

THE FRAMING OF INFLATION BY THE ETHIOPIAN PRINT
MEDIA

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to examine how Ethiopian print media framed inflation during the period of March 2008 to February 2009. The research employed qualitative approach using textual analysis. Three newspapers namely, *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Negadras* were selected for the study. Data was collected using in-depth interview with selected journalists who work for the sample newspapers as well as from the newspapers published between March 2008 and February 2009 and also from in-depth interviews with the few journalists who work for sample newspapers. The findings revealed that the newspapers have framed their news stories predominantly by selecting which facts to include or exclude, emphasize or de-emphasize as well as by positioning the information within the news stories. *Addis Zemen* defined inflation as a problem caused by various factors and worsened by greedy retailers to unfairly accumulate wealth. Hence, the need for continuous regulation and punitive measures against retailers has been in order. It also presented the establishment of consumers association to effectively curve the inflation. *Reporter*, on the other hand, defined inflation as dramatic problem which came about by a number of causes. According to this newspaper, the cause of inflation was predominantly the gap between supply and demand and recommended effecting sensible economic development programme. *Negadras*, on its part, defined inflation as a problem mainly caused and aggravated by shortage in agricultural produce. Thus, increasing production and productivity was suggested as a solution.

Lack of knowledge on the part of journalists in the area of economics, reluctance of experts to serve as sources and the editorial policy were the grounds for the framing to come out as such in *Addis Zemen*. For *Reporter*, the complexity of the issue, freedom on the part of the journalists to cover issues without interference and strong background in economics and business education were the grounds for the framing to come out the way it did. Lastly for *Negadras*, it was mainly because of the focus of the newspaper on business and economy which compelled it to side with business firms.

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Acronyms

ADLI	Agriculture Development Lead Industrialization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTP	Gross and Transformation Plan
HICES	Household Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEWIT	Merchandise and Wholesale & Import Trade Enterprise
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Diverse events can affect the economic states of people. It is unlikely however, that the public will explore and learn about such occurrences by themselves. Rather they depend on media's brief information either from newspaper or broadcast platforms. Media is thus responsible to inform the public about relevant and necessary information including economic issues. The public can access information about economic issue covered by media which can also serve to know how it is affecting livelihoods and the precaution to be taken.

Media report on inflation can capture attention of diverse societal groups. An individual who worries about a price hike on food products wants to know whether the increase will continue or be controlled. Similarly, an investor in either domestic or foreign markets needs to know the rate of increase or the level of volatility of inflation before investing. Different firms also traffic in assessing the situation because it may affect their productivity and income.

Media has persuasive power. It mobilizes the public in order to develop their environment or encourage individuals to help each other. It also stirs up division with in different groups to responded to the 1984 & 1985 famine in Ethiopia with the music recording of "We are the World" or partake in genocide like in Ruanda are examples how media influences individuals' or groups' or societies' toward an issue.

One way that a media can be used to shape public opinion as de Vreese (2005) is framing. Regarding influential power of framing, J. Brown, R. Brown and Rivers (1978) said, "...without acting as advocates of a point of view or consciously trying to persuade, the mass media do influence public opinion by the selection of information they report, by the view of reality they communicate"(P. 8). Chong and Druckman (2007), on the other hand described the power of framing through analogy. An art dealer or gallery owner displays a painting through different frames, one with gold and another with simple aluminium. The art dealer can shape viewers' reactions with the same picture delivered through different frames. The reaction to the picture with gold frames and the picture with simple aluminium is not the same.

Reporters gather information and organize the story before they present it. They select words, phrases and expressions. They also arrange points or elements consecutively, after they decide which point of information should come first which should be placed at the middle and which should appear at the end of the story. These activities are incorporated in the framing process and the manner of arrangement and expression they use affects the audience's understanding of the issue. In the similar line, Gorp (2007) noted frames may affect individuals learning, interpretation and judgement of an issue or event. Gorp (2007) argued the concept of framing assumes that the frame prevents the receiver from using the schemata which are opposite to the frame in their interpretation of the message. He said this may in turn result in omission, adaptation or marginalization of the information that do not belong to frame the package. Hence, as the definitions indicate news is delivered with the understanding that leads influence the way audiences interpret information. Then, receivers can structure and define reality with the help of such message or transmission. Concerning the importance of framing, Brewer, Graf and Willnat (2003) said that framing in media is

important to shape the content according to the elites' desire and in turn, the message may direct how individuals understand the world and thus form judgements to evaluate the subject.

