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*Voice of Addis Chamber*

**An Analysis of Audience Reception: the Perspectives of  
Audiences of the  
*Voice of Addis Chamber***

**By  
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## ABSTRACT

The private sector in the economic and political capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, aims to assert itself as a real power in shaping the face of the national economy. And the association which the private businesses established some six decades ago, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce stands to empower the people behind this sector and build a vibrant business community with the reach of its FM radio programme – the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. “An Analysis of Audience Reception: the Case of the Voice of Addis Chamber” seeks to describe how the programme contents are interpreted by the target audiences and the level to which they are relevant to the needs of the target audiences.

The study has analysed the programme contents over a six month period; the relevance of the programmes, the factors that are at play when audiences make sense of the programme contents and the language use were examined through focus group and in-depth individual interviews.

The findings indicate that level of educational background was the factor to influence how audiences made sense of the programme contents while age came to be a dividing factor regarding language use. The findings show that the radio programme is way far from being the prime source of business news and information for the businessmen and women who it has long targeted hinting at the need for a serious consideration of a scrupulous restructuring in the way the radio programme operates.

# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Trade has long been an important part of Ethiopia's history. However, according to Befekadu (1994: 33), it is with the advent of intensified global interconnectedness and the change of government in 1991 that the country resolved to embrace free-market economic policies. That has seen a growing business community, contributing to the national economy in terms of creating employment, generating tax revenues and expanding the reach of the nation's foreign trade (Befekadu 1994: 33, Yohannes 1994: 178). As a result businesses of private ownership flourished, especially in Addis Ababa. Established in 1947 G.C., one of the oldest business associations in Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.) has witnessed a historic increase in the size of its membership (A.A.C.C. Annual Report 2007/08). And on April 9, 2001, the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, a new radio programme sponsored and produced by a non-state actor and targeting the business community in Addis Ababa went on air. The radio programme has been intended to support the private sector in Addis Ababa with needed trade and investment information so that the private businesses can become a strong power of force in the nation's economic activities.

The *Voice of Addis Chamber*, as an integral part of Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.), broadcasts on FM Addis 97.1 only to its audiences in Addis Ababa, and seeks to serve the purposes of encouraging trade and investment in the capital city. To this effect, the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, with its two half-hour lunch time programmes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, provides information on business activities, business opportunities, on tax and other policy issues to the target

audiences (both the registered and potential members of the A.A.C.C.). It also reports on the various activities of Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (Article of Memorandum: *Voice of Addis Chamber*, January 2001). With that, the radio programme acts in the interest of the public by providing information that helps its audience - in this case, the business community in Addis Ababa - to become knowledgeable on business affairs and to be able to make informed decisions. As the radio programme was established and funded by Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce to serve the business interests of its registered and potential members, who currently number 15,000 and well over 250,000 respectively, the range of its broadcasting is limited to these audiences in Addis Ababa. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise because the nation's key bureaucratic institutions, big businesses, all headquarters of the financial institutions are stationed in Addis Ababa. Besides, Addis Ababa is the entrepreneurial city with a telling example that all the private financial institutions have more number of branch operation offices in Addis Ababa than in the rest of the country (Annual Report on Ethiopian Economy - Ethiopian Economic Association, 2006).

This makes the radio programme of great importance because what it focuses on, i.e., both Addis Ababa and the economic activities of the private sector residing in it, according to Yohannes (1994: 185) and Addisalem (2003: 335-37), are the two most important factors in the national economy. Economic development for a poor country like Ethiopia is mainly alleviating the widespread poverty and enabling the poor to access livelihoods and basic needs, ultimately furthering political and development rights. When economic dynamics work well, citizen-activism in political decision process enhances bringing political stability and social harmony (Eade and Sayer 2006: 4). Eade and Sayer (2006: 4) also argue that compelling evidence exists to show that economic growth is a precondition for sustainable alleviation of poverty and maintaining political stability. Although the reach of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* is limited to Addis Ababa, as seen in this perspective, the radio programme stands important by virtue of its institutional tie with the private

sector in Addis Ababa and its assumed contribution to the creation of a robust business community. That highlights the significance of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programmes as it attempts to address the information needs of the business community in the capital city.

Such is, as being the voice of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, the weight of the roles vested up on the *Voice of Addis Chamber*: disseminating useful and credible information to the private businesses and with that support the process of creating a vibrant and prosperous private sector. In the information front the *Voice of Addis Chamber* does not seem to stand alone. The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce publishes two monthly newspapers: the Amharic *Nigdena Limat* (trade and development) and the English *Addis Business*. Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce has also maintained a presence in the phenomenal world of worldwide web with its web site [www.addischamber.org](http://www.addischamber.org). Nevertheless, with its cheaper means of production and transmission and the wide reach it perfects by virtue of its being a radio transmission, the *Voice of Addis Chamber* remains to be A.A.C.C.'s number one bunker for communicating information to its members

The effectiveness of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* in meeting the set objectives is, therefore, worth researching. Audiences are not passive listeners; they make meanings out of the media content and “use the media as an integrated part of their daily lives” (Shroder et al. 2003: 16). It is believed that the audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* also share this character of being active audiences. Taking this view of Shroder et al. (2003) that audiences are active in making sense of media contents and assessing the value of those media contents in their lives, this thesis examines the programme’s relevance and effectiveness based on the perspectives of selected audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

## **1.2 Economic Activities in Addis Ababa**

The economic importance of Addis Ababa to the national economy in terms of generating tax revenue, creating employment and intensified investment is second to none. The centre of all sectors of business, including major financial institutions is this city. Economically the city is the heart beat of the nation's economic activity. According to a 2005/06 report by EEA (Ethiopian Economic Association: annual Report 1998 EFY) the business activity in the city of Addis Ababa generated more than 86 % of the federal government's revenue out of which close to 82% came from the private sector. Addis Ababa also attracts more than one third of the total investment. However, what is unique about this economic activity is that while the major investor in other regions remains to be the federal and regional state governments, in Addis Ababa the private sector is the largest contributor of the city's investment activities.

The gross regional domestic product (RGDP) estimates for Addis Ababa city in 1998 EFY (Ethiopian Fiscal Year), measured at current basic prices is Birr 17,254 million. Compared with the national GDP (ETB107, 167,701.863) at current basic prices, it is 16.1 %. The city's overall economic activity in terms of regional GDP has grown by 12.1 percent in 1998 EFY. This result is slightly higher than the growth recorded at national level (10.5%) in the same year.

The general economic activity of the city of Addis Ababa is dominated by the service sector which accounts for 75.3 % of the regional gross domestic product (RGDP). The second most economically active sector is the industry contributing 24.1 % of the RGDP. This sector of the city's economic wing consists of manufacturing, construction, electricity & water & mining and quarrying industries of which the manufacturing and the construction alone contribute 48.2% and 39.6% respectively. The manufacturing sector is one of the fastest growing economic activities and attracts more of the foreign direct investment in the city. The EEA report in its executive summary has indicated that this sector alone scored a significant 16.5 % growth from the previous year's performance.

In the manufacturing sector too, as in other sectors of the city's economic activities, the private sector has taken the lion share of the business activity by investing more than the central government. In the constructions sector which has recently grown to be the most vibrant economic activity especially in the major cities across the nation including Addis Ababa, the private sector holds 69 % of the total investment in this particular activity. Government investment in the construction activity in the city of Addis Ababa accounts for only one third (30.9 %) of the total construction sector in the city; this shows that the private sector is the major contributor of the sector which grew by 12.2 % in the 1998 Ethiopian Fiscal Year (EFY). This evidences that the private sector is not only a tax generator, rather a competitive investor in the national economy too. In general terms, investment in Addis Ababa was estimated at ETB 5,474.2 million in 1998 EFY (2005/06), bringing the city's rate of investment at 30 percent of the regional gross domestic product (RGDP). The result also shows that the city is a net importer of goods and services with an estimated net import of ETB 1,018 million.

In the employment front too, the capital city is the nation's prime employment centre especially in the formal sectors. According to the 2005 report by the Central Statistics Authority (ESA), Addis Ababa has constituted 26.6 % of the country's total urban formally employed labor force, 13% of the country's informally employed population and close to 23 % of the nation's total urban employment. As per CSA (2005), the major sectors the employed labor force engaged in the city are service (70.56%) and industry (26.75%).

The figures all but point out that the economic activity is one of the major defining factors when one thinks of the national economy. This is because, as indicated earlier, functioning behind the bulk of the city's investment, import and production chain of activities, the private sector stands being the all important element either for the fall or rise of the economic fate of this important city.

### 1.3 The Voice of Addis Chamber

The role of the media in the creation of awareness on various issues and facilitating change is a foregone conclusion (Williams 2003: 6). This is also true to the support that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* could provide to its intended audiences – the business community in Addis Ababa. The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.) has itself been well aware of the potential reach of the media particularly of the radio, as it decided, in February 2001, to buy air time from the newly established FM Addis 97.1 with the aim of promoting its activities and serving its members with their information needs (A.A.C.C.) *Voice of Addis Chamber - Articles of Memorandum* 2001).

According to Wzt Brukt the chief programme producer and the first employoyee of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, the programme was meant to actualize the sense of importance of *the association* (A.A.C.C.) and the private sector in Addis Ababa as an economic power (Interview with chief programme producer of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, Brukt 2008). For this reason, the start of FM radio in Addis Ababa with its reach of the whole city of Addis and its vicinities was seen as a perfect opportunity for the association to assert itself as an indispensable actor in the economic environment of the country.

The business community in Addis Ababa both members and non- members, the various associations of these businesses, the working force in government institutions which are directly related to the business activities both at the local (Addis Ababa) and national level are all the target audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

The *Voice of Addis Chamber* functions with the aim of creating a robust private sector in Addis Ababa. Specifically, the radio programme has the following objectives:

- To serve businesses and the local communities (of Addis Ababa) by providing quality business news and information;
- To promote business in Addis Ababa by creating a forum for information exchange;
- To encourage the participation of the business community in democratic, political and economic policy formation processes and
- To reach out for the community and government at large with the purpose of building broader understanding of and public debate on business issues and concerns. (A.A.C.C./ Voice of Addis Chamber - Articles of Memorandum 2001)

The *Voice of Addis Chamber* is a half-hour programme running regularly on FM Addis 97.1 twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12:40 pm and 1:10 pm noon. It presents issues ranging from individual and group business success stories that are of business in nature to high level initiatives like NEPAD (the New Partnership for African Development) COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) as well as government economic policies.

The radio programme producers frequent the use of interview and commentary (the presentation of a reporting) on business opportunities, the activities of Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (meetings held, trainings conducted, visits by foreign businesses,...), or performances of any of the business associations in the private sector. *Tip-off* is not a regularly featuring programme on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. It comes in a commentary form intermittently featuring programmes on business and investment opportunities in Addis Ababa for potential investors.

The *Voice of Addis Chamber* had several hurdles to pass to reach its present status. There was a lot of optimism on both sides when the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce officially expressed its interest to lease air time from FM Addis 97.1, agreed to pay the first installment of the half-year air time rental fee totaling ETB

79,000.00 and ultimately commenced transmission on April 9, 2001. The radio programme had even managed to amass as much as two-third of the amount payable for air time subscription from advertisements. In the past five years two events took place altering the financial and functional conditions of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. In 2003, when the Federal Government introduced the new tax system which effected the Value Added Tax (VAT) scheme, there had been confusion and strong resistance among the private businesses. And as the association of the private sector, the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce used its radio programme to voice its stance on the situation that the new tax scheme created. Following the row between the Federal Government and the A.A.C.C., the radio programme was banned temporarily (for three months). When it regained its air time and the Tuesday/Thursday schedule intact, it had already been stripped off its advertising rights. The other event was related to the May 2005 national election. In the run up for the election, the *Voice of Addis Chamber* had programmes featuring on election matters with its 'Vote Addis', which was intended to encourage member businessmen and women to vote in the national elections. The programme, together with the fervour and the enthusiasm that was prevalent during the election period, was believed to have brought a great deal of its audiences to the polling stations whose result (According to the 2005 reports by the National Electoral Board, a stunning 98%) hugely favoured the opposition party. The success in this regard seems difficult to measure but the situation went by leaving the question whether or not the A.A.C.C. should voice its political stance unanswered.

## **1. 4 Objectives**

### **1.4.1 General Objective**

This study evaluates the effectiveness and the relevance of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* from the point of view of selected audiences of the target audiences – the business community in Addis Ababa.

### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives include:

1. Identifying the sources of business information of the business community in Addis Ababa;
2. Examining how understandable, relevant to the needs of the audiences and interesting the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* are;
3. Presenting the reaction of the target audiences in Addis Ababa on the contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme; and
4. Comparing and contrasting the understandings of the audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and the programme producers regarding what the radio programmes need to deliver.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

In order to meet its objectives the study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent do the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* address the information needs and interests of the audience?
2. What do audiences and the programme producers think of regarding the radio programmes' performance?
3. What factors are at play to affect varied interpretation of the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and the relevance of its programmes among different audience groups?

## **1.6 Methodology**

This research primarily aimed to reveal the reactions of the audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* (in this case the business community in Addis Ababa) to the radio programmes. A trend in contemporary audience research has been to use qualitative methodologies to uncover how audience members interact with the mass media (Moran, 2003: 2). There has been a concern to research audiences since the first time the media managed to get their messages across to a large audience

(McQuail 1997; Williams 2003; Schroeder et al. 2003). The focus is still there. What have changed over time are the methods used and the theoretical assumptions underlying these studies. The tradition of researching audiences has moved from empirical data collection to include a more integrated approach that includes qualitative analysis of both the content and audience reception.

According to Folkerts and Lacy (2001), and Moran (2003), qualitative methods such as textual analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews better suit such in-depth studies to understand how audiences interpret media messages. Hence, focus group interviews and in-depth interviews were proved to be appropriate means of collecting data for the study. The process of sampling research participants employed techniques that are traditionally associated with the qualitative research tradition - Convenience and Snowball sampling methods. In such a way, the research gathered and recorded the reactions of participants to a set of questions and issues after the participants were made listen to few copies of previously transmitted programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. The responses of the research subjects were then analysed to provide the views of audiences regarding the relevance and worth of the programme contents to their work life.

According Hutchby (2006: 7), Stuart Hall's (1980) model of mass communication explains the meaning that is available in a given media 'text' or media content is not fixed; it varies mainly due to the fact that audiences are different in their backgrounds. Therefore, suggests that a reception study considers both producers of media programmes and audiences, as well. In making a thorough study of audience reception, Hull's encoding/decoding model points out that there is also the need to assess the assumptions of the 'decoder side' to establish understanding on the intentions and objectives which 'texts' were meant to serve. To this effect, in-depth interviews were conducted with the radio programme coordinator and producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* in order to convey the view of the producer regarding

what the programmes should deliver and the performance of the radio programme in meeting the expectations of its audiences.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This is a study conducted on one of the unique radio programmes which has targetted a specific group of audiences - the business community in Addis Ababa. Producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme may consider the outcomes of the study; its recommendations could help them tailor their programme formats and contents in a way that meets the needs of the business community in Addis Ababa. As Folkerts and Lacy (2001: 450) point out, media organizations need such researches on audiences in order to identify what the audience want so that the media organizations could produce contents that better suit their audiences.

