culturally-relevant pedagogy. In the Gamo Gofa Zone there exists a marked difference in the students' level of motivation and overall achievement in subjects being given in the vernacular language, and other subjects where the medium is not the vernacular language. The subject *Gamotso* language considers the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of students more positively than the other subjects. Thus, the students in the Gamo Gofa Zone indicate a high level of motivation to learn and to score high grades in the subject *Gamotso* language. In the Addis Ababa City Administration there existed a marked difference in the level of motivation of the students who were born and bred in the city and the students who came from the countryside. The motivation to learn of the students who were born and brought up in the city was very good, but the students who came from the countryside were less motivated to learn. This was due to the barrier of the medium of instruction, which is Amharic.

In the Gamo Gofa Zone the teachers used different culturally-relevant pedagogical strategies, such as giving local examples, the reduction of prejudice, and the creation of awareness, engaging the students in group debates on cultural issues, and using cultural heritages as teaching aids. The curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration is highly prescriptive, and does not allow teachers to make use of culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom. However, teachers from the Gamo ethnic group have taken the initiative to teach the culture under general topics in the

curriculum. Some teachers have resorted to extra-curricular activities (clubs at school, specifically music and drama club), in order to teach the Gamo culture and heritage.

Problems existed in the primary school education of the Gamo ethnic group during former regimes that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy. The dominant rhetoric in the country was about Ethiopianness or a common national identity, unity and unitary state, at the expense of ethnicity and diversity. The Gamo ethnic group had no choice but to be assimilated into the dominant culture, which was being propagated as the national culture. The majority of the ethnic group members were obliged to adopt the culture and values of the dominant Amhara ethnic group, which was epitomised as a useful culture at the expense of their own culture and values, which were seen as harmful practices. The damage incurred by the social, psychological and cultural impositions was so intense that it highly affected the dignity and pride of the Gamo ethnic group, and impoverished the people.

At school the medium of instruction and the textbook language was Amharic, and the use of the mother tongue was not allowed. The curricula were non-responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the ethnic group and the learners' needs. There was also a lack of community and stakeholders' participation in the process of curriculum development, and the education system as a whole.

The participants in the study, from both the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration, forwarded their suggestions which could facilitate the successful indigenization of the curriculum development process in their respective settings. Some of the suggestions indicate a reasonable similarity, while others are specific to each setting.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### ***7.1 INTRODUCTION***

This chapter concludes the study. A summary of the major findings from the review of the literature on the research problem, and the findings from the cross-case analysis are presented, and subsequent conclusions are drawn. Thereafter the implications of the findings on the country's policy and the refined model for indigenizing the curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopia are presented. In turn, the policy implications and the polished conceptual model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopia are indicated, based on the themes and patterns where there is strong alignment between the theoretical and empirical investigations.

#### ***7.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS***

In this section the major findings of the literature reviewed and the cross-case analysis are summarised, and subsequent conclusions are drawn. The findings are presented, in correspondence to each of the research questions posed for this study.

*What does the indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally, and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?*

The findings from the literature review and the conceptual framework indicate:

- The discourse on indigenization has undoubtedly emerged as a response to the oppression of colonialism. The discourse criticised professional imperialism, questioned Western values and theories, and emphasised the importance of indigenous social and cultural structure. The discourse maintained that the Western theories and approaches developed in the metropolitan states in the

Western world are irrelevant for Africa. The discourse also calls for locality and cultural relevance, not only in the global South but also in the global North.

- In studies of the curriculum the indigenization approach calls for the elimination of cultural dependency by revitalising and incorporating into the curriculum the concepts of indigenous knowledge, and the replacement of exclusivist and ethnocentric features of colonial or dominant mainstream education by an inclusive curriculum and culturally-responsive pedagogy. Projects on indigenization seek to eliminate all types of oppression, to counteract assimilative education and to ensure equal representation in the curriculum. The industrialising countries are applying the indigenization approach in their practice and curricula by drawing upon their own traditions so as to develop local-specific paradigms.
- In Africa the failure of the plethora of curricular reforms compelled researchers to seek alternative approaches to curriculum development and study, among which the indigenization approach is one. The indigenization approach, which originally began as a process of modifying a transplanted Western model so as to make it relevant to the importing country's political and socio-cultural context, was now transformed into authentisation or the cultural validation approach, which seeks the authentic roots in the local system to construct a domestic model in the light of the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics and needs of a particular country.
- In Ethiopia, two different variants of indigenization have been applied since the introduction of modern education in to the country in 1908. The first kind of the indigenization approach, known as *Ethiopianization*, has been introduced since the 1940s. The approach advocates for changing the medium of instruction and the textbook language into the national language, which is Amharic, as well as the involvement of the Ethiopian personnel in the process of curriculum development and implementation. The Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level has been perceived as an affirmation to the assimilation policy, which was publicly opposed by the subjugated ethnic groups.

- Following the advent of EPRDF to power in 1991, indigenization from the ethnic group's perspective emerged, whereby each ethnic group was allowed to follow its path of preserving its culture, language and identity. The ethno-federalist approach to education in Ethiopia made the issues of the ethnic minority an important part of its moral discourse. As a way of achieving this, the ethno-federalist system introduced a policy to use the ethnic languages as the medium of education. The policies and strategies which underpin the new indigenization approach emphasised the development of culture in the content of education and curriculum structure and approach. The policies and strategies also called for the development of the curriculum and the designing of textbooks by giving attention to concrete local conditions.
- Unfortunately, despite the introduction of educational reform, based on indigenization from the ethnic groups' approach, at basic education level the education system in general and curricula in particular, is still being criticised by researchers because of the lack of relevance. Thus, the alternative approach that this study calls for could serve in overcoming the deficiencies in the curricula. This study suggests an alternative approach to indigenization which calls for the development of the curriculum, based on indigenous foundations and theories, principles and ideas derived from the culture. The approach falls within the authentization or cultural validation approach, which seeks the authentic roots in the local system to construct a domestic model in the light of the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics and needs of a particular country. The approach is a prerequisite for an intercultural dialogue between studies on the curriculum and developments in different contexts.

The major findings from the cross-case analysis or empirical study include the following:

- As a cultural ethnic group, the Gamo ethnic group has a distinct ethnic culture and unique value systems, which differ substantially from those of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia. These unique ethnic culture and value systems are clearly

evident, both in the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration. Unfortunately, the curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group in the Gamo Gofa Zone is only partially responsive to the culture and values of this ethnic group, while the curriculum of the Addis Ababa City Administration has completely ignored the Gamo culture and values, and thus is entirely non-responsive to the culture and values of the ethnic group. The medium of instruction and textbook language of the *Gamotso* language, *Herra Sayinsi* and mathematics subjects, is the vernacular in the Gamo Gofa Zone, while Amharic is used as medium of instruction and textbook language for all subjects in the Addis Ababa City Administration, except English.