Questions like “how does media influence attitudes of audiences towards an issue?” or “what is the impact of framing?” are important to understand framing. For instance, through omitting or focusing on different facets of a story, the media can define public knowledge and construct public opinion. According to Downing, Mohamadi and Sreberny (1995), the public opinion can be fully informed about the sequence, reasons, goals and implications of the event. In contrast, the public opinion can be also poorly informed by confining viewers to see only dramatic moment rather than long term processes (Downing, et al., 1995).

Identifying how media portray an issue is an important topic to explore. Hence, lot of research has been conducted on how a certain issue has been portrayed. Some of these studies attempted to compare the framing of specific event or issue across different media and news outlets (eg. Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

This research examined the expression, examples, words and frames used to portray inflation during its highest pick from March 2008 to February 2009. Moreover, the study analysed how problem, causes of the problem and solutions were framed using textual analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia has experienced economic growth for the last eight consecutive years (from 2005-2013). However, inflation has become a major challenge during these years. The price of goods and services has been increasing from time to time. Particularly, in the mid 2008(July), there had been a sky rocketing inflation (Central Statistical Agency, 2008).

High and volatile inflation as described by Durevall and Sjo (2012) is a threat to good economic performance. The increase in food price specifically makes the lives of people with low income harder. In addition, since most people's income has not increased proportionally with the increase in commodities' prices, middle income individuals have also been affected.

As the impact of inflation is getting worse, the public wonders why it has happened, and what ought to be done. Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (as cited in Flener 2008, p.71) said "The public seeks information to determine whether the crisis will affect them, how they should think, and what they should do." In an effort to ease public uncertainty and anxiety, provision of relevant information is necessary. The Ethiopian media has reported on inflation. It has reported why the inflation has come about and what measures have been taken by the government and their effects.

The presentation of an issue or event shapes peoples' approval or disapproval of policy, regulation or any action endorsed by the government. An event or issue can be presented in various frames. People then reshape their thinking about an issue. Regarding the effect of framing by media, de Vreese (2005) said framing of an issue or an event in a certain way is one influential means of media to shape public opinion.

Studies carried out on framing of an issue or event are important in examining the roles of the media in defining a problem, stating the cause, providing moral evaluation and suggesting treatment. Framing by broadcast or print media on issues such as framing of agricultural transformation, political parties and gender violence were among the topics studied in Addis Ababa University Journalism and Communication School. As to the researcher's knowledge, no research has been done in examining framing of media on inflation. Therefore, this study

is believed to fill in the gap by studying how three local newspapers framed inflation from March 2008 to February 2009.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine how *Reporter*, *Addis Zemen* and *Negadras* newspapers framed inflation from March 2008 to February 2009.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify how the newspapers define the problem.
- To find how causes of inflation and treatment recommendations were presented in the newspapers.

1.4. Research Questions

The study posed the following questions.

- How did the selected newspapers define the problem?
- What causes were mentioned and how these causes were presented?
- What were the solutions noted by the newspapers and how were these solutions portrayed?

1.5. Significance of the Study

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, there was no tangible research made on framing of inflation before. Hence, the study was conducted with a belief that it might give an insight on how the major print media houses addressed economic issues such as inflation.

Therefore, the research will benefit media organizations in general and the selected three newspapers in particular since it points out both their strong sides and limitations in the framing of inflation.

The outcome of this research will shed some light on the practice of the print media in the presentation of the issue. Furthermore, it can also provide an inception for further studies on related issues and also will serve as a reference for other researchers who aspire to conduct a study on similar subjects.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

Because of constraints of time and resource, this research did not examine framing of inflation in other platforms such as television, radio, internet or magazines. Rather the few representative newspapers namely *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Negadras* were included in the study.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter provides a literature review that functions as a relevant framework for the current study. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section is a brief discussion of selected literature on the economic overview of Ethiopia. The second section discusses related studies on media's reports on inflation and economic issues and impacts of these reports; and the third section provides essential points on media framing theory.

2.1 Overview of Ethiopian Economy

Ethiopia is believed to be rich with varied natural resources. However, the country's economy reflects quite a different scenario for bringing about prosperity to its citizens. According to 2012 World Bank Report, the country is one of the poorest countries in the globe with per capita income of US\$370 which significantly lower than the regional average of US\$ 1,257 (World Bank, 2012).