Audiences of the programme may also benefit in a way that the study sets forth what they think of the way the radio programme - that has specifically targeted them - is performing. In addition to that, the study may reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the radio programmes leading to an improved quality in the programme contents and presentations. It is also believed that the study has the significance of sparking insights for other similar researches in the area of audience research endeavours specifically on programmes that are of concern to the business community.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Shortage of time has consistently been one of the constraints of this study. The limited amount of fund available for the research endeavour was also proved to be another glitch in doing what the task demanded.

Organizing groups of respondents was also a daunting challenge for the focus group participants were reluctant to sacrifice their time for a study - to borrow the words of one of the subjects who declined participation – “that does not directly contribute to their bank accounts”. While it was planned to organize six focus groups, the researcher managed to do the interviews only with four groups.

## **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

The study comprises five chapters. In the first chapter are the background of the study, the general and specific objectives, the research questions, the significance, the scope and limitations of the study. Also briefly - by way of providing a backdrop of the focus of the study - it introduces the history of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and its programmes.

Review of related literature presented in chapter two, provides the basic literature on various theories with the aim of laying down the theoretical basis underpinning this study and providing understanding as to how audiences were perceived in various media theories.

Chapter three discusses and in a way justifies the methodology used for the study. Chapter four presents the data and analysis of the findings under four general themes. The last chapter - chapter five - concludes by summarizing the findings and giving recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Introduction

Beginning from the early decades of the twentieth century, media theories and the colossal amount of researches those theories generated had varied views of the role of audiences in relation to the media. The following section of the paper draws the different roles audiences were assumed to occupy in relation to the media as reflected in different theories. The discussion begins with the definitions of the term 'audience' as in the view of different experts on mass communication theories and then continues to present the earliest effects theories and concludes by introducing the more recent ones, i.e., reception studies, of which the latter provides the theoretical basis for this study.

### 2.1 Defining the *Audience*

In early media researches the audience was applied to mean the 'mass society' and as Gillespie (2005: 10) puts it, rather in its pejorative sense. Gillespie emphasizes that the term 'audience' was used to refer to the mass attendants of the media who in light of "the dominant popular and academic thinking", were "mindless, ignorant, defenceless, naïve and as manipulated or exploited by the mass media" (2005: 10). Yet, defining one of the most prevalent terms in mass communication researches, 'audience', does not seem to come by easy. For some experts in the field of media research, it is just an abstract idea that does not have a definitive presence except in mass communication discourse. McQuail, for example, establishes the fluidity of

the concept by presenting the point of view of Allor who writes that “the audience exists nowhere, it inhabits no real space only positions within analytic discourse” (2000: 360).

In one of the pioneering models of mass communication as developed by Wilbur Schramm(1955), audiences are designated by the term ‘receiver’ with the role of taking-in messages dispatched by a source(McQuail 2000: 360). In the earliest media theories too, audience meant the congregated ‘mass society out there’ passively receiving media contents. However, McQuail finds it convenient to put the notion of audience in different and overlapping ways ,i.e., “by place ( as in local media audience) by people (specific age belief groups) by the type of channel by the media content, .i.e., the subject matter and by time ( prime time )” (2000: 360). As noted above, audiences can be perceived in the type of media they tune to; hence, one may talk of local or global media audience. He also notes that audiences could be defined differently when a medium is characterized by the appeal it has to a particular age group, gender, or group of people who share the same political beliefs as in the liberal/conservative continuum. This tells that *Sesame Street* or the *Tom and Jerry* cartoon series are likely to draw more of their audiences from the age of childhood. The type of medium, i.e., TV, radio or newspaper could be used as vantage points to define audiences; therefore, yielding groups of people who one may refer as radio or newspaper audiences. A state of overlapping, as McQuail(2000: 360) notes above, happens because, diverse as they are, audiences may converge to form a different audienceship as they come to hold some level of commonality in their beliefs, taste or life styles.

Ross and Nightingale (2003: 6) contend that the audience comes into being where a group of people engage with mediated information. This means that audienceship not only requires the physical presence of people but rather the active engagement of those people with the mediated message. For Corteau and Hoynes (2003: 260), audiences are people with lives histories and social networks. These people are

‘active readers’ of media messages and not passive recipients of them. Audiences actively engage themselves with the media contents they access and construct meaning in light of the context of the everyday life where in they are situated.

According to Corteau and Hoynes (2003: 266), this notion of ‘active audience’ is, in reception theory, intended for embracing three concepts that complement each other. The first one refers to the rejection of the passivity and gullibility of audiences. It means that audiences engage themselves to bring about their knowledge and experiences as they make sense of media contents. The second one points at the claim that reception and interpretation of media outputs is not strictly individual; it is also a social activity. Individuals share a number of elements common in their social setting and their lived life brings about factors which influence the way audiences make sense of media contents (Corteau and Hoynes 2003: 268). The third view embedded in the ‘active audience’ notion is the ‘collective action’ people could occasionally take in response to certain media programme contents (2003: 269). Williams appears to agree with the view which Corteau and Hoynes(2003) hold as he argues that in contemporary reception theories, “audiences are seen as being active at the individual, social and political levels” (2003: 193).

The above discussion shows that there are indeed different point of views from which the notion of ‘audience’ is seen (Corteau and Hoynes 2000; Gillespie 2005; McQuail 2000; Ross and nightingale 2003). All said, this study uses the concept of ‘audience’ to refer to people who actively receive media messages and make sense of them in relation to the context of their daily life. This also presupposes that the way audiences intreprete media messages is influenced by the ‘identities’(factors such as gender, race, age...) associated with the ‘reading communities’ they (audiences) belong to.

## **2.2 Direct Effects Theories**

In mapping mass communication theories from the cradle to the contemporaries, Strelitz argues that they could be distinguished “between those approaches stressing the determining power of the media and those that highlight the interpretive freedom of audiences” (2000: 37). When media theories began to hold foot in early 1920’s, the dominant preoccupation was finding what effects the media had in the lives of people. With that the theme ‘what do the media do to people?’ became the main feature media researches. As a result the magic bullet theory, which propagated the media’s eminent power, the direct and ‘obvious’ effects they exerted on the behaviour of the ‘passive mass audience’, emerged to become the dominant paradigm guiding early media studies (Baran and Davis 2006: 82).

The direct effects theory considered the audience as “passive consumers” of whatever the media had to offer. People who come in to contact with messages of the media could do nothing but be conditioned to the influences of the powerful media. According to Williams, the notion of direct effects theories is simple: “media messages are received in a uniform way by every member of the audience and that immediate and direct responses are triggered by the stimulus“(2003: 171). As Strelitz summarizes it, the shared principles of the early media effects theories were based on “the view that the media, as powerful institutions, are able to inject their audiences with their messages, and thus affect their behaviours” (2000: 37).

The direct effects theories argued that the audience had neither the consciousness nor the experience to resist the manipulative power of the media and the engulfing effect they brought up on their lives. Hence, they (audiences) were considered at best ‘passive receivers of media messages’ with no effort to interact with it and worse ‘media dupes’ (Ross and Nightingale 2003: 72). It can be said that researches under the umbrella of direct effects theory were centered on the source. Williams indicates that in early source-centered researchers, there was a creeping acknowledgement of “the need to consider the prejudices, the feelings and the opinions of the audiences in trying to make sense of messages they receive” (2003:

30). Although researchers, in such a way, made concessions in considering the roles of the audience, making sense of media contents, they still assumed the public's ability in processing and understanding messages to be feeble and incompetent. Hence, audiences were assumed to be 'helpless victims' in light of the power of the media. In other words, audiences were seen as both inherently passive and easy to manipulate. McQuail (1997: 17) also writes that early effects theories focused on the audience with some positive intentions of finding out better ways of communicating the audience or avoiding harmful effects of the media. Nevertheless, almost all the research was conducted with a strict adherence to a one-way process of communication and a conception of the audience as "an unwitting target or passive recipient of media stimuli" (McQuail 1997: 17).

The direct effects theories received as much critiques as the vast array of interest they generated. The most widely stated flaw is the direct effects theories' claim that audiences are inactive when it comes to interpreting media messages. Message from the media could just be injected in the minds of the audience with little or no knowledge and resistance from the side of the receivers. Stagier points out that the other folly is that it disregards "the factors intervening between the media messages and that of the opinions and beliefs of people on the receiving side" (2005: 44). Critiques such as the abovementioned ones and the growing interest to apply scientific methods to carry out media researches brought about a shift in perspective ushering the theory of limited-effects.

### **2.3 The Limited - Effects Theory**

The limited-effects theory became a formidable challenge to the early traditions of mass communication researches. Limited-effects specifically questioned the prevalent research methods which proponents of this theory dubbed as speculative, highly opinionated and marred by the lingering subjectivity of the researcher

(Staiger 2005: 34). Perhaps, apart from the emphasis on scientific research methods, the important contribution of the limited-effects theory to the mass communication researches lies in the taming of wild assumptions such as 'the hypodermic needle effect' and the 'passive audience' issues.

The central tenet of the theory is that the media did not have in fact direct influence on the audience because there are a set of social relations and variables associated with them to intervene. The limited-effects researches insist that there is indeed a level of effect subtly injected in to audiences by the media - a limited one if not immensely a minuscule. In this regard, the milestone work of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) who, in their research, came up with the 'two-step model' in which they argued that the media were not as such powerful enough to directly affect the opinions and beliefs of people because there were people - 'opinion leaders', as Lazarsfeld and his colleagues called them - having the role of distilling the information on to larger members of the group needs a mention (Shroder et al 2003: 36). This 'two-step flow' of information stressed message came from the media to 'opinion leaders' who exercised group influence, as a result of the knowledge and respect they commanded, to the other members of the group (Williams 2003: 174). The fact that the media messages reach audiences through the 'opinion leaders' was, according to Shroder et al (2003: 36) and Williams (2003: 175), used to stress the limitation that the media faced in directly affecting the actions of their audiences. The theory, by emphasizing the minimal level of the direct effects of the media recognized that "people were not the passive, isolated and impressionable entities of mass society theory but individuals who could interpret what they saw and heard" in line with their own preestablished beliefs and attitudes (Williams 2003: 174).

Similarly, Baran and Davis (2003: 176) argue that the limited-effects theory acknowledges the significance of group dynamics in which interpretation of media contents occur. The theory underlines, by way of stressing the existence of a host of

mediating factors which affect the way audiences select, assess and reject media messages, the fact that audiences are no longer 'passive victims' of the media. Critiques of the theory mention that it overemphasized, in various studies, the use of stimuli-response research methods to assess and quantify all kinds of media/audience interactions at all levels (Baran and Davis 2003: 264). Despite their shortcomings, researches coming out of the limited-effects tradition did inspire endeavors which focused on investigating what for audiences used media contents; hence spawning the uses and gratifications theory (Williams 2003: 177). Baran and Davis (2003: 264) too agree that too much research focuses on the negative effects of the media and that "intended positive uses of the media were being ignored", thus developed an influential theory dubbed 'uses and gratifications'.

## **2.4 Uses and Gratifications Theory**

The uses and gratifications perspective is a major shift in the description of the role of the audiences in the sense that it emphasized the active role of audiences by focusing on "what they do with the media content rather than what the media do to the people" (DeFluer and Ball-Rokeach 1989: 187). The uses and gratifications perspective brought audiences to the centre stage of media researches by recognizing the cognitive variables in understanding the role of the media in everyday life (Ross and Nightingale 2003: 29).

Unlike the previous effects theories, the uses and gratifications approach, from the outset, aimed at developing a different view of audiences, i.e., as active users of the media output. Hutchby observes that this perspective was a complete shift from the preceding media theories, in that "audience members actively and critically selected those aspects of media output which most suited their various everyday needs, be of a desire for entertainment, for escapism for information about events in the world or whatever" (2006: 6). It means that the theory maintains audiences are endowed with both the experience and cognitive capacity to access the media at

their convenience and to make use of their contents. Quoting Renckstrof and McQuail, Staiger (2005: 53) argues that this aspect of the uses and gratifications perspectives heralded “the beginning of active audience proposition”.

McQuail summarizes the basic assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory in the followings four points:-

- media and content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and gratifications;
- audiences are conscious of the media related needs;
- broadly speaking personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors;
- all or most of the relevant factors for audience formation (motives , perceived or obtained satisfactions, media choices background variables) can in principle be measured ( 2000: 387-88).

With all the insights the theory added to the realm of researching audiences, the uses and gratifications paradigm has been identified with a few serious limitations. For example, Staiger (2005: 55) quotes McQuail on three major ones. They are: the lack of ‘genuine scientific methods of research’, the fact that the theory accedes to the general assumption that people use the media to adjust themselves to whatever system was in place and the theory’s disregard for the significance of the media in serving social functions and audiences’ act of extracting pleasures (amusing themselves) with no propose of gaining knowledge or information as uses of the media. The theory, according to McQuail (1984) as cited in Staiger (2005: 55) offered a list of possible needs which individual audiences often have reported to have identified themselves with. The lists are produced from a set of questionnaires which could not allow respondents to express the meanings media contents give them and whether or not their preferences are related to factors such as age, gender, education, and other social factors. The uses sand gratifications theory

heavily leans on the individual audience as the unit of any analysis. In a way it does not enquire in to the social dynamics of reception (listening to the radio or watching television or attending to any other medium). The approach does not concern itself with the discussions which arise as a result of consuming media contents together, and the act of exchanging of ideas. This marks the absence of such contexts of togetherness, hence depriving the uses and gratifications approach of the chance to get sight of the social dimension of reception. Strelitz (2000: 38), for example, writes that this individualistic and rather psychological approach of understanding how audiences make sense of media contents is not only the theoretical stumbling block for researchers of this tradition but also the all-important point of departure from contemporary reception theories. Williams also agrees that this approach is narrowly individualistic and “fails to locate the message and the audience in a wider social context” (2002: 179).

As part of its theoretical assumptions, the uses and gratifications approach implies that individual audiences approach every media programme with a sense of purpose. Nevertheless, this has been contested on the ground that audiences not only casually tune to media outputs but they may attend to a particular media programme out of appreciation of the way that particular programme is composed and presented; watching and listening to a media programme may not all the time be goal oriented and seriously purposeful (Williams 2003: 178, McQuail in Stagier, 2005: 55). DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach add to the list of criticisms that the uses and gratifications perspective did little to provide “a systematic explanation beyond a list of reasons for which people claim for the selection and attending to the media” (1989: 187).