- The reason for the partial catering for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum for the Gamo Gofa Zone emanates from the non-involvement of community members who are well-versed in the Gamo culture in the curriculum planning process. The lack of research in the culture of the ethnic group prior to the curriculum development process is another reason. The total non-responsiveness of the Addis Ababa City Administration's curriculum to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group is attributed to the disregard for the ethnic group's culture and heritage, and the non-involvement of members of the Gamo community in the curriculum planning process, especially during the selection of the contents and the comments on the draft textbooks.
- The subject *Gamotso* language considers the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of students more seriously than the other subjects. Thus, the students in the Gamo Gofa Zone are highly motivated to learn and score high grades in the subject *Gamotso* language. In the Addis Ababa City Administration the motivation to learn and the achievement of the students who were born and brought up in the city is very good, but the students who came from the countryside are less motivated to learn and they achieve lower grades. This is due to the barrier of the medium of instruction which is Amharic.
- In the Gamo Gofa Zone the teachers use different culturally-relevant pedagogical strategies, such as giving local examples, the reduction of prejudice and the

creation of awareness, engaging the students in group debates on cultural issues, and using cultural heritages as teaching aids. The curriculum for the Addis Ababa City Administration is highly prescriptive and does not leave room for culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom. However, teachers from the Gamo ethnic group have taken the initiative of teaching the culture under general topics in the curriculum and by means of extracurricular activities (clubs at school, specifically the music and drama club).

- Thus, the indigenization of the primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group has both strong and weak points. In order to facilitate the process of fully catering for the culture and heritage of this ethnic group in the curriculum, a model, which allows the direct involvement of the local people, has to be developed.

*What is the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy for the Ethiopian school curriculum?*

The findings from the literature review on the research question and the conceptual framework indicate:

- Ethiopian researchers, such as Amare and Woube, applauded Ethiopia's policy documents, especially the 1994 Educational and Training Policy and the 1997 Cultural Policy, for their support in making the education and curriculum culturally relevant. The issue of culture was given due emphasis. But both researchers criticised the implementation process, which failed to properly translate the spirits of these policies into its proper perspectives.

The major findings from the cross-case analysis or empirical study indicate:

- The constitutional and policy documents comprise remarkable provisions, which overtly and covertly support the indigenization approach and the tenets of multicultural education. These include the fundamental right given to the cultural ethnic groups to use their local languages as medium of instruction and as the textbook language, the compensatory measure to increase the participation and enrolment of the historically disadvantaged nationalities in education, and the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach.
- The constitutional and policy provisions have been applauded by the interviewees from both the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration. However, the interviewees from both settings placed the blame on the implementation process, which failed to properly translate the intentions of the constitutional and policy provisions.
- The constitutional and policy provisions are noble in that they go beyond the common approach of adding or infusing cultural contents to the mainstream-centric curriculum. The constitutional and policy provisions call for the development of culture in the curriculum structure and approach. Thus, the provision of culture could help in countering the basic assumptions, perspectives, paradigms, and values of the dominant mainstream curriculum. If its intentions are properly translated in implementation, the constitution can also promote the development of relevant curricula which aligns with the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group in the country.
- However, the constitutional and policy documents also comprise provisions which are antithetical to the indigenization approach, such as the call for maintaining an international standard in the development of the curriculum and the designing of the textbooks, and the granting of the mandate to the Federal Government to establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for education. This facilitated the imposition of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the national curriculum framework, which were adopted and developed by the Federal Government on the regional

governments, and thereby hampered the adoption of policies and strategies appropriate for their local context by the regional governments. Therefore, there is a need for the reconceptualization of the indigenization approach to the country's policies and strategies, to ensure the relevance of the curriculum to the structural and socio-cultural context of the Gamo ethnic group.

*What are the implications of the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group?*

The findings from the literature review on the research question and the conceptual framework indicate:

- Since its introduction, modern western education has been given exceeding precedence over indigenous education. Neglecting traditional education is equivalent to ignoring the invaluable experiences accumulated over a long period of time.
- The lack of relevance of the Ethiopian education and curriculum has been perceived by different sectors in the country and domestic and foreign researchers. The conservative elements of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the nobility argue that there was very little Ethiopian in the curriculum and that the young Ethiopians who passed through the school system were disrespectful towards their society and its institutions. A number of researchers also pointed to the irrelevance of the Ethiopian school curriculum to the historical experiences and current socio-economic situation of the country.
- Attempts have been made by different regimes in the country to reform the educational system so as to make the school curriculum relevant to the learners' cultures. One of the reforms included Ethiopianizing education in the country by using Amharic as the medium of instruction and textbook language, which was proposed by Ernest Work, an American who taught Ethiopian Studies in the

United States and served as an expatriate advisor in the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts in Ethiopia.

- However, the Ethiopianization or indigenization of education at national level was perceived as an affirmation of the assimilation policy which was publicly opposed by the subjugated ethnic groups. It subjected the marginalized ethnic groups in the country, among which the Gamo ethnic group, to assimilate with the dominant culture and language of the Amhara ethnic group. The opposition led to insurgencies of different ethnic groups that toppled both the imperial regime and the military junta.
- The policy and implementation strategy documents adopted after 1991 identified the complex problems which entangled the country's education in general and the curriculum in particular, such as the lack of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity. Thus, the ethno-federalist system or indigenization from the ethnic groups' perspective was adopted as a remedy for the educational and curricular deficiencies.

The major findings from the cross-case analysis or empirical study:

- One of the problems in the primary school education for the Gamo ethnic group during former regimes that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, was the focus on Ethiopianness or common national identity, unity and unitary state at the expense of ethnicity and diversity. As a result, the Gamo ethnic group was denied recognition as a cultural ethnic group, and forced to adopt the culture and values of the dominant Amhara ethnic group, which was epitomised as the useful culture at the expense of their own culture and values, which were seen as harmful practices. The damage incurred by the social, psychological and cultural impositions was so serious that it affected the dignity and pride of the Gamo ethnic group, and impoverished the people.
- At school the medium of instruction and textbook language was Amharic, and the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction was not allowed. The curricula

were non-responsive to the socio-cultural and structural context of the ethnic group and the learners' needs. There also existed a lack of community and stakeholder participation in the process of curriculum development, and in the education system as a whole.