Ethiopian economy is predominantly agrarian; in the year 2009, for example, about 43 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 60% of exports, and 85% of total employment was generated from this sector (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Besides, the contribution it brings, the current government set an Agriculture Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI) as the economic policy of the country with its active involvement in every sphere. Concerning the importance of government involvement, the late Prime Minister Meles (as cited in Teshome's review, 2012) noted that sustainable and participatory economic growth with less income inequality can be achieved through strong and constant government

intervention. He also noted that despite correcting market failure, state intervention has been vital in the development process. According to Teshome's (2012) review, Meles said strong government role enables actors to create of value rather than encouraging rent-seeking attitude. Hence, the free market cannot bring economic transformation on its own, as Meles claimed; the development state must discharge the responsibility of resource allocation and effective coordination of important economic activities. This is because economic growth can be achieved with policy instruments that include command-and-control approaches, information and cooperation.

Since the beginning of 2002, the Ethiopian government has adopted a development strategy called "Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) centred on the goal of reducing poverty in the country (Yonas & Soderbom 2012). With the effort of continuing the development initiative, the government adopted a five years Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) in November 2010 with the aim of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and achieving higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth through the pillars including promotion of agriculture, industrialization and infrastructure development (International Monetary Fund, 2012). In order to achieve the set development goal, the government also takes the experience of other countries into account. As noted by World Bank and IMF (2012), the government has inspired by East Asian countries that perused a public sector-led growth strategy. This strategy focuses on enhancing growth through public investment with the central role for public enterprises in infrastructure development (IMF, 2012).

IMF's report in (2008) illustrates that the strategy helps to bring economic growth and register progress in achieving the MDGs and since 2004 the country is achieving economic growth per year averaging 10.6% GDP. World Bank's (2007) report also noted that from 2004

to 2005, 38.7% of Ethiopians lived in extreme poverty. Five years later, the number decreased by 9.1 percent and reached 29.6% and the country aims to reduce extreme poverty to 22.2% by 2014-2015.

2.2 Inflation

Ethiopia experienced the highest inflation rate in its history and highest in the world next to Zimbabwe in 2008 (CIA, 2009). When looking back the country's history, the rate of inflation is found to be the highest. According to Loaning, Durevall, and Birru (2009), in the previous years, the country's annual average inflation was 5.2 % (between 1980/81- 2003/2004). The increase in inflation occurred because of the effect of drought or war. In 1984/85 the inflation rate was 18.2% because of severe drought. In 1991/92 the inflation reached 21.1% due to war and in 2003 because of the recurrent drought the inflation reached 15.5 % (Loaning et al., 2009).

Inflation arises when the prices of most goods and services continue to creep upward. When this happens, the standard of living falls. That's because each birr buys less, so one has to spend more to get the same goods and services. In other words, inflation is the rise in general prices and the reduction in value of money. The economic assumption is that buying power declines because there is an abundance of cash in circulation.

The rate of inflation is calculated through the Consumer Price Index. The CPI measures the average change in the price paid by consumers for a fixed market basket of goods and services. It is often based on household expenditure weights of the goods and services in the basket and their current market prices. CSA evaluates regions and country level CPI's based on the results of the Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey (HICES) in 2004/2005 from which expenditure weights are derived for major household goods and

services of that period. These rates are adjusted using the December 2006 retail prices of goods and services as a base period(CSA, 2008).