## **2.5 Contemporary Audience Reception Studies**

Reception studies came to the media research realm with the belief that audiences are active and can reconstruct meaning not exactly intended by the media producers but as the audiences own life styles, experience and social interactions dictate. Therefore contemporary audience researches focus on inquiring in to “what audiences think and do” in order to understand the influence of the media (Williams 2003: 190). This quest to look into the process of reception rejects the idea of ‘the captive audience’ who are injected a daily dose of what media practitioners think is good for them (Baran and Davis 2003; Williams 2003; Shroder 2003). As a result reception studies prioritize investigating media messages by active audiences. Meaning is, therefore, regarded as the construct of audiences as they interact with ‘media texts’ rather than what producers embed in the contents (of the media) (Shroder et al. 2003: 124).

Central to contemporary audience reception theories is the encoding/decoding model developed by Stuart Hall. This model of mass communication, which later came to be known as reception studies, explains that the media and their act of communicating ‘media texts’ to the audiences “should be understood in terms of a circuit of communication” (Hutchby 2006: 8). Hall’s model of mass communication connects the producers of media contents and audiences (as the two occupy the two ends of the communication loop) by the continuous process of production, distribution, reception and feedback. As a result, this interconnectedness of both ends - the encoding and the decoding sides - lends itself for empirical investigation. However, the model focuses on the decoding side to suggest three basic ways in which media messages could be discerned, i.e., dominant oppositional and negotiated. The dominant interpretation or “the preferred reading of media texts” occurs, Baran and Davis (2006: 276) explain, when audiences interpret media contents as intended by the producers. The oppositional decoding happens when audiences come up with interpretations that appear to be in direct opposition to the preferred one. Yet audiences could also misinterpret some parts of the message or

disagree with it to develop an alternative interpretation which is labeled as ‘the negotiated meaning’.

A vital aspect of this model is the role of the audiences as active interpreters of media messages. Reception studies such as the pioneering work of Hall's model and the practical researches such as Morley's on the 1970's British TV magazine *Nationwide*, as Corbeau and Hoynes put it, established a tradition of “real people back in to focus in media research by exploring the interaction between people and media texts and locating meaning in those interactions”(2003: 298). According to Strelitz (2000: 38), the encoding/decoding model of mass communication acknowledges that, in part to stress that the significant difference it has with the uses and gratifications theory, reception of media messages and making sense of them are influenced by those factors which identify groups of people called ‘reading or interpretive communities’. These factors which Strelitz (2000: 38) and Williams (2003: 196) identify to be race, gender, age, educational background (level of education) and other ‘identities’, are in fact important elements that need to be closely investigated when researching how audiences make sense of media messages becomes the concern of a study.

The audience reception theory has the strengths of a focusing attention on individuals and understanding how, within the particular context of their lives, they interpret media contents in the mass communication process. Critiques of the theory, on the other hand, draw attention to the theory's basing of itself on the subjective interpretation of audience reports, its intent to downplay the absence or presence of effect, the tendency to focus on audience resistance of media message and the lingering subjectivity of researchers themselves (Baran & Davis 2003: 278 and Williams 2003: 207-08). Researchers like Stagier, however, insist that “reception studies matter for our individual and our social and political life. It is a practically pragmatic field even if at times reaching specific conclusions is difficult” (2005: 4). Shroder et al (2003: 141) also support this view that the study of audience

reception, with all the shortcomings they exhibit, continue to be an established tradition with formidable theoretical and methodological foundations.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion has outlined the theoretical basis of the study. It has addressed the debates surrounding the roles of the audiences in successive theories which rose to prominence at different times of the age of mass communication research. The direct effects theories perspectives saw the media as possessing tremendous power to affect the way audiences thought and behaved because they could directly get their messages in to the minds of the public. These theories perceived audiences to have been inactive and easy to manipulate. The limited effects approaches, on the other hand, have a different view of the effects the media had on their audience. This perspective maintained the media's impact on the public is mediated by other factors.

In a complete shift from the previous theories, the uses and gratifications perspective developed the existence of a more liberated and independent individual audience who can use the media contents to meet the varied desires of their daily lives. Reception studies like the decoding/decoding model have envisaged more active and powerful audiences. Audiences are, according to reception theory, a theory that stem from Hall's encoding/decoding model, where power belies in the mass communication continuum in which they can reject or accept the whole or parts of the media messages.

All said, this paper stands by the notion that audiences have different backgrounds and mindsets which influence them as they engage themselves with the media. This makes audiences potential subjects of mass communication researches, as they (audiences) are capable of providing insights on the varied ways they interpret media 'texts'. Such conceptions remain in line with what contemporary audience

reception theories that are “more concerned with the way that active audiences contribute to the negotiation and construction of meaning” (Livingstone 1990 cited in Gunter 2000: 45).

In the end, Gunter writes quoting Lunt and Livingstone (1990) that best represents the view this study identifies itself with: “Audiences do not comprise a vacuum to be filled by messages. Instead they must be conceived as being psychologically active in their use of the media and the way they react to media content” (2000: 45). In addition to that, the paper also goes with the claim that audiences ‘interpret the same media output in different ways’ and probably in ways that defy the intentions of the producers. Such views, as discussed in the literature review, are rooted in the reception theories, and this study has taken the resulted strengths of the audience reception research tradition and continues to embrace them throughout.

## **CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

This study sought to produce data and understandings on how far the programmes fit the needs of audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and how they interpret the contents of the radio programme. To this effect, the study has followed the qualitative data gathering and analysis tools applicable in line with audience reception analysis. This part of the paper, therefore, discusses the principles underlying the qualitative method of research which provides the guidelines for conducting this study. Accordingly, it attempts to provide justifications as to why this study opts for qualitative methods of research. It also discusses the data gathering tools, i.e., qualitative content analysis, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews, which are often put to use to provide the ‘insider perspectives’ of the research subjects.

### **3.1 Scope of the Study**

This study has the *Voice of Addis Chamber* in focus and the content analysis done qualitatively on programmes covering a six month period. Four focus group interviews and five individual in-depth interviews have been held. The focus groups were organized based on age and educational background. The producers of the radio programme have also been interviewed in order to provide the point of view from side of the ‘decoders’. In light of this, the study does maintain a sense of

relevance but not a belief to generalize for the whole population of the *Voce of Addis Chamber* audiences.

### **3.2 Qualitative Research Methods in Reception Studies**

With all the controversies surrounding the use of qualitative or quantitative methods in researching mass communication, many experts acknowledge that there are areas which are better explored qualitatively. In this regard, Mytton captures the comparative advantage qualitative methods offer in audience research as he writes that “in qualitative methods researchers have found very useful ways of understanding human behaviour, exploring how media messages are interpreted” (1999: 126). He strengthens his claim that qualitative methods of researching audiences are resourceful if a study is intended to provide understanding on what factors influence audiences’ engagement with the media and the resulting experiences. Mytton, therefore, adds that qualitative methods of audience research are important for they “can bring out the intervening influences of people and the experience of audiences more clearly than is the case with quantitative methods” (1999: 126).

In underlining the major difference between the two methods in research, Anderson and Meyer, as cited in Lindolf, explain that qualitative methods do not rely on “the logic of mathematics, the principles of numbers or the methods of statistical analysis” (1995 :21). Rather than numbers and statistics, they make use of “actual talk, gesture and other social actions” as the raw materials for analysis (Lindolf 1995: 21). Lindolf (1995: 10) crystallizes this claim based on the rationale that interpretation, insight into human conditions, and certain questions of culture can appropriately be researched qualitatively. Similarly, Jensen (1987: 33) understands that since mass communication is a process of meaning making, using qualitative analysis of audience reception becomes invaluable because it primarily places

importance to investigating the feelings and beliefs of respondents about media contents, which he contends to be derived from the conceptual framework of audiences themselves. In capturing the distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry, the same author argues that, “while quantitative inquiry may be especially suited for reception phenomena where the conceptual categories are familiar and well-established such as the pattern of consumption and the public perception of different media, qualitative inquiry is called for in the attempt to discern the categories audiences use to decode specific media” (1987: 33). He also highlights that the importance of doing reception studies in such a fashion because they provide data pertinent to the “needs and interests that audiences formulate in relation to the media, and they may suggest changes needed in the structural frameworks of communication” (1987: 36). This means that the data obtained from audiences have the potential to reveal the needs and interests of audiences in the media contents. The in-depth qualitative data, as Jensen argues above, could be weighed as against the media programmes and the way their contents are delivered offering insights for producers to make structural changes in ways that meet the needs and interests of their audiences. Yet such which researches might entail may not guarantee that audiences would enthusiastically embrace changes in programmes neither does it imply that programme contents would be decoded in the same or uniform way. It nevertheless highlights the need for continued research endeavours on audiences and a constant effort to introduce innovations and change.

It is perhaps equally important to raise the issue of generalisability here due to the fact that is what critics of qualitative methods point at as the very weakness of the research tradition. Nevertheless, Strelitz, citing Maxwell (1992) and Ang (1996), argues that the lack of generalisability can not be taken as a weakness because fundamentally the goals of qualitative researches is primarily “understanding particulars rather than generalizing to universals” (2005: 110). Ang in Strelitz (2005: 113) also emphasizes that the absence of generalisations in qualitative

studies is not an issue because these kinds of studies have a different purpose to serve and none of them is making generalisations. In the words of Ang (1996) writes:

The understanding emerging from this kind of (qualitative) inquiry favours interpretive particularisation over explanatory generalization, historical and local correctness rather than formal abstraction, ‘thick’ description of details rather than extensive but thin survey” (quoted in Strelitz 2005: 113).

A research endeavour, by using qualitative methods, does not suffer from a weakness as a result of avoiding generalization rather opts for interpretation of meaning and coming up with a depth of description of subjects’ experiences (Strelitz 2005: 113). Therefore, against this background and the purpose of this study being exploring how audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* make sense of the contents of the radio programme, qualitative reception analysis has been employed. In line with the principles of qualitative methodology, this study adopted a three-stage design involving qualitative content analysis, focus group interview and individual in-depth interview respectively. Such an approach, according to Strelitz, allows “inferences or leads” to be drawn “from one data source to be corroborated or followed by another” (2005: 121).

### **3.3 Data Gathering and Sampling Procedure**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

Audience reception studies take a strong interest to provide insights in to how audiences interpret media contents. This particular tool, i.e., the analysis of media content at the surface level is an important tool in a reception study. When Jensen provides a general picture of what a reception study must look like, he writes “reception analysis ... combines a qualitative approach to media texts” – texts that need understanding on the part of the researcher (1988: 3). This is imperative for these media texts bear both the purposes and the meaning of “producing and

circulating meaning in the society” (1988: 3). And this is an important point to take as it allows the researcher to get a glimpse of ideas about the decoder’s objectives in communicating a particular ‘text’. Shroder et al. too agree that textual analysis of media contents is productive because it equips the researcher with the “knowledge on the media products” (2003: 154-55). This knowledge helps not only in conducting “focused conversations with the informants” but also in “eliciting the experiences of informants on media contents” (Shroder et al. 2003: 154-155).

In doing a textual analysis qualitatively, Strelitz recommends the task to be “of a rudimentary level with the purpose of preparing oneself for the role of group and individual interviews” (2005: 121). Rudimentary as it is, however, the task of textual analysis needs to be done with a sense of purpose to gain adequate knowledge regarding the programme types modes or format that the producers use to present the programmes and the programme contents in focus.

Having this in focus, the researcher looked into the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* aired between the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. That covered a span of six months which roughly gave a twenty-six hour programmes production. Given the schedule set to complete this study, it was believed that the content analysis of the six-month programmes would suffice to serve the research objectives and to garner the desired level of knowledge and ideas on the programme contents.

### **3.3.2 Focus Group and Individual In-depth Interviews: the Process from Beginning to End**

### 3.3.2.1 Focus Group Interview

As Lunt and Livingstone put it, focus group interview as a method of gathering data involves “bringing together a group or more after a series of groups of subjects to discuss an issue in the presence of a moderator”(1996: 96-97). The same authors also state that focus group interviews are particularly useful when a research aims at discovering participants’ meanings and understandings. As a resourceful tool of gathering data focus group interview has long been preferred by researchers for the various advantages it bears to a reception study. Hansen et al., (1998: 62-63) for example, provide two strong reasons which focus group interviews are connected with. The first one is that focus groups present the social activity in which “audiences form their interpretations of media content and their opinions about such content through conversations and social interactions”, while the second one is related to the relatively vast amount of data such group dynamics produce(Hansen et al. 1998: 62-63). Libbes and Katz cited in Hansen et al., lend their practical experience to argue that focus group interviews are also resourceful for they could be used as opportunities “for the individual expressions of latent opinions, for the generation of group consensus, for free associations to life and for analytic statements about art” (1998: 263). Based on what Lunt and Livingstone (1996) argue for, research benefits from using focus groups in that they recreate the social contexts in which people interpret media contents by allowing participants to provide insights into their experiences of media contents and how they relate them to their lives. The important issue is that focus groups replicate real-life processes of meaning-making whereby meaning is arrived at after discussion of texts with friends, family etc.

The fact that focus group interviews have this hallmark of generating in-depth data that can be used in understanding how audiences receive and interpret media contents does not appear to be contestable but the issue of their reliability is. In this regard, Lunt and Livingstone (1996: 92) offer a solution as they note that by virtue of their potent ability to provide “rich and believable data”, focus group interviews

compensate to the problem of reliability with “greater validity”. In other words, the fact that focus group interviews represent a small portion of a population makes the outcome of the data they generate less generalisable. This shortcoming, as the case with other qualitative methods, is oft-mentioned to be the Achilles’ hills of focus group interviews. However, as Lunt and Livingstone (1996) argue above, regarding audiences, focus groups provide a depth of data which helps the researcher to extract authentic information about the research subjects. The abundance of data offers the opportunity to review different sides of an issue and to form informed interpretations. The relative strength of focus group interviews in this regard enhances the believability of the data, and, in a way, provides a counterbalance for the problem of reliability.

This research relied on focus group interviews as the key source of data. Sampling participants considered the recommendation of the programme producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* who have established their own list of participants of the radio programme. According to the chief producer of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, the list mainly constitutes those audiences who regularly tune to the programme and give their opinion on the issues covered, choice of topics, and quality of the programme and the performance of invited interviewees. Hansen et al (1998: 268) confirm that this way of using ‘existing lists’ to draw participants is viable as long as the researcher is granted access. Hansen et al (1998: 268) note that decision to determine the size and number of the focus groups, mainly depends on the nature of the research and the resources available at hand.

Given the limited time and resource, this study organized four focus groups comprising five to six people. The organization of the focus group participants had been a tedious task. For one thing, the participants were all private business owners who appeared to be often on the rush to use their time as their businesses demanded. The researcher had been more than patient to wait longer time (well over six weeks) until he got the opportunity to keep the participants together for the

interviews. To serve the purposes of reception studies such as this one, Jensen (2002: 241) advises that the composition of focus groups should maintain relative homogeneity. This is due to the fact that having a smooth conversation and achieving consensus is difficult when the participants comprising a group have significant differences among themselves or when they are far from being 'like-minded' (Lunt and Livingston 1998: 82; Mytton 1999: 130). The focus group participants were, therefore, organized based on two factors - age and level of education - which the researcher assumed to be causing difference in the making sense of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. There were in fact issues of gender and ethnicity to consider because these also cause deferred ways in the making sense of media contents. The programme contents are, as explained by the programme producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and as can be seen in the establishments *treatise* of the radio programme (AACC/ Voice of Addis Ababa Chamber Article of Memorandum 2001), however, not sensitive to these elements and the programmes target all residents of Addis Ababa who are one way or another involved in business. As a result age and level of education were, therefore, chosen to be the demographic factors that maintained homogeneity among the participants of the four focus groups.