*What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula, specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?*

The major findings from the literature review on the research question and the conceptual framework indicated the following:

- At present, the indigenization movement has started to add momentum in Africa and the need for indigenizing education is becoming a leading issue in the educational circles. Unfortunately, not many notable initiatives are being taken in Ethiopia to establish an indigenous theory and knowledge base that could be incorporated into the curriculum and education. The current Ethiopian education is blamed for succumbing to the knowledge and systems of Euro-Americanism by means of assimilation. If indigenization is carried out, it would offer a basis for socially-responsive knowledge and culturally-responsive learning for relevant education in Ethiopia.
- There exists a lack of a systematic way of incorporating culture into the curriculum, although the issue of culture is given emphasis in the country's policy documents. It is difficult to identify the body that is to take the responsibility of incoherence in translating the spirits of the 1994 Educational Policy into its proper perspectives, and of making education culturally relevant, that is, bringing the social, technological, economic, and psychological life of the communities into the schools (and curriculum). However, Woube (2004) boldly attributes the failure of translating the spirits of the 1994 Educational Policy into its proper perspectives to the lack of common understanding among curriculum developers

on the concept of culture and the selection criteria for incorporating it into the curricula.

- In Ethiopia a notable initiative at transforming the indigenous knowledge systems was taken by the Oromo ethnic group. By translating theory into practice and by drawing on the blended Oromo and Western development models, Hundee, an Oromo Civil Society Organization, has started the process of transforming the indigenous knowledge systems. The revalidation of the indigenous knowledge systems is supposed to serve as an instrument in the struggle of the Oromo people against the historical economic and cultural discrimination it suffered under the Ethiopian nation-state. The reactivation of the indigenous knowledge systems is thus seen, not as a mere luxury, but as a matter of the cultural survival of the group.

The major findings from the cross-case analysis or empirical study:

- The participants in the study from both the Gamo Gofa Zone and the Addis Ababa City Administration forwarded their suggestions which could facilitate the successful indigenization of the curriculum development process in their respective settings. These suggestions were listed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3. The participants also forwarded suggestions to successfully indigenize the curriculum development process in the Addis Ababa City Administration. These have been indicated in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.

### ***7.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS***

The major findings of both the literature review and the cross-case analysis have a bearing on Ethiopia's constitution, policy and strategy documents. The country's constitution, policy and strategy documents include salient provisions which promote the indigenization of the curriculum. They provide an opportunity for the development of culture in the content of education, curriculum structure and approach. This opportunity could have been exploited by agencies involved in the implementation of the

constitutional and policy provisions to develop a locally relevant curriculum structure and approach.

The right conferred on each regional state to develop its own education and other policies has to be maintained. What actually happened is the imposition of the federally-adopted policies and strategies and even the curriculum framework on the regional states. This hampered the development of culturally-relevant curricula in the regions. Indigenizing the curricula from the ethnic group's perspective could materialise only if this noble right conferred on the regional states is respected. However, in the area of respecting the right to develop its own curricula restriction has been made by making the compliance to the policy standards as set by the Federal Government mandatory.

Unfortunately, the country's constitution, policy and strategy documents' salient provisions have been taken away by their openly support for the standardization thesis. By so doing, they tried to incorporate two opposing paradigms, indigenization and standardization, which do not work together. The country's constitution, policy and strategy documents have to favour either the indigenization or the standardization thesis. The country's constitution, policy and strategy documents' have to be rectified so as not to confuse those who are entrusted with the duty of translating their intentions into practice.

#### ***7.4 THE REFINED MODEL FOR INDIGENIZING THE CURRICULUM FOR THE GAMO ETHNIC GROUP***

The major findings of both the reviewed literature and the conceptual framework for the study on the one hand, and the cross-case analysis on the other, have a bearing on the theoretical model for the indigenization of the curriculum development process for the Gamo ethnic group. Thus, the conceptual model designed based on the literature had to be refined, using the findings from the field research. The refined model comprises three stages, which are interconnected in a cyclical way.

These are explained as follows:

Stage 1: Establishing the foundations of the curriculum (laying the foundation of the building). It is the stage where the key cultural constructs and the knowledge-base of the Gamo ethnic group would be identified so as to serve as the foundation for the curriculum.

Stage 2: Curriculum-planning (erecting the building). It is the stage where the curriculum-planning takes place by anchoring it on the key cultural constructs and knowledge-base (foundations) of the ethnic group, established during Stage 1.

Stage 3: The implementation of the curriculum (finishing the building). It is the stage where the intended and hidden curricula are implemented, using a culturally-responsive pedagogy which is consonant with the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group.

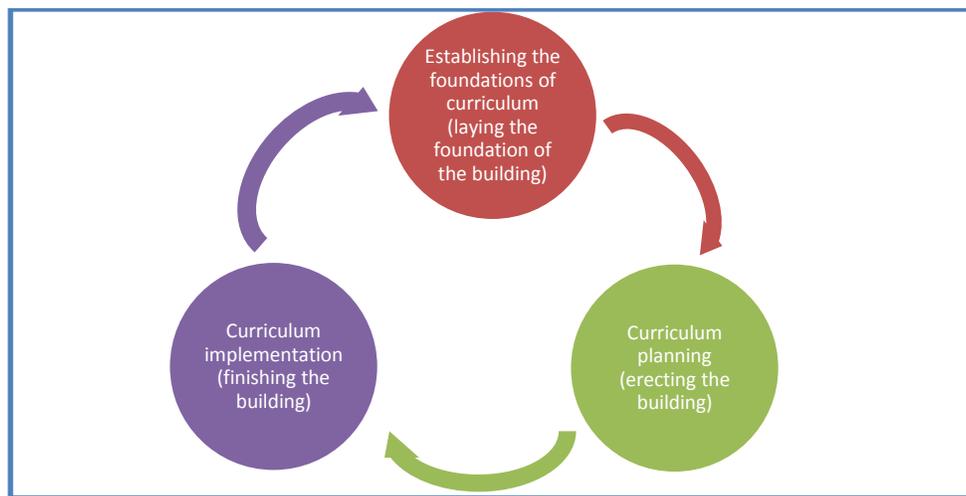


Figure 7.1: A refined model for indigenizing the curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group

The following procedure is indicated as a guideline for indigenizing the curriculum development process for the Gamo ethnic group, based on the refined model as developed:

### Stage 1: Establishing the foundations of the curriculum.

- Identify the key cultural constructs by reaching out to each *kebele* to revitalise the culture and values to be integrated into the curriculum and to stand as the foundation for Ethnocentric/Gamocentric research, knowledge and theory-building. Almost all the identified key constructs have to be interwoven in one or another way with the culture, traditions, religion, local practices, and so on.
- Conduct Afro/Ethiocentric/Gamocentric qualitative research, targeting the culture and heritage of the ethnic group, and using the paradigms and methods relevant to the context. Qualitative research helps to formulate theories and a knowledge-base using the grounded theory method. The research should not focus on indicating the percentage and degree of the phenomena being studied, but should explain the phenomena in an emic way in order to pave the way for the creation of theories and a local knowledge-base.
- Create local foundations or knowledge-bases on which the curriculum is to be anchored. The research findings should be used as the foundation to define the local knowledge-bases, such as philosophy, sociology, history, and so on, which can replace the out-of-context Euro-American foundations.