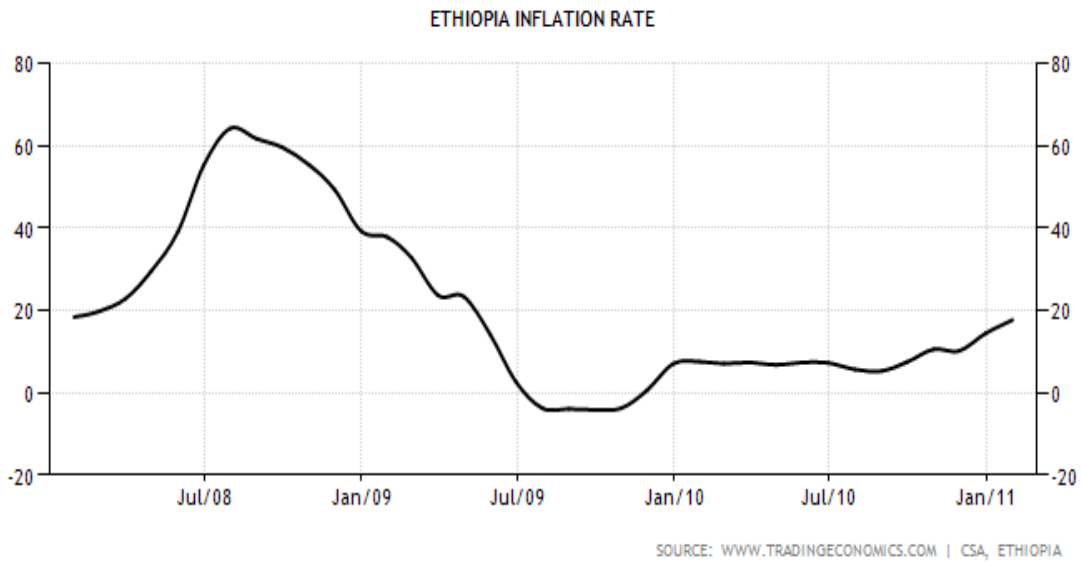
According to CSA (2008) the monthly CPI report, all the region and country- level indices are divided into two groups- food and non-food index. The non-food index includes Beverages; Cigarettes and Tobacco; Clothing and Footwear; House Rent, Construction Materials, Water, and Fuel and Power; Furniture, Furnishing, Household Equipment and Operation; Medical Care and Health; Transport and Communication; Recreation, Entertainment and Education; Personal Care and Effects; and Miscellaneous Goods and Services. The Food Index on the other hand includes Cereals; Pulses; Bread and Other Prepared Food; Meat; Milk, Cheese and Eggs; Vegetables and Fruits; Oil and Fats Spices; Potatoes, Other Tubers and Stems; Coffee Beans (whole) and Tea Leaves; Other Food Items; Milling Charges; and Food taken Away from Home. A total of 119 market places were selected for the retail price survey. In each market place an enumerator is assigned to undertake the data collection activities. The price data is collected from the 1st day though 15th days of European Calendar month under consideration.

Based on the July 2008 CSA report, the price of the entire commodities and services has been in a sharp increase. Particularly, the price of food items has been increasing unabated. According to African Development Bank Group (2011), report, the continuous increase in food prices has raised inflation in some east African' countries including Ethiopia. Similarly, Ulimwengu, Workneh, and Paulos, (2009) said the food price increases in Ethiopia were larger than the increase in world markets and those observed in most other African countries. The inflation rate in food price increase 18% in June 2007 to 92% in July 2008. And the overall inflation rate rose from 15% to 55% in the same time (Loening et al., 2009). From

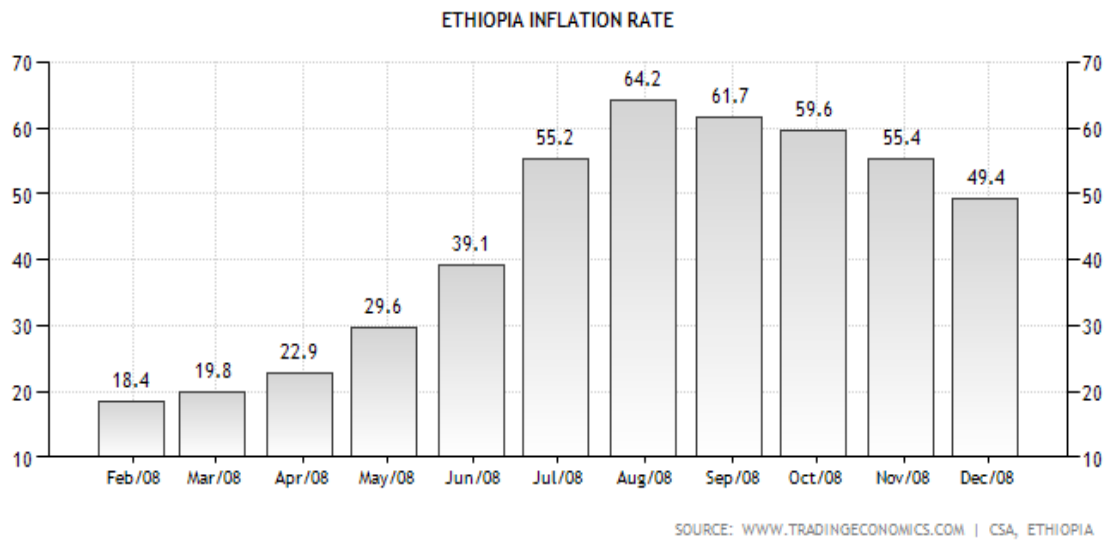
2007 to 2008 for example, there was a 100% increase in wheat and *teff* price; and maize and meat prices increased by 180% and 50%, respectively (Sanogo, 2009).