Gaining access to the established list of audiences (audiences who make frequent phone-calls to make comments on the programme contents) documented by programme producers helped the researcher to employ convenience and snowball sampling techniques in order to establish contact and select informants who were willing to take part in the study. While this was one possible way to reach focus group participants, the researcher also used personal contacts he has with economists working at the Business Policy and Development Office in the municipality of the city of Addis Ababa. The 2005/2006 edition of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce Business Directory was consulted to obtain addresses of a few of the candidates - candidates whose identities [names and type of business they were engaged in] were initially offered to the researcher by the staff of the

*Voice of Addis Chamber*, and contact was established with the ones who showed interest to partake in the study. In such a way, the research accessed listeners of the programme and combined them with those who were reached out through personal contacts. Personal contacts [of the researcher] produced five of the participants while the remaining constituting members of the focus groups came in to attendance and participation of the discussions due to the efforts of an acquaintance working in the Business Policy and Development Office at the municipality of the city of Addis Ababa. This means that the participants of the focus group interviews were the result of the efforts of the researcher and the support extended by the *Voice Addis Chamber* team. Deacon et al (1999: 54) and Jensen (2002: 239) confirm that there is logic in using such sampling techniques that are naturally non-random for they are common in qualitative research tradition.

Focus group interviews were held in Amharic (the language of business and the official government language). My role as a moderator was smoothly running the focus group discussions and as much as possible, rendering all individuals a fair share of opportunities to have their say. The discussions were fully recorded, transcribed and translated into English for further analysis. Important as they are though, focus group interviews could be disastrous if they tend to be dominated by ‘smarter individual participants’ and when the moderator appears to be pedantic and preaching; caution has been taken in this regard.

### **3.3.2.2 Focus Group Organization**

Participants of the focus group interviews were organized in to their respective groups based on their age and educational status. Two groups with a high school and above level of education but ages between 20 and 40 years and 41 years and above constituted the FGD-B and FGD-A respectively. The third focus group FGD-C had younger audiences aged between 20 and 40 but with the education level of

grade four or below. Conversely, those respondents, who were above the age of 41 and with an educational level of grade 5 and below, made up the fourth and the last focus group, i.e., FGD-D.

Initially it was planned to organize six focus groups; however the busyness of the participants, the difficulty of meeting them at the same convenient time, the lack of interest and the fact that older participants [people of adult and late adulthood ages] were needed to comprise the focus groups for the study exacerbated the challenges. They were overly time sensitive, and difficult to manipulate (to guide, to make them talk, to probe in to ...). The researcher acknowledges that the number of focus groups, to his dissatisfaction, was less; reality on the ground dictates outcomes and given the time constraint, this study had to get by with the four groups of respondents. Nevertheless participants did help to produce interesting data, which if considered, could help producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* to tailor audience- sensitive programmes and insights which may inspire further studies.

The focus group discussions had a rather calmer mood in those groups consisting of the younger participants. They had been easier to interrupt, easier to guide to the point and at times funnier; that relaxed the tension which dominated the first few minutes of the group interviews. There were instances where some of the participants shuffled off their speak up their opinions to other more active members of the groups, who had already had their chances/turns and to those who were uninhibited to further explain when asked to state what they meant by a particular point they tried to get across. At times, different opinions looked to be leading some of the participants especially those in FGD-B the younger ones with relatively higher level of education (specifically those listed at number 2 and 3) were more critical of the radio programme when they said the *Voice of Addis Chamber* was not everything it could be and the journalists settled for just getting by.

The other groups comprising the older participants were somber in their mood and had a sense of respect and humility toward each other which was, often times, marked by the tendency to give up their turn to speak to other group participants if they happened to be to begin to speak at the same moment. To an extent this has been a problem because some participants were, out of their own will, to be left out of the discussion but the researcher had taken a step to intervene and tell the participants that each person's opinion counted equally important hence they should have their own say on every point.

There was also a sense of discomfort when the moderator announced that they were about to take a listen to two pieces of previously cast programmes and throw their opinions for the questions they would be asked. This situation was experienced in all but only in one of the focus groups (FGD-B). The only thing that prevented the participants from breaking away was the fact that, it was the last point in the list of guiding questions for discussion. The other event which threatened to bring the group interview especially the one held with FGD-B was the point whether or not the *Voice of Addis Chamber* should make programmes which may criticize government economic and trade policies, because these policies one way or another affect the way businesses would be conducted in the country. This point further looked like to move the interviews toward whether or not the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.) should take a political stance of its own. That posed the most difficult challenge of the whole interviewing endeavour for the researcher. That was a time in which the moderator lost his voice and the authority he managed to exercise during the previous two group interviews. It was obvious to see that the feeling that the discussion was about to move to a dangerous territory and the awkward silence that followed the debate drained the participants off their enthusiasm for discussion. Ironically that turned out to be the ideal time to announce the end of the interview session, and fortunately the discussion had already neared its end. This issue had been further probed in to in individual in-depth interviews.

The focus group interviews have benefitted the data collection process not only by generating a depth of information, but also by offering the opportunity to observe those participants who were in a better position to give further information regarding points which needed elaboration and ideas which would not make one comfortable to reveal in group discussions. Such issues included the question whether the radio programme under investigation delivered what the target audiences expect and whether it should assume (as part of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce) the role of organizing the business community for activities which entail political and economic changes.

Selection of the individuals for in-depth interviews was carried out with the assumption that the ones who had been active in the group interviews would do the same if they were called for the service. Out of the five participants who were selected for individual in-depth interviews only three showed interest to meet the researcher on other appointments. That opportunity had to be taken.

Over all, however, the focus group interviews were lively, informative and at times funny. There was a constant pressure coming from the awareness that the researcher was too young in the face of the participants of two of the focus groups and the feeling of respect due to the elderly and the need for pragmatism in being the organizer and moderator of the discussions. All said it is claimed that the interviews provided important data which both confirmed and in a way disproved the assumptions held at the outset.

### **3.3.2.3 The Interview Setting**

Strelitz (2005: 123) quoting Morgan(1988) points out that in arranging an interview setting for focus group and individual interviews, a balance should be struck to address the needs of both participants and that of the researcher's. In order to assert the seriousness of the task and dignify the pain the participants had taken to

appear for the focus group interviews, it was held at an outdoor cafeteria located inside the Addis Ababa Exhibition Centre. The setting offered an environment of less crowdedness and a condition of being less distracted, which made it ideally favourable for a discussion of this sort. Hansen et al also support the idea that “arranging the setting for focus group interviews could logically vary depending on the purpose of the research, convenience and practical feasibility” (1998: 271).

#### **3.3.2.4 My Role as a Moderator**

My role as a moderator was mainly to guide the participants to generate data based on the questions which were set around four major themes. I also assumed the role of keeping the interviews focused and prevent participants from going astray. The researcher did not lose sight of the importance of allowing participants to speak as they please for there might appear, in the mean time, the exotic and interesting revelations such semi-structured discussions might produce. Yet again there was the time factor which participants kept on complaining about even while the group interviews were half way through.

The fact that the moderator was younger compared with most of the participants, at the beginning, threatened to be an impeding factor. However, the discussion which one of the participants raised on the poor track record of the research tradition [in Ethiopia] in yielding tangible results must have helped to establish a rapport between the researcher and the participants – a thing that looked to dissipate given the age-gap factor .

#### **3.3.2.5 Recording the Data**

The focus group and the in-depth individual interviews were recorded using a mini-recorder which was set at the centre of the round seating arrangements of the focus groups. During the focus group interviews, some of the participants had to be constantly urged to speak-up for the moderator was anxious that their voices sounded weaker. While individual interviews were conducted the recording

apparatus was kept at a close range enough to capture the speaker's words as clearly and make the transcribing easier.

### **3.3.2.6 Individual In-depth Interview**

It is of great value that researches combine different tools for gathering data. Strelitz writes that using individual in-depth interviews as a “follow up to focus group interviews” is not only important but enhances the completeness and reliability of a reception study (2005: 127). Shroder et al confirm the view which Strelitz (2005) stipulates as they state that the wisdom behind using both focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews “one after the other” is the advantage of reaping “the benefits of their respective strengths” (2003: 151).

Individual in-depth interview *per-se* has some merits to add to a study. It eases the burden of the researcher as it is a one-on-one communication, it helps obtain a depth of information and reveals certain matters which are too sensitive to openly discuss in focus groups (Shroder et al. 2003: 153). This study held individual in-depth interviews with three participants who came out of three sets of focus groups and the two programme producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. The group comprising the older in age and the less educated participants (FGD-D) could not yield one for an in-depth individual interview; literally the participants of this last group said they had done enough and gone the extra mile to help a person aged many years younger than them. The in-depth individual interviews with the producers were conducted with the objective of providing insights in to the decoders' point of views regarding the purposes of their programmes and what they believe those programmes should deliver to their audiences. Purposive sampling has been put to use at this stage, too. However, in order to make an informed selection of interviewees, the researcher did make use of the experience he derived from the focus group interviews. It is hoped that the selection picked up those participants identified with being outgoing, motivated, communicative and, of course, conversant with the media contents in focus.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the design of the study and the procedure for data gathering and the sampling of the research participants. In so doing, it has presented the theoretical basis for opting for qualitative methods of research, which are oft-linked with the study of audience reception. The option made to employ qualitative methods is indicative of the belief, on the part of the researcher, that the results are not, at any level, conclusive and neither are they generalisable. The discussion has also attempted to substantiate the reasons behind the decision to use convenience and snowball sampling techniques with the relevant literature. It is, therefore, believed that this part of the paper has provided an idea on the direction which the study aspires to be heading to. The results of the data are analyzed and presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR– DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The major objective of this study was to investigate what factors were at play when it comes to making sense of the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* among the target audiences. Mean while it was also attempted to probe in to the reasons that audiences have for tuning to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and to look in to as to how the audiences identify themselves with the radio programme that claims to promote the interests of the target audiences. It also sought for unraveling what the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* mean to the target audiences as seen in light of their lived-life experience and background such as age and level of education.

This chapter adds to the analysis by providing an analysis of comparing and contrasting the opinion of the decoders (audiences) and that of the encoders' (the producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme) regarding how far the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has succeeded in performing to meet the information needs of audiences on trade and investment.

Primarily, this section of the paper presents the data at full length and discusses the findings of the study. The interpretation and analysis of the data obtained by interviews held with individuals and groups have been used to meet the set

objectives of the study. The theoretical discussions presented in the literature review have been used to guide the researcher to make sense of the data obtained. The analysis of the data that led to the findings was obtained by putting both the focus group interviews and in-depth individual interviews together. The material acquired from the in-depth individual interviews with the programme producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has also been put to use in order to make comparisons between what the producers of the programme think of the performance of their radio programmes against the views of their target audiences.

## **4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis Findings: A Brief**

### **Overview**

To serve the purposes of equipping the researcher with the relevant information on the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and gaining insight which would help while doing the focus group and in-depth individual interviews, a rough review of the programmes transmitted between July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 was carried out qualitatively with the aim of providing the reader with a brief overview of the programme contents and presentation of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. The following discussion presents the results of the analysis of the contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* done qualitatively.

The programme begins with a song by a choir (which has now become the one thing from which any less regular listener of FM Addis 97.1 could tell that the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce is on air). The piece that tells the vision and of the programme sponsor, i.e., the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, has the following lines in its verse:

*Our vision [is] the light of growth,  
Our emblem [is] Addis Chamber;*

*Our promise [is] 'anything's possible';  
A fruit of effort and that of toil.  
On we go via the path of growth ...*

A piece of instrumental music then follows as the presenter's voice comes alive to introduce the day's programmes. The *quote of the day*, which is the constant contribution of their audiences, is told as the piece of music which the presenter chooses runs in the background. It was found that music and *quote of the day* are the two single elements which are regularly making it to every programme day. The quote and the piece of music together often take the first five minutes of the half-hour programme package. The *Voice of Addis Chamber* has no specific names for the separate package of contents presented on different issues. The only thing one can say is that, feature story, presented in the form of reportage, and interview only, and sometimes interviews in combination with a commentary are the dominant formats through which the producers deliver the programme contents. As indicated above, interview combined with a commentary is the most frequently used format of programme presentation. During the six-month period, of all the one hundred and thirty one programmes, 63 (48%) were conveyed in such a way. The remaining 48 (37%) and 20 (15%) of the programmes were presented in interviews and in the form of feature stories respectively. It is, therefore, possible to observe that the programme producers' preferred format for conveying their messages is interview; used both solely and at times combined with commentaries, it accounted for 85% of the way programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* were communicated on the air.

One of the programmes intermittently featuring in the two half-hour programmes is *business news* – a programme that offers two to four short major international business news stories which had taken place during the period prior to the programme days. The news stories are obtained from the web sites of international television networks such as the BBC and CNN International (interview with Wrt.

Brukt 2008). The *business news* programme, since the contents are facts that happened in the international world of business, the producers expect these items of news, according to the deputy programme production at the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, to communicate almost a more or less similar meaning to their audiences – facts on current business around the world. In connection with this, Eco (1979) cited in McQuail argues that news reports are ‘close texts’ offering less room for varied interpretation “are in general intended not to be open but to lend to a uniform informational end...” (2000: 351).

The researcher has carried out a rough review of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* transmitted between the period of months June 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2007 which covered a six-month period, and found that of the total 131 programmes went on air, 59 (45%) were pertinent to the activities happening at the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.), 30 (23%) were performance (most of them success stories) reports on different business in the private sector, 21 (16%) programmes featured government policies (on trade, tax, investment, export, etc.), regulations and the services some government offices provide for the private sector, 13 (10%) of the programmes were on business news packages, which aimed at providing audiences with the international business and the remaining 8 (6%) programmes were stories adapted from Amharic newspapers. For most of the programmes featured during the period of six months the association’s (A.A.C.C.) activities have been the source of the majority of the programmes. It should be noted that even though the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce is the source for most of the programme ideas, the content may not necessarily be entirely about the association; a programme may feature a forum (organized by the A.A.C.C.) in which study papers on the performance of a sector of the economy may be presented.

One half-hour programme package could be as brief to end a day’s programme by presenting two issues only. For example, the August 9, 2007 programme had two major contents. The first one was an interview with the officer in charge of the

department of tax collection and follow-up in the Ministry of Federal Inland Revenue on the improved services of the ministry was providing for tax payers (with specific reference to the private sector). The second programme featured a commentary by the *Voice of Addis Chamber* staff on the comparative advantages of doing business in joint ventures and/or share companies over private limited companies. The lengthy interview and the (approximately) seven-minute report together with the inevitable piece of music were enough to complete the half-hour programme. On the other hand, several contents could be packed in thirty minutes like the November 27<sup>th</sup> one, which featured the activities of the Private Sector Development (PSD) Hub of the A.A.C.C., a luncheon in which A.A.C.C. staff discussed the scheme to stage the 12<sup>th</sup> international trade fair, an interview with the A.A.C.C. Merkato Satellite Office chief and a few bits of international business news.