### Stage 2: Curriculum planning

- Set educational goals that fit the context rather than borrow the goals from elsewhere. Use the local knowledge-base (foundations) established by means of curriculum studies and research conducted by institutions engaged in curriculum studies/research as a source for setting local educational goals.
- Involve teachers, educationists and others from the ethnic group who know the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum-planning process in order to make the process free from domination and impartial.
- Translate the local educational goals stipulated in the policies into curricular objectives.

- Select and organise content from the cultural constructs, research findings, and the local curriculum foundations that may help to achieve the objectives in respect of the curriculum.
- Select and organise learning experiences based on local learning theories and styles established by means of the qualitative research done in Stage 1.
- Organise the curriculum in stages and sequences to make it ready for implementation.
- Include the Gamo culture and heritage in the subjects Environmental Science and Aesthetics.
- Publish dictionaries and other reference material such as books and journals in the *Gamotso* language.
- Provide students with the opportunity to learn through the medium of their own vernacular, that is the *Gamotso* language, at both KG and primary level.

### Stage 3: Implementation of the curriculum.

- Convince the students, parents and administrative bodies from the Gamo ethnic group through an awareness-creation campaign, about the value of incorporating their culture and heritage in the curriculum.
- Erect pedagogical centres on the school premises, and *woredas* for collecting the heritage material of the Gamo ethnic group.
- Appoint cultural (culture-conscious) teachers and administrators who are well-versed with the culture of the ethnic group, and who would effectively implement the curriculum in schools.
- Organise and conduct pre-service and in-service training for educational practitioners to equip them with the strategies of culturally-relevant pedagogy that were established, based on the curriculum studies and research on the specific culture of the Gamo ethnic group.
- Implement the curriculum as intended by making use of the trained practitioners who understand the culture of the students being served using culturally-relevant pedagogy.

- Use co-curricular activities which involve activities in the schools in various clubs as avenues for teaching the culture and heritages of the ethnic group.
- Give due attention to the hidden curriculum. Teachers and administrators should demonstrate the fact that the *Gamotso* language and culture is equal to other languages and cultures, by using them on the school premises.

### ***7.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE***

This study, which perhaps is the first of its kind in Africa in general, and in Ethiopia in particular, has a huge international and national significance. So far, indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum has not been investigated. Researchers have clearly indicated the problems attached to changing the content of the curriculum alone to bring about fundamental change, but have not come up with counteractive approaches and models. This research, however, has come up with a holistic model for indigenizing the curricula at the foundation, planning and implementation levels, and thus contributes to making the education relevant. This approach can lead to the reconceptualisation of the indigenization of the curriculum, and the invention of a model suited to the context of the various cultural ethnic groups.

This study informs and influences policy revision and practice, which will facilitate the development of relevant curricula using the indigenization approach. This study also provides curriculum planners and implementers with a viable model to translate the policy provisions into proper curriculum development. The call for an alternative curriculum approach in the policies and strategies of the country can be answered by means of this study, in order to materialise the development of culture in the content of education and the structure of the curriculum.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the ongoing national and international debates on the role of the indigenization approach in making the primary school education curricula relevant and functional. It will take the debate on indigenizing the curriculum one step forward, in that it calls upon indigenizing the foundations of the curriculum first, which

will feed important principles into indigenizing the curriculum planning and implementation processes.

### ***7.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY***

As a number of researchers argued, notable initiatives have not been taken by Ethiopian researchers to identify the cultural constructs of the different ethnic groups, which can serve as foundations for the formulation of local theories and knowledge which may be incorporated into education and the curriculum to make them relevant. Thus, this researcher invites other researchers to engage in qualitative research, targeting the culture and heritage of the different ethnic groups, using paradigms and methods relevant to the context.

In addition, educationists are invited to carry out similar research as this one, with a view to indigenizing the curricula by taking other ethnic groups in the country as cases. By doing this, they will contribute to the debate that the approach of indigenization in curriculum studies and development will ensure the socio-cultural and structural relevance of the curricula. They will also contribute to the development of a genuine and relevant curriculum, which represents the Ethiopian national macro-culture being drawn from the micro-cultures of each ethnic group in the country.

### ***7.7 THE RESEARCHER'S INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY***

This researcher's interest in studying the Gamo community goes back to his undergraduate level. The title of his B.A.-dissertation is *The history of Dorze Safar in Addis Ababa from its foundation up to 1974*. This first study made him acquainted with the richness of the culture and history of the Gamo ethnic group, and the extent to which it had been addressed in scholarly debates.

The researcher worked as a teacher, and proposed to prepare relevant teaching material for the primary school where he taught grades 1-8 for one year. He tried to develop relevant material for the lower grades by blending the Ethiopian and American

curriculum. This triggered his interest in curriculum development and studies. As a result he joined the Graduate School of the Addis Ababa University to specialise in curriculum and instruction. Until graduation he has been engaged in holistic curriculum development in a faith-based non-governmental organization. As a curriculum specialist he led the holistic curriculum development process. Thereafter he volunteered to head the syllabus-construction for the Sunday school curriculum of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus Church, which is the largest denomination in Ethiopia.

Since he started working as an independent curriculum consultant and researcher following the commencement of his doctoral studies, he has developed different manuals for organizations that are engaged in formal and non-formal educational programmes. In 2012 he co-authored an article which is churned out of this research with his supervisor, Prof. Gumbo Mishack. The article was published in the reputable journal named *Indilinga – African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, under the title *Indigenizing the school curriculum: An alternative approach for ensuring relevance to the context, vol. 11, No.2, pp.179-193*. Another joint article bearing the title *A stand-alone, blended, or restructured approach to indigenization of curriculum? A critical perspective*, has also been churned out from this study by the researcher and his adviser and submitted to another highly regarded journal, named *The International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*. The article has already been critiqued by referees who advised only a slight revision. The article has been resubmitted for consideration after incorporating the feedback of the referees. The above indications clearly attest how important and acceptable this study is.