The problem is vast and widespread. High and persistent inflation introduces uncertainties into the economy and may lead to slowdown of the economic growth by discouraging domestic as well as foreign investments. It may also cause balance of payments problems by eroding the country's competitive advantage (Kibrom, 2008). Since most citizens' incomes do not increase at least proportionally as price of goods and services, individuals are unable to make ends meet. Thus, households who spend a large share of their income on food are forced to consume low quality food and cut meal frequency and quantity to cope up the continual increase in food price (Sanogo, 2009). According to Yonas and Soderbom (2012) in Ethiopia, high food price inflation was the most unpleasant economic shock between 2004 and 2008 and affected low income households and casual workers most.

The inflation has started increasing since 2005 and continued through 2012. The highest is registered in 2008. In July 2008 the inflation rate reached its peak, which is the highest in the country's history 64.2%.



Graph 1. Inflation rate across years (from July2008 to Jan2011)



Graph 2. Inflation rate across months of 2008

Different causes were noted as to why inflation has ravaged Ethiopia. Nonetheless, Yonas and Soderbom (2012) noted there is little consensus on the causes. World Bank (2007), and IMF (2008), stated surplus aggregate demand which resulted from expansionary monetary policy was key driving factor. Ethiopian Development Research Institute (2007), and Food Agriculture Organization (2008), noted internal and external factors including increasing international commodity price, economic growth, structural transformation and change in farmers supplying experience (due to storage facility, marketing information, micro-credit access etc.) as main factors of the inflation.

Durevall and Sjo (2012) on their study, *The Dynamics of Inflation in Ethiopia and Kenya* categorize the causes under two categories - long run and short -to- medium. World food prices and exchange rates were categorized under a long run impact whereas money growth and agricultural supply shocks were grouped under short-to-medium run effects. They concluded that the factors are found similarly across the two countries and there is no nominal anchor for inflation in both countries in the form of a clear and well-functioning monetary or exchange rate policy.

Kibrom's (2008) findings on the other hand showed that, the determinant of inflation differs between food and non-food factors and the time period under consideration. For food inflation the main forces in the long run are real income, money supply, inflation expectation and international food prices. For non-food, the long run determinants are money supply, interest rate and inflation expectations. In the short run model, however, wages, international prices, exchange rates and food supply are found to be key sources of inflation.

2.3 Related Studies

In reporting on single economic issues, similar to any other topic, journalists may gather a lot of information. But all the information can't be included in the news. Rather it is selected to be included or excluded for the purpose of brevity or simplicity. Consequently, journalists are forced to decide on what should be included or excluded. What is important for one specific newspaper may not necessary for other newspapers. Besides the selection of information, the message of news can be also determined by words; phrases or expressions journalists use to describe the event or issue. For example, a newspaper may describe a group as a terrorist while another depicts the same group as fighter for human rights.

Journalists' level of attention to an issue also can be revealed in the arrangement of information. While a journalist organizes a story, single information may get ideal place like the lead or less ideal place- the middle or the end part of the story or in background part. This alone is indicatives of what pieces of information are more important than others. The media frame an issue and it affects the message. In this regard, Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) said elites including policy makers, journalists and activists are interested in shaping media agendas and frame to have an impact on volume and character of news messages. To understand the role of framing in the construction of meaning, it is important to assess how journalist use framing in the presentation of news stories or other journalistic works. This is because they may want to create specific understanding through framing.