As the programme motto always tells it at the beginning of every programme, the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* are intended to serve as the major sources on information trade and investment. The analysis, on the other hand, showed that two formats namely, interviewing and a combination of interviews with commentary dominate the ways of getting the contents across. It can also be seen that the programme producers are heavily dependent on this particular association (A.A.C.C.) to construct the messages of their programmes. Whether these and other dynamics in the production of the programmes and the construction of the contents fit the needs and interests of the target audiences are points addressed in the following section.

## **4.2 Results of Focus Groups and In-depth Individual Interviews**

### 4.2.1 Tuning to the *Voice of Addis Chamber*

Audiences can have varied reasons for their preference to attend to a particular media programme. It is also possible that, if not always, often times they also develop motivations for being audiences of a particular media output (Blumer 1985 cited in McQuail 1997: 32). The following part of the chapter discusses the views of the participants and attempts to investigate if the *Voice of Addis Chamber* is effective in its service of being the source of business and investment information to the business community. It also looks in to the listening habits of the research participants. Focus group participants were asked how often they turn to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* seeking to find information on business. Their replies are summarised in the following manner.

Most of the respondents of the four focus groups agreed that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* is useful when one seeks information on the activities of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.). It has also emerged from the data that audiences do not totally depend on the radio programme particularly for their information needs on business issues. On this particular question which asked the participants' source of business information, what Akmal, 55, (FGD-A 5), and Le-alem, 31, (FGD-B 5) said better capture the locus of the responses.

**Akmal:** "I usually tune to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* to know what's going on in the business activity of the city or Ethiopia...but I think I use the programmes if the government made new law and if I needed to know what is being done by the Chamber[A.A.C.C.] to get laws which benefit our business....like asking the government to make laws which won't impede us...So...the meetings the Chamber [A.A.C.C.] holds with the government ... are important it is good to know what they say. But business information comes from different sources...there are some excellent private papers.... You get it from every where...even people can tell you something important."

**Le-alem:** “I don’t regularly listen to the programmes but from my experience I can say that, to hear the story of some businessmen is interesting...you may get something useful. You know...in the middle you ask yourself how they become rich, successful.... It’s never occurred to me. But I can’t say that will never come true to me either. Most of the time you ask people, friends ... some other time you share some information...It’s like that but not the radio programme.”

The views that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* is not top in the list of the participants’ business news and information sources and the habit of asking friends and companions for information on the very thing the participants are engaged in – business – were persistent among the responses of the focus group participants. Yeshimebet,38, FGD–B6, Mebrat, 29, FGD-B4 both from the group consisting participants with a high level of education and Kibret ,59, FGD-D4 all asserted the fact that the role of other media outlets as source of business information is higher than that of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* . They also underlined the point that friends are significant in filling the gap when one failed to attend the media including the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

**Yeshimeet:** “Since I don’t understand what most of the programmes are about, I don’t follow it on regular basis. But I get information on what’s going on in business from newspapers and the radio... the FM stations. But if we’re too busy to do that, we ask each other and share what we know...You know... you ask ‘*anything new?*’ “

**Mebrat:** “TV and radio news is my source to know about the business activity in the country. If you regularly watch TV and listen to FM radio stations you can get information that’s what I do. The radio programme [*the Voice of Addis Chamber*] is good but you don’t find new things in it. ... I like some of their programmes but they don’t tell you the latest events because their broadcast is not daily. It’s difficult to compare them [the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*] with others like TV, radio...”

**Kibret:** “I and my friends do business we share so many things we talk about life in general so if anything comes up that concerns our business ...may be the government has made some new decisions or directives... so we discuss that’s how I get information.”

The question of whether or not participants have made it their habit to seek for business news and information from the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio broadcast and their responses to the question were further analysed through the lens of the question of how convenient the time of the transmission was for them and the subsequent replies of the participants. Here in, it was intended to elicit whether it was the transmission time factor and not the content which made the *Voice of Addis Chamber* less frequently used by its audiences as major source of business information.

All but three of respondents from FGD-D and FGD-C said the programme would be convenient for them if it was transmitted in the morning between 7:00 and 8:00 am. This, they believe, is the time they would be free from the distractions that their work brings up on them, such as extended work in the premises of their business and appointments (business or for socializing purposes) which many of them prefer to take up during lunch time.

Almost all the respondents from the four focus groups, i.e., twenty two of them, said they listen to the bi-weekly programme of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* which goes on air every Tuesday and Thursday between 12:40 pm and 1:10 pm. Only six out of the total twenty two respondents replied that they listen to the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* on a regular basis; that is, three from FGD-D, two from FGD-A and one from FGD-C. Almost all the participants of the four FGDs answered that when they find it convenient, they tune to the new consumer

reporting and business promotion programmes on FM 90.1 (*Zami FM Radio*) and FM 102.1 (*Sheger FM Radio*) respectively; however, all participants reported that they do not have the luxury of sifting through “the multitude of programmes on the four FM radio stations” that are now available to audiences in Addis Ababa and to its neighbouring towns for eighteen hours a day. Most respondents conceded that they found it convenient to tune to the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* while having lunch and presumed that it is so due to the very time that the programme runs (12:40 pm to 1:10 pm) is conveniently a lunch time. One of the subjects in FGD-C confessed that he has become fond of the gossip programme on FM 93.1 that is exclusively about celebrities and their financial status (including possessions of houses and vehicles) and private life affairs. Except three participant from FGD-B and two other from FGD-C, all the participants reported a habit of watching ETV evening news programme, which according to participants, is a family practice during that time of the evening.

It is perhaps important to note that almost all the participants reported that they have developed a liking for the programmes of *Sheger FM 102.1*, one of the new FM radio stations to have flourished recently, for its relatively balanced programmes and a sense of appeal that the presenters use while programmes begin and end. This may be an important finding for the owner of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.), which, according to Wrt. Brukt (Chief Producer of *Voice of Addis Chamber*), is contemplating on drawing a plan to do the transmission of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme on *Sheger FM 102.1*. This argument that audiences can provide insights for producers to consider and bring changes in their functions is supported by Jensen (1987: 36) who argues that audiences are capable of providing data which help in making alternatives in the ways media organizations are structured to operate.

The participants agreed that there is no a programme they like to tune to on other FM radio stations which coincides with the transmission time of the *Voice of Addis*

*Chamber*. The only preventive factor is the distraction that comes from the lunch time ETV news programme and the busyness that the nature of their work creates.

As indicated above, all participants listen to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* with varying difference in the regularity of their listening habits. The ones who described themselves as regular listeners of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* came from FGD-A and FGD-D. The commonality among these participants coming from the two focus groups is the age factor hinting at the point that the older members of the participants among the target audiences are the loyal ones. Yihenew, 58, said that there was nothing that prevents him from listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programmes as he has his two sons who could help him with his retail work.

**Yihenew:** “I am not busy. There is of course...a lot of work but these days thank God my two boys could manage all type of work here. But it’s not all about having nothing to do at the time of the radio transmission but it’s about remembering to listen to the radio programme. I think...I have got that problem. Often times I manage to recall the programme would be on air and I switch the radio on to *Voice of Addis Chamber*....I also remember a few times...to have listened to the programme while driving. That’s, however, inopportune as it is difficult to fully concentrate.”

This is in line with what the uses and gratifications perspective underlines regarding the choice of audiences make. When it comes to tuning to programmes of their preference audiences are active to make goal oriented choice of the programmes they need to attend to (McQuail 1997: 70-1). Some participants reported that it is even difficult for them to recall that the programme is broadcast on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some put their business ahead of tuning to the radio programme partly because the time of the transmission and partly due to the nature of the programme contents which are, as the participants (FGD – A5, FGD – B 4, 5 and 6) pointed out, much less in a position to be their chosen source of information on business and the economy in general.

**Yassin:** “Trust me I love to listen to the radio programme since I am a registered member of the *Chamber* [Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce]. But for people like me who have a lot of things to contemplate in their head, it is difficult to recall every Tuesday and Thursday that the programme is on air. ”

As the above participant conceded, it might be difficult to for some audiences to recollect themselves from the busyness of their works and tune to the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. Though it could not be representative of the opinion of a large number of audiences, it might indicate that the appeal of the programmes may not have the power to lure those busy audiences away from the busy cycle of their work and be in attendance of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

Kibret, 59, said that the constant urge by the representatives of the radio programme production office during the meetings of the association has helped him develop the habit of dutifully tuning to the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

**Kibret:** “Though I have no convincing reason not to do so, I always find it too difficult to regularly listen to the radio programme. But they [the programme producers] communicate reminders during meetings, training programmes and other gatherings telling us that we should listen to it because it is ours. They’re right ...I guess. Now I am slowly developing the habit. And slowly I am finding a reason to keep on listening....”

The point that the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* are less informative in the sense of obtaining business information relevant to the trades that audiences were engaged in is seen in the participant’s reply that the act of listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* did not come from the appeal and resourcefulness of the programme contents but from the urge by the programme production crew. For the time being, at least, the *Voice of Addis Chamber* could not earn the audienceship of its target audiences but it had to ask for it.

One of the problems associated with the relatively less regular audienceship for the focus group participants is the inconvenience that the time of the transmission pauses for them. The most repeatedly suggested time for the producers to consider were the morning time before 8:00 am and the weekend, more specifically Sundays.

**Salem:** “The timing is the least convenient for us. Lunch time may sound a break time but it is not if you are doing a private business. You need to run a lot...The work you do dictates whether you are taking a break or not. I’m not a regular listener because the time is not convenient. I think they need to move it to the weekend like Sunday... I mean...the morning.”

The chief programme producer who has been engaged in the production of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* since its inception in 2001 confirmed that from repeated phone calls by audiences to some opinion polls they had gathered, her staffs were aware of the inconvenience the time of transmission is causing. However, the programme producer said that the best time FM Addis 97.1 offered them was the current schedule.

**Chief producer:** “The only time of the 18hours-a day-transmission that the FM Addis 97.1 officials put on the table for us was the current schedule. I remember the situation when we first made the request. They were happy but the way they told us about the schedule had an undertone of ‘take it or leave it’. The morning hours were unbelievably unavailable. We had to grab what was on the table. We’re not disappointed at the current schedule but that shouldn’t mean that we are not trying other possibilities.”

Brukt was affirmative when the researcher probed if trying other possibilities meant broadcasting on other newly opened FM radio stations. A colleague and the deputy programme producer is also aware of the inconvenience of the time in which the programme goes on air but not as such optimistic that there will be a change to act on what some of the participants suggested. The deputy programme producer

said the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has long established it self as a day time and a week-day programme thus equating changing its timing to robbing the radio programme off its brand.

**Deputy programme producer** “I don’t think it’s a good idea that we change the time of the transmission because the programme, by staying on air uninterrupted for almost seven years, has turned itself to be a brand. Seven years is a very long time. I think I can say that... it’s now seen as a brand. If we change the time of the transmission to the weekend we sure lose what was established in those years. ”

The deputy programme producer was asked as to how he could treat the issue of the audiences’ dissatisfaction with regard to the timing. The reply indicated that the audiences would, through time, make their own adjustments or adapt themselves to tune to the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

**Deputy programme producer** “I’m optimistic if we could improve the quality of our programmes... I mean both the technical aspect and the content of the programmes, our audiences will get used to the programme time and they will change their habit of listening to us. It is up to us to make it a programme that people eagerly await to listen to and for that we should improve the quality of this radio programme. ”

The replies of the participants on the time of the programme transmission, in unison, confirm that the schedule is the least convenient for them. This particular finding indicates that the need for a reschedule of the transmission time and/or day should be, for the programme producers, a matter to consider seriously. Nevertheless, the replies from the programme producers do not show but a faint sign of budging to accommodate change in the time and /or days of programme transmission. The producers need to see the point that in addition to providing quality programmes to audiences, convenience is one of the issues for both sides (broadcasters and audiences) to strike an agreeable balance. However, two differing opinions are still there to parry the participant’s experience regarding to the

inconvenience of the time of the transmission. One is resulted from the unavailability of air time other than the current one on the same FM station [97.1] while the other one is the firm belief that *the Voice of Addis Chamber on FM Addis 97.1 on Tuesdays and Thursdays noon* has ,after seven years of broadcasting, established itself as ‘a brand’. This belief of the producers, though not supported by any kind audience opinion survey, is what they [production team] are set to continue clinging to showing that the problem of the time of the programme transmission, as part of the unanswered needs of the participant audiences, will go on to be the same in the foreseeable future.

#### **4.2.2 The Content: what meaning lies behind listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber?***

All the participants of both the focus groups and those who have given an in-depth interview claimed that the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* focus on what the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce itself does ranging from the meetings held with the participation of member businesses, to reporting on the various trainings the AACC gives to its members and the activities of the A.A.C.C. - including its HIV/AIDS [prevention initiatives] projects, reports on the performance of the sectors (manufacturing, service, export, financial...) and business opportunities. There are also programmes on the policies of government and how they affect business in the city. Other components of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* include interviews on the success stories of entrepreneurs.

The researcher has carried out a rough review of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* transmitted between the period of months July1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2007 which covered a six month period, and found that 59 programmes were pertinent to the A.A.C.C. activities, 30 programmes were performance reports on different business sectors, 20 on government policies (trade, tax, etc.) as well as the trade and investment related services of the government and the rest were *business*

*news* and *tip-off* with aim to provide audiences with the opportunities for doing business in Addis Ababa with the two dominant formats of presentation, which are commentary (reading articles composed on an issue) and interview or a combination of the two. Of the two formats interviewing was the dominant one. Therefore, the participants of the focus groups were asked what in general the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* mean to them. The following section describes what meanings audiences derive from the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*.

Three of the participants in focus group discussions (FGD-A1, FGD-B3 and FGD-B4) who claimed to be relatively regular listeners, reported that the programmes do not offer coverage of international business and market reports making them too local and less appealing. One of them is Eliyas, 28, who claimed private business owners and those who run family businesses like him would be better off if they were aware of what is going on in the world of international business and how events happening in other parts of the globe are related to the local ones. He believed business programmes [the business news] of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* should be able to present analysis of what the implications of events taking place in international markets are. Asked about what may necessitate that, the respondent replied with a rhetorical question “do we do business alone?”

**Eliyas:** “I would be glad to know what is happening in the world of business. I think the journalists do not pay attention to that aspect. If...knowledge in the world market benefits us why not they pay attention to it? I see lack of interest in that area, I mean...to my mind, it would have been better if one of the days were dedicated for programmes of global issues. I recall listening to some pieces of international business news but they were late events and less important. For example...they can do a kind of comparisons of Ethiopia’s economy with that of a neighbouring country’s. May be we can learn about ourselves more and how we as business communities are performing. In order for us to do this, there has to be other ... countries’ experience to see.”