Finally, given the experience and the expertise the researcher earned so far he is able to easily undertake post-doctoral research, so as to contribute to the wealth of knowledge of curriculum development and studies locally, nationally and internationally.

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# LIST OF APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Instrument Six: Document review guides for policy documents

1. The name of the policy document reviewed \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date the document was reviewed \_\_\_\_\_
3. Brief summary of contents of the document on indigenizing the basic education curriculum

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4. What strategies does the policy document suggest to indigenize curriculum in Ethiopian primary schools?

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## **Appendix B**

### **Instrument One: Interview Guide for curriculum experts**

- What does indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
  1. How do you view the curriculum development process for Gamo ethnic group being undertaken by your office?
  2. How does your office prepare the Primary first-cycle curriculum such that it is responsive to the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group?
  3. How is the curriculum development process informed by the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group?
  4. Are culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group articulated in the curriculum and if so, how?
- What is the nature of the 1994 Education and Training Policy for the Ethiopian school Basic Education curriculum?
  1. How do you view the policy provisions of the responsiveness to the culture, language, and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum development process in the country?
  2. What is the role of your office in translating the policy provisions to the benefit of the Gamo ethnic group?
- What are the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group?
  1. What are the problems that the basic education of the Gamo ethnic group had been entangled with that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy?
- What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?
  1. Do you have any suggestions on how to make the basic education curriculum best suit for preserving the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group?

## Appendix C

### Instrument Two: Interview Guide for teachers/principals

- What does indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
  1. What do you know about the ethnicity of the Gamo culture?
  2. How do you think the present Primary first-cycle curriculum caters for the culture and heritage of the Gamo ethnic group?
  3. How does the present Primary first-cycle curriculum respond to the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group?
  4. How do you teach children in order to achieve the purpose of preserving the culture, language and identity of the Gamo people?
  5. How does the curriculum and pedagogy consider the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of the students?
  6. How do you express the children's level of motivation to learn and their overall achievement at school using the new curriculum?
- What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?
  1. Do you have any suggestions on how to make the delivery of the basic education curriculum best suit for preserving the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group?

## **Appendix D**

### **Instrument Three: Interview guide for parents**

- What does indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
  1. Do you think that your child is being taught in line with your culture? Why?
  2. How does the present Primary first-cycle education respond to the specific values of the Gamo ethnic group?
  3. Do you think that children in the primary first-cycle in your community face any difficulty when taught?
  4. How do you see the knowledge, skill and attitude that your child/children acquire at school in relation to your culture?
  5. Do you think that children in the primary first-cycle in your community are proud of their culture, language and identity?
- What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?
  1. Do you have any suggestion on how schools can better make education suitable to the culture, language and identity of your child as a member of the Gamo ethnic group?

## Appendix E

### Instrument Four: Observation checklist

1. Name of school being observed \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of observation \_\_\_\_\_

#	Items being observed	Remarks
1	The student-teacher interaction at the classroom-level communication: language of communication and teachers' demonstration of their knowledge of the culture that they teach.	
2	The reflection of the local culture on the school premises: students' plays/games and communication among themselves, student-teaching staff interaction.	
3	The values being communicated in the students' interaction among themselves and with other members of the school community; the nature of rules and procedures being adhered to in the school premises/hidden curriculum.	
4	The values being communicated through the formal curriculum/curriculum and pedagogy.	
5	The nature of culture reflected in the physical environment such as classrooms, building structures, playground, cafeteria within the school premise.	
6	The kind of school and community interaction.	
7	In- and out-of-classroom activities.	
8	Demonstration of pride by school children in their culture and identity and are they determined to preserve them?	

## Appendix F

### Instrument Five: Document review guides for organizational documents

1. Name of the site from which the document was obtained \_\_\_\_\_
2. The kind of documents being reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Official Documents	Printed Mass Media	Archival Documents
Annual reports	Newspapers	Mark lists
Minutes of Meetings	Newsletters	Name lists
Administrative documents	Magazines	
Correspondences	Journals	
Inter-office memos	Books	
Teaching notes	Maps and charts	
Others	Others	Others

3. Date the document was received \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date the document was reviewed \_\_\_\_\_
5. Significance of the document in terms/in relation to indigenizing the basic education curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group

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6. Brief summary of contents in relation to indigenizing the basic education curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group

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## Appendix G

### Sample memo for securing a letter of permission from the MOE

Date:

To: FDRE Ministry of Education

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Subject: Request for a Letter of Permission and Support

Dear Sirs,

First of all, I extend warm greetings to you. To introduce myself I am a Ph. D. candidate at the University of South Africa. The title of the research study I am conducting is: *A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.*

The study is designed to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model that best suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools. This will be done in order to inform and influence policy revision and curriculum transformation in the country, to contribute to the national and international scholarly debate on the role of indigenization approach in ensuring the relevance of a curriculum, and empower the Gamo ethnic group by designing a model for indigenizing the basic education curricula.

The study involves three separate cases with embedded cases in them that show different perspectives on the problem, process, or event that I want to portray. Policy and implementation strategy documents that guide the basic education curriculum development are organized centrally. Therefore, these documents will be critically analyzed as a separate case (Case 1). The responsibility of developing and implementing the basic education curricula hinges on the Regional, Zonal and *Woreda* Education bureaus. Therefore, in order to critically analyze the indigenization of the basic education curricula development and implementation process from Gamo ethnic group's perspective two cases are selected purposefully; that is Case 2 Gamo Gofa Zone from the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Case 3 Gulele sub-city where a large Gamo community resides.

Therefore, I kindly request the Ministry to provide me a letter of permission and support to the different levels of government institutions that will participate in this study so that I would get access to them and the favourable support in gathering data for the research. I would like to extend my gratitude in advance for your thoughtfulness and kind support.