The effect of framing is resulted from the way the story is organized and told. Studies have been conducted to identify how economic issues including inflation are presented in media and how the framing of such influence audience perception. One of the researchers who studied media's influence on reporting inflation is Drager (2011). The researcher gathered

data from Swedish Consumer Tendency Survey and from media reports about inflation and analyzed the formation process of inflation perceptions, expectations and the role of media reports on inflation. The finding revealed that audience perception and expectation toward inflation was affected by media report. Drager, (2011), through quantitative survey found that perceptions of audience towards inflation are affected asymmetrically by news where media effects are generally stronger in times of high and volatile inflation. For the low inflation sample period, on the other hand the researcher found inflation expectations are more affected by shocks to perceptions than vice versa.

Another piece in relation to the purpose of identifying what frame used in selected newspapers in reporting economic issue is the study by Kostadinova and Dimitrova (n.d.). This study analyzed the role of media type, political institutions and type of news on the use of frames during elections in Bulgaria for the period 1990–2009. The frames are episodic, thematic, economic consequences, human interest and conflict. They analyzed 543 news stories from six newspapers. Their findings revealed that thematic and economic consequences of framing are determined both by the type of economic policy that is reported and by the type of newspaper publishing the story. The frequency of human interest framing is also affected by the kind of economic news that is the focus of the news story as well as partially by the broader political environment. According to their findings human interest frame is used more frequently in stories reporting highly controversial economic issues.

The other study that revealed what tone (positive, negative or neutral) was used to report economic issues is also found important. Hester and Gibson(2003) included both print and broadcast media news in the analysis and found that economic news was framed as negative more often than as positive, and negatively framed news coverage was one of several significant predictors of consumer expectations about the future of the economy.

Lamla and Lein (2007) study is also important because of its topic i.e. inflation. The researchers compared the intensity of coverage (volume channel) and contents of the reports matter (tone channel). Though the effects vary with income, age and education of respondents, Lamla and Lein, (2007) found the intensity of coverage improves the accuracy of consumer forecasts while the content induces a media bias.

The other study by Lamla and Lein (2010) also reveals the impact of media report on audience perception. They argue that in the aftermath of the euro cash changeover consumers increase significantly in the euro area countries while actual inflation figures remained almost unchanged. They found that the information set of the public has been distorted through the high slant in the media. In addition, they concluded that media reporting has a statistically significant and economically meaningful impact on inflation perceptions and contributed to their sharp rise in the aftermath of the euro cash changeover.

The studies mentioned above are on economic issues and inflation. Although their goal, method and subject of analysis are different from this study, they indicated how economic issues are presented in media and what impact the reports can bring on the audience perception and expectation.

2.4 Framing Theory

2.4.1 Definition

The magic-bullet and hypodermic needle models were replaced by more theoretically and methodologically sophisticated ideas of Lazarsfeld' and his colleagues. Before Lazarsfeld' and his colleagues introduce new way of looking, it was believed that media has absolute

power in changing audience attitude. Lazarsfeld' and his colleagues emphasized on the importance of personal experience and argued that media messages reinforced people's existing attitude rather than changing their attitude (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

The other major paradigm shift in research on political communication marked when theories like cultivation theory emerged with the assumption that mass media had strong and long term effect on audiences (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). Champbell, Richard, Fabos and Hina (2005) said the assumption of cultivation effect is that heavy viewing of television leads audience to perceive reality in ways that are consistent with the depiction they see on television.

Paradigm shift has been continued and diverse theories were introduced to the world. The emergence of framing, agenda setting and priming are some examples of this endless development. Though these theories are considered to be related or have similar premises, as Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), explanation agenda setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the stress that mass media set on particular issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audience, while priming occurs when news content recommends to receivers that they ought to use specific issues as a base for evaluating the performance of leaders and governments. Framing on the other hand focuses how an issue portrayed in news reports can have an influence on audiences' understanding.

In the field of media and communication studies, framing has become an important topic. With its increasing attractiveness, scholars have contributed to the development of the theory. Goffman is acknowledged as the originator of framing analysis with his (1974) concept of frames which define social situations. Goffman and others who laid sociological foundation assumed that individuals cannot understand the world comprehensively unless the individuals

apply primary frameworks to process new information effectively (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Although Goffman and others are mentioned in relation to the existence of the theory, Frank Luntz was the first professional pollster who systematically used the concept of framing as a campaign tool (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). According to different studies conducted based on framing theory, the implementation of framing concept is not restricted to political issues but includes other issues like economy, disasters, or social issues.