**Mebrat** “I’ve had times listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* the parts which deal with forums on studies on issues like tax, government policies.....and market problems interest me. And yet they don’t deal the issues themselves because they’re presented in interviews. Interviews don’t give you much because they are cut short and most of the questions they [journalists] ask don’t focus on what I want to know...”

**Teferi:** “I often listen to them and I like the reports on studies of tax, export.... They are good because if you miss the presentation you get it on the radio programme...but the reports are short and often followed by interviews with the people who did the studies. Apart from that I think the *business news* is most of the time bits and pieces which give no deeper knowledge. I’m very busy and it [the radio programme] helps me learn more about what’s new in the Chamber [Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce]...”

Such strong craving for a deeper and more analytic content in the programmes(as in the responses of the FGD-B2 above) and the belittling of *business news* as mere ‘bits and pieces’ has apparently been one of the consistent focal points to evaluate the relevance of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. The above respondents are a few of the most educated ones among the focus group discussants. They have long been familiar with the concepts of international trade, international economics and the ideas behind globalization. This familiarity, in addition to personal encounters, comes in the form of academic courses which students take in high schools and higher institutions and according to Befekadu (2004: 309), it is likely to bring an appreciation for the knowledge and ideals (together with the political and economic culture of its society) which students and academia in the higher institutions of the country deal with. Similarly, Markakis (2006: 193-94)has also identified that there is a history of the educated group in Ethiopia who passed through in the British and late on in the American style of school curricula, unlike the uneducated mass, to develop a positive value judgment for the foreign [Western] economic and social ideals. This situation is not less likely at least of the economic realities at present are dominated by western liberal economic philosophies. It seems, therefore, likely that the respondents gauged the worth of the meanings lying behind the

programmes as they see in the lens of their educational experience. This becomes further obvious in the responses of the less educated participants of the focus groups who generally perceive the contents of the radio programme as promoting alliance among the members of the business association (Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce).

Asked about incorporating international market news and making it a regular feature of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, one of the experienced journalists and deputy producer in the team replied that he doubted the viability of treating such matters in a programme as short as an-hour-a-week.

**Deputy programme producer:**“International business news is, compared to other issues we deal with, less related to local business activities besides that will be beyond that scope of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* which is primarily serving the purposes of the association. I’m saying that members should know how their association is performing. As I told you earlier...we place priority to local events to what...is going on in the Chamber [Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce]. We should also give the opportunity for the business men and women to say their opinion. But if that’s what the majority of the audiences wan to listen to, we can think about it.”

Presented with the above opinion of audiences who share Eliyas’s view, the chief programme producer offered a less direct response and hinted that there is a process to go through to make such changes in programme contents. The researcher asked the chief producer about what factors often cause the changing of regularly featuring programmes and what things need to be fulfilled to that end.

**Chief producer:** “It’s not too long a process. There has to be a convincing proposal and sample programmes for...consideration and the most important question is whether the new programme content is of a considerable use to the business community, the private sector. That’s what we see in making programme changes. When we first came up with the present contents, we did go through

the same process. It's not resisting change but making it reasonable; whatever happens, we can't afford to simply turn down the opinions of our audiences.”

The chief programme producer, the chief programme producer, in an in-depth individual interview she held with the researcher conceded that the current programme format stood for too long a time and might need some kind of a restructuring.

Responses of both producers show that doing major changes in the contents of the radio programme is not what the professional journalists can do single-handedly. The view of focusing on local events and prioritizing the institutional performance of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce is also shared by focus group participants such as Haimanote, 40, FGD-C1 and Tamene, 63, FGD-D5 who said the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has not yet done enough to promote, in a sense advertise, the efforts and the achievements of the private sector in uplifting the impoverished economy. This sentiment was also shared by the other participants of FGD – D1 and 5, who spoke in a manner that was akin to the ideas as expressed by the following participants in FGD – C.

**Tamene:** “They’re doing a good job. They’re trying to get the business community and the general public further closer. The radio programme is doing somehow good in educating the public more about the contributions of the business community in supporting the economy...If your question is whether or not the radio programme has worked to enlighten the public on the works of the business community, I mean, what we are contributing, to the nation, there still remains a lot of work undone. Their prime focus needs to be how much effort we are putting up to get rid of poverty. People should recognize that...I still feel that that’s not yet recognized.”

**Haimanote:** “As the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, the name suggests, is the voice of the business community it focuses on the Chamber [A.A.C.C.] itself. Now they should reduce the time they dedicate

for noisy Western music and begin to get the opinion and the voices of other businessmen and women who're doing fantastic jobs with the small amount of capital they have. I think many of us like that. The radio [programme] has more to do to prove that it is standing by the business community.”

**Ahmed:** “They have some good programmes but I think they should add some more programmes like...introducing the business men how we're doing like...what positive things we are contributing to the country should be made part of the programmes. Why? In this country the name ‘merchant or businessman’ has bad connotation. People only think that we are after money. That we rob people off their money that we are prone to cheating....we are this, we are that; we've so many bad names but this bad image should be improved. Our radio the journalists must work for the good service of the merchants. I think the programme is lacking this. It's very good that they are trying to educate us to help us be modern businessmen but the public should also be educated....”

**Hintsa:** “Well...the programmes tell me the performance of the Chamber [A.A.C.C.]. They tell us every detail activity and that's good. I heard some of my friends on the programme and we discuss how we can use the Chamber [A.A.C.C.] to promote trade in Addis Ababa and in the country...because that's our vision. ...if people know what the business community is doing, they [the public] help us....We're also trying to have a TV programme and if we're successful in that, we shall have a strong voice. The radio programme is good but it's not enough.”

Meanwhile, the researcher was able to make note of the different views the focus group participants have, when it comes to what the contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* should deliver. The younger members of the responding groups observed a declined interest on the part of the producers in covering foreign business activities to present; be it in the form of news or by way of comparison with the local economic or business activities. The demand for more coverage of the local or home events (especially of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce) comes from the relatively

older members of the focus group participants who tended to see the radio programme more as the voice of their association [the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce] rather than as a source for balanced content or deeper level of economic analysis. This illustrates that, as can be further seen in the discussion below, the participants of FGDs A and B on one side and FGDs C and D on the other, see divergent purposes being served in the contents of this radio programme.

Those respondents who were older in age and with a low level of education distinctively indicated that they were not fully satisfied with the performance of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* not it lacked content but because it has not adequately promoted how the private sector is boosting economic growth. This hints at that the programmes and the ways they were conducted meant different for those respondents who had high level of education and for those with lower level of education. Similarly, the performance, in general, of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* together with the purposes that the radio programmes were expected to serve, were seen from different point of views by the participants of different focus groups. While the education factor causing the different interpretations was apparent, the two groups appeared to be equally disinterested in the programmes for different reasons. As shown above, for the older and the less educated participants, the radio programme is not performing well enough for the reason that it has not yet duly acknowledged the contributions of the private sector.

The participants with high level of education of both ages had a different sense of the radio programme; they made sense of the programmes as superficial and devoid of analytical insights in a way their focus was the depth of the contents. The main point in the above discussion notes that audiences sharing common social backgrounds tend to form what is, in reception studies, known as ‘interpretive communities’. According to McQuail, one of the assertions of reception studies is that there exist “interpretive communities which share much the same forms of discourse and frameworks for making sense of the media” (2000: 367). These

interpretive communities do not only exist but also show a level of similarity in the ways they make sense of media contents. This is the point in this finding. The audiences' level of education appears to be the factor which has created a shared identity among the participants in the way they decoded the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. These 'reading communities' manifested in FGDs A/B and C/D, exhibited a difference in their decoding of the intentions of the 'text' as presented by the *Voice of Addis Chamber* crew. Participants of FGDs A and B interpreted the programmes as "genuine attempts to provide audiences with helpful and change-oriented business information"; however, the programmes were a failure, in their views, and far from being ingenious and insightful. According to the producers of the programmes, the purpose of the programmes was not to go that deeper, to be that analytic thus showing the rift between the intention in the contents and the interpretations of audiences.

#### **4.2.3 Relevance of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* to the Needs and Interests of the Target Audiences**

It is important to note that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* targets the business community in Addis Ababa with its two-days-a-week Amharic programmes which are, according to the programme producers, produced in the interests of the business community.

As part of the research questions, one which the study intended to answer was whether the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* were relevant to the needs of the target audiences. This was done with the researcher asking the participants to listen to two five minute previously cast programmes. The purpose was one to help the participants including those who rarely listen to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* to rekindle their memories of the contents and in general what sense the programme contents made to the audiences in addressing their needs and interests. Even though the geographic sense of the transmission (as they broadcast to

audiences in Addis Ababa) has some focus, the balance of contents and the selection of topics need to be seen in the eyes of audiences. How educative the experiences of the success stories of businessmen or women are to the target audiences, how relevant the reports on government policies and regulations are, how interesting and relevant the programmes on the activities of the A.A.C.C. are to the audiences and to their business activities....were a few of the points that the focus group participants discussed. Although it is too wide an issue to deal with, both producers of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* agree that the programme in general provides the audiences with fairly relevant information pertaining trade and investment activities in the city of Addis Ababa.

**Chief producer:** “I believe that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* is fairly the voice of the business community. There is still a lot of issue to cover but little time. We’ve managed to get by with the available time and resource. We can’t present the voice of every individual member of the business community but we try to be representative of the different point of views. Even though it is impossible to please all sides at least we have balanced programmes and the feedbacks tell us that. I also believe we make programmes that we think are helpful to stimulate trade activities and investment because that is the ideal which the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce [A.A.C.C.] stands for.”

The researcher wanted to see if this view of the programme production team was consistent with that of the audiences’; hence, attempting to make a comparative assessment. Copies of previously aired programmes were presented to the focus participants who were made listen to them. The copies had three different contents. Before exposing the participants to the programmes they were told to take notes if they needed to. The first piece of the programme was on an agriculture trade fair organized by two people who have come from Green Home Agro Business plc. The programme presenter emphasized, by way of offering a background to the interview that the role of agriculture in the nation’s economy which according to the journalist, accounted for the largest share of the gross national output. He then

went to introduce the two interviewees who happened to be one the owner of the company and the other the manager. The second programme, which the participants were made listen to was *business news* in brief, aired on August 7, 2007. The contents were on how the perpetual increase of the price of oil has significantly slowed down the growth of the US economy. The other news item narrated Zimbabwe's economic downturn and the seemingly unstoppable price hike in consumer products which led to the highest ever recorded inflation in the country's history. The presenter went on to recount the introduction of the new note of two thousand Zimbabwean dollars that the government introduced in order to counter the rising inflation. The third three-minute piece of programme, which the participants were made listen to was on the reform the Ethiopian Customs Authority was undergoing to improve its services. It featured an interview with an official from the Customs Authority to describe the process.

The participants were then asked if the programmes were interesting and relevant to their needs, if they are delivering what they as target audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* expect to get from the programmes, if they satisfy their curiosities and of course whether they are understandable to them. None of the participants were able to tell if they had listened to those specific programmes. The participants listened to the extracts with composure (possibly thinking of what they would be saying). Then they gave their opinions to the above questions which are summarized as follows.

**Wubshet:** “It's useful to listen to these sort of programmes. The agriculture trade fair of those people is very fascinating. This is a good example that shows the efforts that the business people are doing to build their country. The chamber radio [*Voice of Addis Chamber*] also plays a role in introducing such performances so that we can learn from one another. I haven't heard before that individuals can work out a big event like this one...a trade fair. It's a new thing for me....

**Moderator:** “How about the US and the Zimbabwe stories?”

**Wubshet:** “...And the Zimbabwean case shows that the issue of inflation is not typical to Ethiopia. And compared to Zimbabwe our economy is better.”

Besraw, 37, form FGD-C, preferred to speak on the programme featuring the Customs Authority and appreciated the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has done a good job by introducing how some government offices operate. Besraw, 37, form FGD-C share this view that the programmes show the good meaning intention to establish smoother relationship between government offices and the business community. They also emphasized the point that the programmes have several things to educate them for which they felt obliged to appreciate.

**Besraw:** “It’s educative....previously, I always thought that the only thing... the customs office was set to up to confiscate goods...and store them, collecting [tax] money at the customs posts set up at town gates. I dreaded it. But I could hear that they can also serve the business community and the public, and they are improving their work.”

**Kibret:** “The activity as accomplished by the two businessmen is important and it’s an exemplar work for the business people in other sectors and it encourages us to do the same. But if the programmes are short like these ones, we may not understand them enough. It is also important to hear what’s going on at the international field. It gives us knowledge of other countries.”

**Hintsä:** “Agriculture is very important for the country I am glad that there are people doing good work in agriculture. I see that there is problem in Zimbabwe...it’s not bad that we know.”

The replies revealed that for those participants who comprised the groups with lower level of education tend to show a level of satisfaction with regard to what the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* should deliver to meet their needs. And despite some programmes were short spanned, they could create understanding on how government organs work – a knowledge, as these

participants put it, which helps both the private sector and the public offices to come to work together. Others have concurred that the exemplar works of other businessmen and women could help them. It could be inferred that the less educated participant audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* believe they benefit from hearing the practical experiences of fellow businessmen and women and the inside-office works of government bureaus connected to their work (the Customs Authority) were more relevant for them. As they have brushed aside the issues of the rise of oil and the US economy as well as the Zimbabwe issue, these participants Besraw, 37,(FGD-C), Kigret,54, FGD-D4 and Hintsu ,54, FGD-D1, they demonstrated that they feel they are less connected to both the US and the Zimbabwe issues.

The other side of the reaction by focus group participants of FGD-A and B showed that the contents and their presentation require a significant improvement in terms of being analytic and giving depth to the information the producers of the programmes intend to provide. In their replies, these groups of participants questioned the relevance of such programmes which were 'hindmost to their experience and know-how of business'. Such tendencies of trivializing the relevance of programme contents appears to be somehow common among audiences who are comparatively better educated. Morley (1992) as cited in Corneau and Hoynes argued that in the eyes of middle-class students the 1970s British TV magazine programme *Nationwide* was belittled as "lacking the seriousness that would make an informational programme worthwhile" (2003: 276). Elias, 28, Salem, 31, and Angachua, 36, from FGD-B and Akmal, 55, FGD-A, have all been vocal in their critics of the radio programme in focus, which these groups of participants regarded as all a remiss to their [the programmes']. The following participant began by asking questions.

**Akmal:** "Are they good? Yes they're and are they useful? Well...I say no....No attempt is there to relate the situation in other

countries with that of Ethiopia. For example the news on Zimbabwe is good but they could have made connection to the price hike in Ethiopia like asking questions ‘Are such economic regulations helpful to improve the situation in Ethiopia? What can we learn from Zimbabwe?’ Answering such questions can make the programmes more interesting and more informative but... I think it needs experience and time ... may be they [journalists] don’t have that.”