With Regards,

Yishak Degefu Mushere

Ph. D. candidate at the University of South Africa

Appendix H

Letter of support secured from the Ministry of Education



በኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፑብሊክ  
የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር  
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
Ministry of Education

☎ 011-156-40-46, 011-1 55-31-33  
☒ 1367  
☎ (Fax) 011-158-09-37 011-156-09-37, 011-157 06 86

ቁጥር 20/1-11084/3358/35  
Ref. No  
ቀን 26/9/05  
Date

አዲስ አበባ፣ ኢትዮጵያ  
ADDIS ABABA - Ethiopia

ለሚመለከተው ሁሉ

አቶ ይስሕቅ ደገፋ ሙሽሬ በደቡብ አፍሪካ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ-ምረቃ ተማሪ ሲሆኑ በአሁኑ ሰዓት በሥርዓተ ትምህርት ዙሪያ ጥናት በማካሄድ ላይ እንደሚገኙ በመግለጽ የክልል ትምህርት ቢሮዎች ተገቢውን ትብብር ያደርጉላቸው ዘንድ ደብዳቤ እንድንፃፍላቸው ጠይቀውናል።

የባለሙያው ጥናት የሚያተኩረው የመሠረታዊ ትምህርት (ከ1ኛ-4ኛ ክፍሎች) ሥርዓተ ትምህርት ለራስ አውድ ምቹ እንዲሆን የማድረግ ጽንሰ ሐሳብ በሀገሪቱ የትምህርትና ሥልጠና ፖሊሲና በሥርዓተ ትምህርት ዝግጅትና ትግበራ እንዴት እንደታየና እንደተንጸባረቀ ጠለቅ ባለ መንገድ ለመተንተንና ለጋሞ ብሔረሰብ አውድ ምቹ የሆነ የመሠረታዊ ትምህርት (ከ1ኛ-4ኛ ክፍሎች) ሞዴል ሥርዓተ ትምህርት ለመቅረጽ ነው። ይህም በሥርዓተ ትምህርት ቀረጻ ስር ነቀል ለውጥ ለማምጣትና አውድን ያገናዘበ ሥርዓተ ትምህርት ባለው ሚና ዙሪያ የጋራ መግባባት ለመፈጠር እንደሚያስችል ይታመናል።

ስለሆነም የባለሙያው ጥናት ያለውን ሀገራዊ ፋይዳ ግንዛቤ ውስጥ በማስገባት ትምህርት ቢሮው አስፈላጊውን ድጋፍ ያደርግላቸው ዘንድ የተለመደ ትብብርን እንጠይቃለን።



ከሰላምታ ጋር  
  
የሥርዓተ ትምህርት ዝግጅትና ትግበራ  
ዳይሬክቶሬት ዳይሬክተር

## Appendix I

### The case study protocol

#### Overview of the case study project

The Gamo community is one of the marginalized communities in Ethiopia who have been accorded a despised status not just because of its weakness but due to its strength in preserving its culture and identity, be it in the Gamo highlands or among the Gamo communities in Addis Ababa. An eminent American scholar named Burley Dexter studied the detail reason why the Gamo people in Addis Ababa have been given a despised status in his Ph. D dissertation. Today you do not find many ethnic groups in Addis Ababa that have successfully resisted the onslaught from the dual Western and Amhara assimilationist policies that have been practiced since the incorporation of the south to the Ethiopian empire militarily by Emperor Menelik. Despite the furious attack on culture and identity the only community that has retained its culture and identity is the Gamo community. This clearly shows how resilient the Gamo community is and this quality has to be utilized to further develop strategies to preserve the culture and identity of the Gamo community in this difficult time in history where the corporate-driven western world and their allies in nation-states are working hard towards homogenizing the world community by marginalizing the culture and identity of local indigenous peoples.

Unfortunately, presently the dual assimilationist policies of the western world and the Amhara, which changed itself in a guise under globalization, looks succeeding through the institutions that we borrowed from the Western world like modern education, media, church, and daily products. In order to come up with a strategy to mitigate the attack from the education sector I am preparing my Ph.D dissertation on the topic “A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.”

The main aim of this research is to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools. This will be done in order to inform and influence policy revision and curriculum transformation in the country, to contribute to the national and international scholarly debate on the role of indigenization approach in ensuring the relevance of a curriculum, and empower the Gamo ethnic group by designing a model for indigenizing the basic education curricula.

Based on the main aim stated the following specific objectives are set to the study:

- ① To explore the meaning of indigenization of the school curriculum globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group.
- ② To critically analyze the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy for the Ethiopian school Basic Education curriculum.
- ③ To critically assess the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group.
- ④ To design a model suitable for the indigenization of the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools.

## Case study questions

In order to achieve the main purpose and the specific objectives of the study the following main research question has been posed which reads as:

How is indigenization approach conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation process at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy?

This main research question leads to the stating of the following sub-research questions:

- What does indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
- What is the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy for the Ethiopian school Basic Education curriculum?
- What are the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group?
- What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?

My attempt in engaging in studies of the Gamo community started since the undergraduate level. I had a plan to work on “The cultural history of the Gamo people” but due to shortage of time and resource I shifted focus to the “The History of Dorze Safar in Addis Ababa from its Foundation up to 1974” just not to distance myself from studying the community. This first study gave me acquaintance with the scholars who studied the culture and history of the Gamo and the richness of the culture of the ethnic group.

The study is situated in the critical theory paradigmatic position. It employs a qualitative case study research approach and design. The study will use a multiple case study design because looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases strengthens the precision, the validity and stability of the findings of research. In order to select study sites (cases) and participants different sampling techniques have been employed even if case study itself is not a sampling research. The sources of data evidence in case study research is typically extensive which depends on multiple sources of information. This study however uses three types of data sources namely documents, interviews and direct observations. Interview guides, document review guides and field notes for recording observations are the instruments used for data collection. In order to facilitate the smooth flow of the research activity the study follows coherent procedure for data collection.

Being a study which has embedded units within each case an embedded analysis will be used. First within-case analysis has been conducted to be followed by a cross-case analysis across the cases. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the data case study protocol, case study database and maintaining a chain of evidence have been employed. To protect participants in the study from any ensuing harm related to their participation in the research ethical consideration has been made and a guideline has been prepared and strictly adhered to. Ethical clearance has been sought from the Faculty Graduate

Committee and secured in a written form before the commencement of data gathering which confirmed the fact that the research is free from ethical dilemmas.

### **A guide for the case study report**

The case study report will be presented using the guideline which comprises six chapters. The first chapter deals with the statement of the research problem. In the second chapter the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study will be presented. The third chapter is devoted to the review of related scholarship on the research problem. The fourth chapter highlights on the research design and methodology employed by the study. The fifth chapter presents the data and the single cases and multiple case analyses. The last chapter will deal with conclusion and recommendations of the study where the policy implication of the study and the modified model for indigenizing curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group will be presented.

### **Field procedures**

Unlike in experimental studies where the behaviour of the subject is constrained by the ground rules of the investigator in case studies it is the behaviour of the researcher which is subject to constrain. Therefore, it is necessary to have explicit and well-planned field procedures encompassing guidelines for coping behaviours. The field procedures of the protocol need to emphasize the major tasks in collecting data.

Step 1. Presentation of credentials to representatives of study sites along with the informed consent form so as to secure access to the study sites. The signing on the consent form by centre representatives warrants that access to a study site is secured.

Step 2. Up on securing access to the case study sites interviewees will be selected, classrooms to be observed will be chosen, and documents to be reviewed will be spotted with the help of site representatives.

Step 3. Get acquainted with the interviewees and create a friendly relationship with them based on mutual respect. To this end, individuals who participate in the research will be kindly requested to sign on the consent form. This will help to create favourable atmosphere for free discourse with the participants of the study. After that appropriate date and time for interview sessions will be jointly arranged with the interviewees.

Step 4. Collect the documents which are provided by the study site representatives for review and start reviewing them. Review confidential documents which could not be withdrawn from the study sites within the premises of the study sites in a place arranged by the centre representatives.

Step 5. Make observations throughout engagement with the study sites and record all the observations on the check list prepared for tracking observation data.

Step 6. Conduct all the interviewees face to face with all the interviewees with whom an arrangement has already been made. Record all interviews with audio recorder and video recorder with the help of a researcher assistant. During interview I have to remain alert to probe the interviewees so as to get in depth and relevant data.

Step 7. Always check the field procedure while going out to the field to ensure consistency in using the procedures in the study sites.

Step 8. Return back to the study sites whenever issues that need further verification arise. This could be done even during the final phase of data analysis.

## Appendix J

### Cross-case matrices for the two similarly defined cases on curriculum planning and implementation

#### The basic research questions

- What does indigenization of the school curriculum mean globally and specifically in the context of Ethiopian Gamo ethnic group?
- What is the nature of the Federal and Regional Constitutions, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, the 1997 Cultural Policy and the 2002 Education Implementation Strategy for the Ethiopian school Basic Education curriculum?
- What are the circumstances that led to the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy in the Ethiopian primary schools for the Gamo ethnic group?
- What model can be suggested for indigenizing the basic education curricula specifically for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools?

Key issues or themes	Case two	Case three
Distinct features of the Gamo ethnic culture and Value Systems	The administrative system which it carries out through <i>dubusha</i> , initiation ceremony to the political position of <i>halaqa</i> , the celebration of the <i>mesqel</i> festivity, the feeding style, the dress making and dressing style, farm implements, and dispute resolution. The ethnic group has its own unique History and heritages.	The main reflections of the ethnic group's culture are the mourning ceremony for deceased persons, the cultural hand woven clothing produced by traditional looms, the wedding and the mourning ceremony and the unique feeding style.
The process of planning the present Primary first-cycle curriculum for the Gamo ethnic group	The non-involvement of community members in the curriculum planning process Lack of research in the culture before the curriculum development <i>Gamotso</i> language Textbooks are locally prepared by the Zonal Education Department. Whereas textbooks for other subjects were translated from the Amharic version prepared by the Regional Education Bureau	Disregard for the ethnic group under the pretext that the context of Addis Ababa City Administration comprises diverse ethnic groups The non-involvement of members of the Gamo community in the curriculum planning process/during content selection and commenting on the draft textbooks. Amharic and English language textbooks are prepared at Federal level by the Ministry of Education. Whereas textbooks for other subjects are prepared by the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau

<p>Level of curriculum responsiveness to the culture and specific values of the Gamo ethnic group</p>	<p>Partially responsive to the culture and specific values of the Gamo ethnic groups The locally prepared textbooks are better respond to culture and heritage than the translated materials</p>	<p>It responds to the so called national culture and national values rather than to the Gamo culture and values.</p>
<p>The culture responsive pedagogy for the Gamo people</p>	<p>Teachers use different pedagogical strategies such as giving local examples, prejudice reduction and awareness creation, engaging students in group debate on cultural issues, and using cultural heritages as teaching aids</p>	<p>The curriculum is prescriptive and does not give room for making use of culture-responsive pedagogy in the classroom. However, teachers take initiatives to teach the culture under general topics. Some teachers resort to the extracurricular activities (clubs in the school specifically the music and drama club) in order to teach the Gamo culture and heritage.</p>
<p>Curriculum's and pedagogy's consideration for the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of the students</p>	<p>The curriculum and pedagogy for <i>Gamotso</i> language subject considers the cultural knowledge, prior experiences and learning styles of students in a better way than the rest subjects.</p>	<p>There is discontinuity between the cultural knowledge, prior-experiences and learning styles of students on the one hand and the curriculum and the teaching-learning process on the other.</p>
<p>Compatibility between what children are being taught and the Local culture</p>	<p>There is partial link between what children are taught in school with their Gamo culture. However, the curriculum does not fully represent the Gamo culture (There is difference between curriculum for <i>Gamotso</i> language and other subjects)</p>	<p>There is no compatibility between what children are being taught and the culture of the Gamo ethnic group because the medium of instruction is Amharic language. There is nothing which speaks about the culture of the Gamo ethnic group in the curriculum because the process of curriculum planning is impartial.</p>
<p>The difficulty children in the community face when taught the present primary first-cycle curriculum</p>	<p>Whenever they learn the subjects through the medium of the <i>Gamotso</i> language they do not face difficulty though the new words used in the curriculum create problem or difficulty to the new generation.</p>	<p>Especially children who come from the Gamo highlands face difficulty in learning the present primary first-cycle curriculum. This is because firstly the subjects they learn do not reflect their culture and simply introduces the children to new cultures.</p>

<p>Children's level of pride in their culture, language and identity</p>	<p>Students are free to use <i>Gamotso</i> language in their communication in the school premises and they sing and perform the Gamo cultural songs and dances in school. However, they are not this much proud of their identity, language, culture and history.</p>	<p>They become embarrassed by their cultural foods, their cultural dresses, their language and identity. These things emanate from the fact that they are not taught about their culture, language, history and identity.</p>
<p>The children's level of motivation to learn the new curriculum and their overall achievement</p>	<p>There is a marked difference in students' level of motivation and overall achievement between subjects being given in the vernacular language and other subjects whose medium are not the vernacular language. The students' results in subjects whose medium is the vernacular language are very high. This is because of the fact that they do have prior experience on what they learn and they know them very well and the lessons are part of their day-to-day activities. Presently the drop out level at school is very low.</p>	<p>The student motivation to learn is very good but there are students who come from the countryside and they become highly confused when taught in Amharic. The students' academic achievement is unsatisfactory and not exciting. Drop-out rate is also very high</p>
<p>Suggestions to make the delivery of the basic education curriculum best suit for preserving the culture, language and identity of the Gamo ethnic group</p>	<p>Delivering the curriculum by cultural (culture-conscious) teachers. Teachers have to be well versed with the culture through the provision of continuous training on the culture. Convincing students, parents and administrative bodies the worth of incorporating culture in the curriculum. Pedagogical centres are prepared in the school premises and <i>weredas</i> for collecting material heritages. Conduct different studies targeting the culture and heritage of the ethnic group before preparing the curriculum. publishing dictionary and other reference materials in <i>Gamotso</i> language Teachers have to demonstrate the fact that the Gamo language and culture is equal to other languages</p>	<p>Opportunity should be provided for students to learn through the medium of their vernacular language. Written materials such as books and journals are prepared in their language Use teachers who belong to the Gamo ethnic group in teaching children from the Gamo ethnic group. Provide special trainings for school teachers and administrators Include the Gamo culture in environmental science and aesthetics subjects. Use co-curricular activities which involve activities in the schools in various clubs. Involve teachers, educationists and other people from the ethnic group who very well know the culture of the ethnic group in the curriculum planning and implementation</p>