The critics’ side of the participants eyes the balancing aspect of the stories which they

heard in the programmes. Salem FGD-B5, for example, insisted that the producers should in addition to making the programmes more relevant to the audiences’ needs, the participants, it was found, have an unfulfilled expectations of the programme producers to dig deeper and to reveal both sides of every story – both the positive and the grudging aspects of every story.

**Salem:** “The information is good ...it’s useful but what about the negative sides because we heard only the improvements. I think people still experience problems with the customs authority...problems were not mentioned...”

In the focus group interviews, this young energetic and eloquent participant [Eliyas] represents the voice of the educated youth who are conversant with current issues of the globalized economies and politics. Eliyas likes to draw attention to the way questions were asked by the presenter and when asked about his evaluation of how much importance and relevance the contents bore to the needs of the target audiences, he stood by the opinion that the programmes are often incomplete because they end without explanation hence lose the quality of being comprehensive.

**Eliyas:** “The questions were not interesting. They [journalists] asked them simple questions and in the sample programmes I have observed that they were asking the kind of questions which you say ‘*Oh I know that*’.....Presenting or reporting on things that

happened...isn't enough. They need to give analysis in terms of what should be done in the country. ...you know that can help us to learn from the wrongs of other countries. To do this, the journalists should compare the realities in this country with the business conditions in other countries....if we don't compare our performance with others' how can we say that we are successful or unsuccessful? ... I think I could feel it ... they don't want to comment on the strong and weak sides of government. How can reporting only what happened help me change how I do my business? I need more than that.”

The data show that the question of whether or not the *Voice of Addis Chamber* has an optimum level of performance in its endeavour to meet the needs and interests of the of the target audiences has come out as an issue that divided participants evenly; nevertheless, there seems to emerge a clear line of division when it comes to assessing the relevance of the programme contents and the level to which those programmes satisfy the needs of the audiences. The dividing factor here appears to be the level of education of participants. Those who have lower level of education, in spite of their difference in age, spoke in defence of the programmes and the experiences and information they delivered while respondents comprising FGD-A and FGD-B - the ones who have high level of education - felt that the programmes lacked depth and left a number of questions unattended to. For these groups of respondents, the sanity of the relevance of the programmes lies in the depth of the contents, which according to them was non-existent in the programmes they came across. In connection to this assertion it is of important value to mention what Morley (1992) has demonstrated in his study of the *Nationwide* audiences that such instances of completely differed interpretations of the same media content by audiences are results of “the interpretive codes which the audiences brings to the decoding situation” (Corteau and Hoynes 2003: 276-277). In this respect, the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, as the data indicate, is way behind from serving one of the functions of its establishment; as the Articles of Memorandum (A.A.C.C. / *Voice of Addis Chamber*, 2001): providing up-to-date business information to the business community”. This may is not helpful audiences who specifically expect to be

supplied with the specific and in-depth information by the programme that has long targeted them.

#### **4.2.4 Language Use – Does the *Voice of Addis Chamber* Speak the Language of the Majority of Its Audiences?**

As Amharic is the official language of the state and given the fact that it is the language of business in Addis Ababa, as in most parts of the country, the producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* are perhaps right to make it an Amharic programme. All the respondents spoke Amharic well; hence, had no impeding problem of understanding the programme contents. In fact, the majority of focus group participants agree that Amharic is by far the best possible option to broadcast business to a diversified community such as the public in the city of Addis Ababa. In trying to understand the level of language difficulty of the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* from the point of view of the focus group participants, the researcher asked them whether they were familiar with some of the terms he came across while doing the qualitative content analysis like ‘*yewaga gishbet*’ (inflation), excise tax, and turn over tax. Most of the respondents from FGD-D and two from FGD-C respondent 4 and 3, said that they did not understand all but the Amharic word for inflation (*yewaga gishbet*). And they added that these words bear less or no significant barrier to understanding the over-all message of most of the programmes. Tefsehte, 47, said much of the trouble is caused by not the use of difficult Amharic words but when either presenters or interviewees blend in English words. Other participants FGD-A2, FGD-B2 & FGD-B3 have been mild in their criticisms of the language use on the *Voice of Addis Chamber*. They said the problem was not only the difficulty of words and the mixing of English words; it was also tied with the departure of some experienced and lively journalists left and joined other newly established FM radio stations. And some expressed they

understand the causes of the problem of mixing English words while the programme is Amharic—a situation they said they could tolerate.

**Tefsehte:** “I know what *yewaga gishbet* means, especially after it has come to be a buzzword following the continued increase in the price of food items. But the problem is not with the Amharic words for I grew up speaking the language it’s when....guests who almost always meld English and Amharic words when they are on the radio. The presenters also share the blame because they themselves mix up some English words when they read something...but it’s not all that bad”

**Hintsä:** “These words are not strange to me....For example, I know what ‘*gebir*’ (taxation) or *yewaga gishbet* (inflation) or ‘*yewaga meregaat*’ (price stabilisation)....I know these words; these are Amharic words but there are some people who use many English words. I think...it may be possible to ask people if I don’t understand what something means...but I believe the journalists will translate if they find the words very useful for us to understand. ...because I think they want us to learn.”

**Ilawo:** “I think they [the journalists and other giving interviews] should use Amharic always...but if they use English words and if I fail to understand what they say, I don’t mind because that doesn’t happen all the time.”

As the participants have observed when words of a foreign language are mixed in an Amharic programme- though some are willing to tolerate - it understandably creates a state of confusion.

In Ethiopia, English language has a long history as a foreign language. Although French was dominant as a medium of instruction, Hameso et al (1997: 154) write that in late 1940s English held ground to appear in currency, began to be widely used in business correspondences, for mails and a number of journals and newspapers appeared in English. Since then English has been taught as foreign language in schools. The language grew to be widely used and in 1958, it was made

the medium of instruction in junior secondary and secondary schools as the medium of instruction, (Hameso et al 1997: 158).

There have been changes in this regard following the 1974 revolution to restrict the language to secondary and tertiary level education. The authors argue that after 1994, when the new government came to power, there followed a change of policy which favoured a wider level use of English and other ethno-national languages. Despite the long age that the language has had in the country it has strictly been confined to the educated class of the society even the a good deal of secondary school and college and/or university graduates continue to be blamed for showing a dismal proficiency in the English language. In a country where the rate of literacy stands at 34% (Berhanu 2004: 19 and) and where the language could be rarely is available out of the school environment, one can understand that English is in short a language that has been remote to the large majority of the population and even difficult to those who have studied it since early elementary grades.

Meanwhile, the participants who claimed to tolerate the influx of English words in the radio programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* were those who have a solid background higher education.

**Teferi:** “It’s their responsibility. I remember [instances] where there was a repeated use of English words in a single programme. It could be frustrating but I can understand that journalists would not fail to correct that if they had the chance....I mean they don’t do it on purpose....but it’s also tolerable.”

**Mebraht:** “I think their language use is not too difficult to understand but the thing is that they have lost some experienced journalists and the use of too simple and less appealing language has become the problem of the *chamber radio* [the *Voice of Addis Chamber*] programme. I can tell you that the journalist\* who left a year ago... is still missed by many of us.”

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\* In 2006, one of the veteran journalists who once made the *Voice of Addis Chamber* famous,

Added to the opinions of the above participants of the focus group interviews, the researcher approached the chief programme producer with a count of 24 English words used by an interviewee in a seven minute interview that was held in Amharic on quality control mechanisms. The chief programme producer, who recognizes the problem of mixing English words, is both the problem that comes as a result of the nature of the issue at hand and the behaviour of interviewees (usually experts) themselves.

**Chief producer:** “I think we’re aware of the problem and we think we are taking some steps to get the messages across, like reading slowly and trying use simple language as much as possible.... But we find some of the concepts and the terminologies too difficult to translate and when we try to do the translation, we happen to be too wordy and the meaning might be lost in the lengthy sentences. As to the interviewees, the problem arises when the guest in the programme happens to be an expert, I mean a professional we invite to speak on economic, business or policy issues. Before doing the interview, we try our best to remind them of using Amharic throughout but they still couldn’t avoid mixing some of their English vocabularies; apparently, I guess...this seems a trend we can’t avoid. I still find it hard to recall a programme that has gone with out being understood due to language difficulty because we never fail to try. ”

The problem of language does not seem to be confined to a few influxes of alien (often English) words while either interviewees or journalists speak; it is also the use of words which are not common in the discourse of business or which one may refer them to be a rarity in the day to day conversations of business doers. One of the participants, Bekalu, 35, (FGD-C 5) brought about an example of the use of such

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Tadesse Muluneh went to join one of the newly opened FM radio stations Sheger FM 102.1 Radio.

rare words and said he recalls a recent programme on the 12<sup>th</sup> Addis Chamber trade fair “ ...that so and so are working ‘*messa lemessa*’ to make the trade fair successful...”. The word is usually used to mean *side by side* but as the participant said the word is hardly heard on day to day or casual conversations.

**Bekalu:** “This isn’t the first time that I heard such words but I am not against the use of them I was saying why do they use such words for example I was surprised but I didn’t ask...it’s is not always like that.”

Mebrat, 38, who is currently attending her final year studying for her MBA at a private college, in a way, agrees with Bekalu. She said that even though the language difficulty *per se* does not pose a problem, if it persists, it could create a condition of being less appealing and less memorable.

**Mebrat:** “The words should not be seen whether they are difficult or not but also in ways as to how the journalist or the speaker uses them to present a programme that is unforgettable. ...if you see it this way, the journalist in the *Voice of Addis Chamber* uses words that you easily forget because they are strange to you; so the language is not only difficult but at the same time less interesting.”

The use of simple or standard (difficult) Amharic appears to be a preference coming along the line of age. The above respondents FGD-B 4 and FGD-C 5 are the younger participants speaking of their preference for simpler words and colloquial Amharic. However, other participants Kibret, 59 of FGD-D and Zemedkun, 64, of FGD-A, were of the opinion that such issues could not be taken as serious weakness for the obvious reason that that radio journalists should use standard Amharic.

**Kibret:** “It is alright to hear such words. It shows that the journalists are careful in their preparation. I appreciate such good use of language. They may be difficult for some listeners to understand but to my understanding it is not that difficult after all it is

Amharic. I think they should be appreciated and I have a good opinion of their job.”

**Zemedkun:** “I remember no encounter of hearing difficult words.... I can only say that it was the language is good. The weakness is the frequent use of English words and not difficult Amharic. There is a male journalist most of the time he uses selected words...formal language. I think he is doing well and that should be the way journalists speak on the radio.”

It is possible to locate the generational rift as the participants of different age groups show different stances regarding the use of standard or easier and conversational language. The older respondents of FGDs A and D have grown through the age where Amharic was considered to be ‘*afe negus*’ the language of the king (Ullendorff 1966: 124 and Markakis 2006: 49). The younger ones who liked to hear more conversational language have passed a time where the emphasis was on English and ethnic languages were important. In general, discussions revealed that the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* do not significantly suffer from the persistent appearance of difficult words of Amharic. The in-depth individual interviews with the programme producers revealed that the producers believe they use simpler language since their prime intent is, according to the deputy programme producer, the deputy chief producer of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, to get the useful messages across to their target audiences. Nevertheless the researcher came up with sample English words used by this same producer and a colleague on a programme aired on September 4 , 2007 in which the English words ‘*pavilion, best stand award, globalization and civic organizations*’ were used in one programme with no attempt to explain or translate. His reply showed that there were times when audiences would be left to construct their own understanding of some words when they [the producers] find them difficult to translate.

**Deputy producer:** “There are of course some terminologies which are difficult to translate. As I have told you unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, we try to translate words in to Amharic ... but some words are either difficult to translate in to Amharic or their

concept is better understood when left in their original [English] language. The best example I can give you is the word *globalization*. Its Amharic equivalent '*lulawi tesisir*' which roughly translates in to 'global interconnectedness' is not that clear; for me it easier to make use of the more familiar one. ”

The reply is indicative of the fact that there would be programmes which may go with out being fully understood by audiences. The reality in the country regarding access to education and accessing knowledge materials in a foreign language such as English, however, does not appear to be in congruence with the expectation of the programme producers. According to a report on global education by UNESCO (2005: 25), in Ethiopia in 2002/03 academic year, only 8.2 %, that is, 147,954 out of the total 1,785,655 students enrolled in secondary schools, could achieve to access tertiary level of education where students get more specialized training and knowledge. Of the total population who joined only 25% were able to come out with a first degree; the rest would not make it to the end of the course of their study. The figure further diminishes to become insignificant when it seen against the general population. Therefore, for audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* to have a full grasp of ideas presented in programmes, like the various study papers presented in the successive forums of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, they must be among the lucky ones (comprising the 8.2 %) who get college or university education (Global Education Digest, UNESCO 2005: 25). As the findings suggest unless the problem of language is rendered due consideration by the programme producers, a portion of the audiences of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme are likely to pass some programmes being mere listeners [and not understanding the contents].

It should be noted if there continues to be an excess influx of words of a foreign language in the programmes, there will fundamentally be a condition of misunderstanding between the people engaged in a communication process. In connection to this, Akmajian et al (2001: 150-51) explain that when listeners do not have the 'linguistic competence' of the language being spoken, the unfamiliar

vocabularies, phrases and sentences will be barrier in the communication continuum, at least, until some level of stability is maintained by coming back to the language/medium of the communication process. According to the same authors, speakers naturally have their intentions and the meanings they wish to pass to their audiences embedded in the words the speakers utter (Akmajian et al 2001: 367). Thus it can be argued that in a situation where there is no chance of asking for elaboration due to physical remoteness – as in a radio transmission - allowing the melding of English words and expressions, will only compound the problems of understanding the programme contents.

## **Conclusion**

This part of the chapter as discussed above has presented and interpreted the data in line with the theory of audience reception which the study opted for in order to gain guidance. It has also summarized the data obtained through qualitative tools of data gathering mainly focus group interviews and in-depth individual interviews. The comparative analysis of the views obtained from both the decoders (audiences) and the encoders (programme producers) of the radio programmes under investigation was incorporated. An attempt has also been made to interpret what the data imply toward providing answers for the research questions. In so doing this section has outlined three major themes to seek for answers for issues of evaluating the performance of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* from the vantage points of *both sides of the communication continuum* - the listeners and the producers, the language use and what factors were there to influence audiences in making sense of the contents of the radio programme in focus.

The following chapter briefly captures the major findings which have emerged in the entire data of the study and offers concluding remarks.

## **CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 CONCLUSION**

Focus group interviews and in-depth individual interviews were used to gather the substantial share of the data for the study to come up with its findings. The decision to employ these data collection tools was justified by the preference made at the outset to use the qualitative research paradigm to guide this study. Focus group and in-depth individual interviews have been of immense advantage when the data generated through them was combined to arrive at a few well meaning findings. In fact, two findings, though they were not within the research inquiries of the study, emerged during the individual interviews with participants. The individual interviews held with the programme producers helped to make comparisons with the views obtained from focus group and individual interviews.