	<p>and cultures.</p> <p>The use of <i>Gamotso</i> language as a medium of instruction at KG level in order to solve the contradiction of medium of instruction at KG and primary level.</p> <p>Researchers need to reach out to each <i>kebele</i> and adopt the culture and values of the people properly which would later be incorporated in the curriculum.</p>	<p>process.</p> <p>Responsible bodies have to study about the history, culture and identity of the Gamo ethnic group</p> <p>Awareness creation among the members of the Gamo ethnic group living in Addis Ababa should be the measure to incorporate culture and heritage in the curriculum.</p> <p>The curriculum planning process should not show favouritism to one language, one religion, one culture, and even one subject. It needs to be free and impartial.</p>
How far the curriculum development process is informed by the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group	The curriculum was not drawn by taking the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo community in to account. As a result it is incomplete and partially responsive to the culture and heritage of the community.	The curriculum development process is not properly informed by the socio-cultural and structural context of the Gamo ethnic group. As a result the specific culture, language, history and identity of the Gamo ethnic group are not articulated in the curriculum.
The problems that entangled the basic education of the Gamo ethnic group	<p>It did not give recognition to the existence of the Gamo ethnic group as an ethnic group in the country.</p> <p>All the cultural practices were completely ignored due to the fact that they were seen as harmful practices.</p> <p>The social, psychological and cultural impositions highly damaged the dignity of the ethnic group and impoverished the people.</p> <p>The medium of instruction is in an unknown language which is either the second and third language for the students.</p>	<p>There was no room for the use of mother tongue for medium of instruction as a result children were not allowed to learn using their mother tongue.</p> <p>Non-responsiveness to the country's context and the learners' needs and lack of community and stakeholders participation.</p>
The translation of the policy provisions in the curriculum development process	Proper use of the provisions of the policy has not been made.	The policy supports responsiveness to the culture, language, and identity of the Gamo ethnic group in the process of curriculum development but when it comes to implementation there are weaknesses.

## Appendix K

### Informed consent form for teachers

Dear Participant,

First of all, I extend warm greetings to you.

My name is Mr. Yishak Degefu Mushere, a Ph.D candidate at University of South Africa. The title of my study is: *A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.*

The study is designed to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model that best suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools.

I kindly request you to participate in a research study that I will soon conduct at your school. This participation is in the form of the interview that I will conduct with you, observing your teaching activities and interaction with your students inside and outside the classroom, and to provide relevant documents related to my study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate either from the outset or to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required to sign at the bottom of this letter as a way of giving your consent to participate in the research. You are assured confidentiality by not revealing your identity in the study. The information you give will only be used for this study and not for any other thing.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the information provided above and give my personal consent to participate in this study.

---

Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Address

## Appendix L

### Informed consent form for the students' parents

Dear Participant,

First of all, I extend warm greetings to you.

My name is Mr. Yishak Degefu Mushere, a Ph.D candidate at University of South Africa. The title of my study is: *A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.*

The study is designed to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model that best suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools.

I kindly request you to participate in a research study that I will soon conduct at your child's school. This participation is in the form of the interview that I will conduct with you and to provide relevant documents related to my study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate either from the outset or to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required to sign at the bottom of this letter as a way of giving your consent to participate in the research. You are assured confidentiality by not revealing your identity in the study. The information you give will only be used for this study and not for any other thing.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the information provided above and give my personal consent to participate in this study. I have read the information provided above.

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Name of Participant

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Signature of Participant

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Date

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Address

## Appendix M

### Informed consent form for curriculum experts

Dear Participant,

First of all, I extend warm greetings to you.

My name is Mr. Yishak Degefu Mushere, a Ph.D candidate at University of South Africa. The title of my study is: *A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.*

The study is designed to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model that best suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools.

I kindly request you to participate in a research study that I will soon conduct at your institution. This participation is in the form of the interview that I will conduct with you and to provide relevant documents related to my study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate either from the outset or to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required to sign at the bottom of this letter as a way of giving your consent to participate in the research. You are assured confidentiality by not revealing your identity in the study. The information you give will only be used for this study and not for any other thing.

#### SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the information provided above and give my personal consent to participate in this study. I have read the information provided above.

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Name of Participant

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Signature of Participant

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Date

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Address

## Appendix N

### Informed consent form for school principals/Heads of Education Bureaus

Dear Sirs,

First of all, I extend warm greetings to you.

To introduce myself I am a Ph. D. candidate at the University of South Africa. The title of the research study I am conducting is: *A model for indigenizing the curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary school.*

The study is designed to critically analyze how indigenization approach is conceptualized and reflected in the policy, curriculum planning and implementation at basic education level since the adoption of the 1994 Education and Training Policy and to produce the model that best suited for indigenizing the basic education curricula for the Gamo ethnic group in Ethiopian primary schools. This will be done in order to inform and influence policy revision and curriculum transformation in the country, to contribute to the national and international scholarly debate on the role of indigenization approach in ensuring the relevance of a curriculum, and empower the Gamo ethnic group by designing a model for indigenizing the basic education curricula.

I have selected your school/institution as one of the study sites in my research work based on the information obtained from the different levels of education offices. Therefore, your school/institution is kindly requested to host a research study to be conducted at your school. Curriculum experts, selected teachers from among those who teach basic education first cycle (grades 1-4), principals and students' parents are participants in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you would be required to sign on the Consent form to ensure your informed consent to participate in the research. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study either from the outset or you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You are assured confidentiality by not revealing your identity in the study. The information you give will only be used for this study and not for any other thing.

Attached herewith please find the LETTER OF PERMISSION to conduct the research in the schools and different levels of government institutions under study secured from the Ministry of Education.

SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

I, the undersigned, declare that I have read the information provided above and give my consent on behalf of my school/institution to be used as a study site by the researcher.

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Name of Representative

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Signature of Representative

Date

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Address