As discussed in the introductory part of the preceding chapter, the pattern of reception of the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* were summarized under three major themes which looked in to audiences' sources of business information together with their listening habits, the relevance of the programme contents to their needs as well as the meanings they made out of the varied programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* and the language use in the radio programme.

As a result, it was found that respondents do not habitually turn to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* in search of the latest - and the more serious ones, for that matter - business information. The local news papers, FM radio stations and the national TV were there prime sources of business news and information. In this regard, the major function of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* appeared, in the view points of the participants, to be enlightening audiences with the answer of the question '*what is going on inside of the A.A.C.C.?*'

In connection with the above point, respondents were divided by a single factor – their level of education. Those who were with a higher level of educational background, comprising FGD–A and FGD–B were critical of what the *Voice of Addis Chamber* meant to them. It was found that these participants were dissatisfied with the “mere reporting and interviews” dominating the programmes which, at the same time, lacked analysis and a depth of information. For these groups of respondents, the programmes were isolated pieces which were also in short of a sense of connectedness. The respondents consisting the focus groups C and D who have a lower level of education, on the other hand, were supportive of the radio programme's performance as being the voice of the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce (A.A.C.C.) which they strongly believed is the embodiment of the private sector. These participants were, however, equally dissatisfied with the unconvincing performance of the radio programme as they found it just “grappling to emerge as the voice of the private sector”.

This shows that both groups of the participants who have differed educational background were equally unhappy with regard to what the radio programmes mean to them. The ones with higher level of education believed that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* was superficial in its contents; therefore, far from being a serious source of business information and more of an echo of their association of businesses in the city (A.A.C.C.). The less educated ones were equally unhappy, if not more, because they believed the radio programme is not asserting its role of promoting the private sector and telling the story of the orgies and languishes which businessmen and women experience as they toil to support the economy.

The issue of language had a different picture. Although the participants agreed that language was not a pronounced hurdle in their attempt to make sense of the messages coming from the *Voice of Addis Chamber*, the age factor has become a dividing line in their view whether the radio producers should opt for a formal language (words of Amharic language). The older respondents of FGDs A and D were of the view that it was appreciable that the journalists use formal words in the programmes while the younger audiences reported that the more conversational the language the easier to comprehend.

Regarding language use, the data show that there was the recurrent use of English words and expressions even while explaining key concept areas of a programme content. This was evident especially when programmes involve guest interviewees or there were reports or programmes on the presentation of study papers, which A.A.C.C. often stages, and this has been identified as one of the downsides of the *Voice of Addis Chamber's* programmes as audiences experience in programmes that have the potential to enlighten audiences with ideas on tax, economic policies and other vital issues. As pointed out in the data analysis, researches show that English is limited to the academic circle; it is neither spoken nor understood by the significant section of the population of Ethiopia (Hameso et al 1997: 158). Hence the

situation will continue to be an impediment to the target audiences as they attempt to decode the contents of the radio programmes. If the contents of a programme are presented in such a way that speakers on the programme seamlessly move in and out of the two languages (Amharic and English), while it is an Amharic language broadcast, the process of decoding the gist and details of the contents would be a remote experience for audiences.

Even though they were not within the frameworks of the research objectives two findings emerged in in-depth individual and focus group interviews. It appeared that there is an interest among the participant audiences to own their own television channel in an anticipation of presenting a commanding presence of the privates sector in the media landscape as the government does in its use of the power of television with radio to tell its stories. Data obtained from the younger participants particularly of FGD–B offered that there should be an extension of the purpose of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* by which the A.A.C.C., with the strong force of the private sector behind it, could express politico-economic views which may or may not criticize government acts and policies on the economy.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

One of the issues respondents were not comfortable with appears to be the time of the programme transmission (i.e., between 12:40 pm and 01:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays) as a result of which they miss a number of programmes. The *Voice of Addis Chamber* staff, therefore, should address the issue as their intentions are to serve the interests of their audiences.

The institutional loyalty that the *Voice of Addis Chamber* shows in its programmes may not have come from a decision of little insight but from the desire for the fulfillment of the purpose of building a strong association of the private sector. Nevertheless, the radio programme production staff should also develop more

innovative and analytic approaches in their programme contents so as to become creators of entrepreneurs rather than reporters of institutional successes.

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## APENDICES

### APPENIX 1

#### Description of Research participants

1. Young entrepreneurs between ages 25 and 35( two FGDs)
  - 1.1 Those whose level of education is above high school
  - 1.2 Those whose level of education is below grade four
2. Adult businesspersons above the age of 35 (two FGDs)
  - 1.1 Those whose level of education is above high school
  - 1.2 Those whose level of education is below grade four
4. Program producers

### APPENDIX 2A

#### Interview guide for FGD and In-depth Interview with participants

##### Part 1: Biographical Information

1. Name/Code \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender \_\_\_\_\_
4. Level of education
  - a, illiterate
  - b, 1-4<sup>th</sup> grade
  - c, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and above
5. Status of Amharic :
  - a, Mother tongue
  - b, 2<sup>nd</sup> language
  - c, 3<sup>rd</sup> language
6. Place of residence \_\_\_\_\_
7. Sector of trade \_\_\_\_\_
8. Status of Amharic :
  - a, Mother tongue
  - b, 2<sup>nd</sup> language
  - c, 3<sup>rd</sup> language

##### Part 2: Access to media and use

1. How is your access to the media?
  - a) Radio
  - b) TV
  - c) Print media (newspapers and/magazines)

d) Both\_\_\_\_\_ &\_\_\_\_\_ e) Any other

2. Which programmes/ columns do you attend more often?

3. How and where do you get information about business issues?

### **Part 3: FM 97.1 Radio and the *Voice of Addis Chamber* Programs**

#### **I. General**

##### 1. Access

Whose radio do you usually listen to?

a, Your own radio

b, A friend's radio

c, A neighbour's radio

d, Other\_\_\_\_\_

##### 2. Listening habits

2.1 When did you start tuning to FM 97.1?

2.2 How often do you tune to FM 97.1?

a) almost everyday

b) about 2 or 3 days a week

c) once a week

d) any other\_\_\_\_\_

2.3 Which radio programmes are your favorites? (*list them in order of importance*)

a) business and consumer reports

b) sport

c) health

d) news

e) other\_\_\_\_\_

2.4. What are your major reasons for the above priority.....? Would you please list them for me?

#### **II. Specific (on the *Voice of Addis Chamber*)**

1. What comes first to your mind when you think of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme?

2. Why are you listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme?

3. How often do you listen to the *Voice of Addis Chamber*?

**a, Regularly**            **b, Not regularly**

4. When did you start listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme?
5. What do you use the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme as?
  - a, As a source of entertainment**
  - b, As a source of information and news**
  - c, As any other radio program**
  - d, I don't know**
  - e, Any other**
6. What features of the programme interest you most and make the program particularly relevant to you? Why? (*Could be more than one answer*)
7. How are your needs met in the radio programme? (refers to the issues you think were made particularly relevant to you/your business)
8. What do the programmes lack/miss which make them fall short of meeting your needs?
9. In what condition do you listen to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* (*while working or doing business, eating, sitting in your office room...*)?
10. Was there a moment when you decided to stop listening to the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme?
  - a, Yes**            **b, No**
11. If your answer to the above question is 'yes', what were your reasons?
  - a, The broadcast time is not convenient with your own activity**
  - b, Overlap of the programme with other TV/radio programmes**
  - c, Irrelevance of the programme to your personal activity(interest)**
  - d, Any other \_\_\_\_\_**
12. What is your reaction to the duration of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* program? Should it be extended (longer than the current) or reduced (shorter than its current duration)? What are your reasons?
13. Are you comfortable with the time of the day in which the program is broadcast?

14. Are there any programmes that inspired you to take any action? Can you try to remember one or more programmes?
15. Which issues do you think have got more coverage on the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programme? (*Would you do your own sequencing, please?*)
- a,** Tax
- b,** Investment or trade or business opportunities
- c,** Issues related to the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce(AACC) itself
- d,** Government economic policies
- e,** Any other \_\_\_\_\_
16. How relevant are the above issues to the business activity/ activities you are engaged in?
17. How easily/clearly do you understand the language/words used by the journalists and interviewees (for example, experts, business people...)?
18. Whose language do you understand better? The journalists' or the interviewees'?
19. Among the interviewees whom do you find easy to understand? Professionals/experts or fellow business people?
20. How much do you think has the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme been helpful personally to you in learning about the general business activity, business opportunities, etc in the city?
21. Do the programme contents of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* conform to what your friends (fellow businessmen/women) and other people tell you and with your beliefs regarding the realities of business and investment activities in Addis and in the country in general?
22. Do you discuss the issues raised in the *programmes* of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* with other people? If 'yes' with whom? If 'no' why?
23. How do you generally rate the programmes of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*?
- a. Excellent   b. Very good   c. Fair   d. Poor**

## APPENDIX 2B

### Interview Guide for all FGDs on *Interpretation of Messages* (after listening to three sample programs)

1. What are the programs about?
2. What meaning did you make after listening to the programs? Why?
3. Were they interesting to you? Why?
4. Are they in conformity with what you already know?
5. How does each program appeal to your own life experience as a human being and as a businessman/woman?
6. To whom do you think the programs need to be presented?
7. What kind of messages do you want to get from the programs on the *Voice of Addis Chamber*? (facts, policy issues, people's experience for example business successes or failures, ...)
8. If you were to evaluate the *Voice of Addis Chamber* radio programme, where do you put it? **A)** Excellent **b)**Very good **c)** Fair **d)** Poor
9. Why do you rate it that way?

## APPENDIX 3A

### Guide for individual in-depth interview with the producers of the *Voice of Addis Chamber*

#### Personal Details

- Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Position \_\_\_\_\_
- Responsibility in the production of the *Voice of Addis Chamber* programmes  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Educational background \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questions

1. How long have you been involved in the production of programmes in the *Voice of Addis Chamber*?
2. How do you get programme ideas?

3. Are the issues relevant to those business activities in Addis Ababa? Why do you think so?
4. What are the sources of the information/facts... on which you base your programme?
5. Do you edit stories you take from other sources (newspapers, magazines, websites...) so that they can appeal to radio audience?
6. Do you edit interviews you have had with experts in which there have been incidents of using English words?
7. Do you make efforts to have sound bites of some of the members of business community or invite experts only?
8. What format do you commonly use while producing the Voice of Addis Chamber (*prioritize if you are using more than one format*)
  - a, Lecture /Straight talk      b, Interviews/discussions
  - c, Drama      d, Music      e, Jingles/Slogans      f, Feature
  - g, Magazine (containing a number of issues in the form of interviews, music, straight talk...)      h, Infotainment
9. Do you think the issues you raise relate to the reality on the ground?
10. Have you ever thought of changing the time of broadcasting the radio programme? If 'yes' Why?
11. Are there plans to air the *Voice of Addis Chamber* more than twice a week? If 'yes' what do you think necessitates that?
12. How does feedback on your programmes come to you?
13. What do the comments generally say?
15. Have you ever received media related trainings? And in particular on business reporting?
16. Have you ever been in disagreement with the officials of **FM Addis 97.1**?
17. Has the management or member of the management team of the **FM Addis 97.1** radio station editorial right over your programmes? Are there cases in which you were forced to drop an already produced programme/s as a result of exercising this 'editorial right'? Please explain.

18. Any challenges you are facing in dealing with the **FM Addis 97.1?**

## Appendix 4

### Individual in-depth interview participants

Brukt Melaku – chief programme producer at the Voice of Addis Chamber

Debebe Abebe – journalist and deputy programme producer at the Voice of Addis Chamber

Eliyas Heyru

Yihenew Abebe

MebratHailemikael

## Appendix 5

### Participants - Focus Group Interviews

#### FGD A. Older in their age (above the age of 40) with high school or above level of education

No	. Name of participants	Age	Sex	Level of education	First Language	Type of business
1	Teferi Bikrie	53	M	Diploma Addis Ababa Commercial College	Hadiya	wholesaler
2	Yihenew Abebe	58	M	Diploma in Management	Amharic	Exporter distributor of imports
3	Zemedkun Kibret Demozie	64	M	College diploma (from a private college university)	Amharic	Wholesaler-
4	Yelulnesh Alemseged Kibret	43	F	Diploma in Accounting from a private college	Amharic	wholesaler
5	Akmel Yahya	55	M	BSC in Biology	Guragignia	Wholesaler

**FGD- B. Younger in age (20-40years) with high school or above level of education**

No	Name of participants	Age	Sex	Level of education	First Language	Type of business
1	Angachua Negusse Kifle	36	F	1 <sup>st</sup> year Law student by correspondence at a local private college	Amharic	Importer and distributor-electronics
2	Anissa Mohammed Yasin	33	F	Completed High school	Amharic	Importer and Wholesaler – construction materials
3	Eliyas Heyru	28	M	2 <sup>nd</sup> year Marketing student at a private college	Amharic	Retailer-consumer goods
4	MebratHaile mikaël	38	F	Management final year student at a private college	Amharic	Retailer-consumer different goods
5	Salem Gelan	31	M	High school certificate he has completed recently	Oromignia	Habshat plc. Wholesaler
6	Yeshimebet Anbessie	29	F	Completed High school and got certificate	Amharic	Retailer - building materials

**FGD-C Young in age 25 – 40 and less educated – grade five and below**

No	Name of participants	Age	Sex	Level of education	1 <sup>st</sup> Language	Type of business
1	Haimanote Abateneh	40	F	No formal education	Amharic	Wholesaler small and medium level machineries
2	Yassin Hmiid	32	M	No formal education but can read and write well	Oromignia	Retailer-different electronic apparatuses and equipment
3	Ilawo Keberet	28	F	Currently in 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade goes to a language school	Guragignia	wholesaler
4	Besraw Sergew	37	M	Had recently quit school from 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amharic	Retailer - building materials
5	Bekalu Garedew Tesfamariam	35	M	Currently 4 <sup>th</sup> grade at Firehiwot	Amharic	Wholesaler household

				elementary school		appliances
6	Emiru G/Selassiiies	34	M	Corrently dropped out of school due to the demands of work	Amharic	Wholesaler

**FGD - D. Old and less educated or uneducated participants grade five and below above the age of 40 years**

No	Name of participants	Age	Sex	Level of education	First language	Type of business
1	Hintsu WoldeCherquos Hile Giorgis	54	M	Able to read and write ;no formal education	Amharic	Wholesaler
2	Tefsehte Selamu	47	F	Able to read and write ;5 <sup>th</sup> grade in formal education	Tigrignia	Undisclosed
3	Wubshet Molla	63	M	Able to read and write ;5 <sup>th</sup> grade formal education	Amharic	Undisclosed
4	Kibret Kiflemariam	59	M	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade education in formal education with different trainings and workshops; won certificates and awards	Amharic	Distributor heavy trucks parts & light machineries
5	Tamene Ayehu Aliyu	61	M	Illiterate(not able to read and write)	Amharic	Retailer& owner chain of small hotel
6	Ahmed Mohammed Hussien	57	M	Two years of formal education some 30 years ago	Guragignia	Wholesaler