In the application of framing theory, particularly for media analysis, Entman's (1993) study is important. Entman (1993) defined media framing as "... a process by which media select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation" (p.52). As per Entman (1993) definition, which is used as a base for this study, saliency is made possible by placement, repetition or associating issues with culturally familiar symbols.

In some definitions, framing is also described as a mechanism of persuasion. For Parenti (1986), framing is "Just short of lying, the media can mislead us what to think about a story before we have had a chance to think about it for ourselves" (p, 220). Parenti (1986) argued that propaganda relaying through framing is effective. According to his explanation "By bending the truth rather than braking it, using emphasis, nuance, innuendo, and peripheral embellishments, communications can create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy and without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity."(P.220). Furthermore, framing is described as a useful tool in news media. Gans, (as cited in de Vreese, 2005) noted framing is an important device for journalists to lessen the complexity of an issue.

On the other hand, Chong and Druckman (2007) described framing based on the impact it has on audience understanding. They argued an issue can be viewed from different points of view and taken as having implications for several values or thoughts and this is the major premise of framing theory. Chong and Druckman, (2007) defined framing as “a process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue”(p, 104).

Framing also described as a way of giving meaning. Gamson and Modigliani (as cited in Scheufele, 1999 p. 143) defined framing as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue”. Entman, (1993) also described the concept based on the role it plays. According to him, “...frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies”. In similar manner, de Vreese, (2005) argued that frame includes source presentation and defining an issue. De Vreese, (2005) defined frame “By virtue of emphasizing some elements of a topic above others, a frame provides a way to understand an event or issue.” (P.53). Similarly, Straubhaar and LaRose (2006), stated that in the framing process like painter who choose what to put in the painting, journalist decide on what to include or exclude, what conceptual framework to put them, in what context to include and how to interpret the issue.

There are different definitions on framing. Researchers then by using such theory they have identified how the story of an issue or issues has been presented and how the presentation affects audiences’ attitude of an issue or issues. This paper tried to identify how the issue was portrayed and the Entman (1993) conceptualization is the base for the study.

2.4.2 Identifying Frame in News

Different scholars have provided suggestions on how frame can be identified in the news. As Entman (1993) said, the occurrence or absence of certain key words or typical phrases is indication of the frame. He also said "...stereotypical views or images, sources of information and sentences which "...thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" are pointers of frames (p. 52) Gamson and Modigliani (as cited in de Vreese 2005) on the other hand, stated that frames can be identified based on: metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions and visual imagines used in the news. Along these lines Tankard (as cited in de Vreese 2005 p.101) listed eleven mechanisms or locations of frames including headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, and pull quotes. Parenti, (1986, p. 220) noted that "The amount of exposure, the placement (front page or back, lead story or last), the tone of presentation (sympathetic or slighting), the accompanying headlines and visual effects and the labelling and vocabulary are the ways news is packaged to achieve framing".

As the definitions of framing concept indicate, the arrangement of story is one method journalists use to frame news in a particular way. Selecting specific words or phrases also the other mechanism used by the writers to frame the story. Hence, in order to analyze how journalists frame a certain issue or event, it is important to identify the location of frames in stories.

2.4.3 Why Do Media Frame Stories?

Journalists frame their story through several mechanisms. For instance, they choose certain words rather than others. They also arrange stories to emphasize or deemphasize a particular point in a story, or they select or omit information from an event to convey message in a

particular way. But why do journalists frame a story in a certain way? This question helps to understand framing.

Diverse reasons have been given for why journalists frame a story in a particular way. Elites' desire to impose their belief or ideology has an impact on framing process. Regarding this, Gamson and Modigliani (as cited in Carragee and Rofes, 2004) said journalistic framing of events are shaped by frames sponsored by politicians, organizations, social movements and other social actors. As a result as Carragee and Rofes, (2004) noted, news stories become a medium for framing competition where political actors compete by sponsoring their preferred definition of issues and the resources are important to the ability of a particular frame is used in the news and to become dominant.

According to Straubhaar and LaRose, (2006) self-censorship also affects framing of the story. They argued journalists' perception on what is permissible or unacceptable push them to edit their work and they thought this helped them to keep consistent with particular media norm or policy. Hence, reporters decide what fact should be included or excluded in a story. They also decide the conceptual framework to put the facts in, the context to include, and how the facts are interpreted (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2006).

Gitlin (1980) in keeping with this emphasis, noted economic and cultural assets of elites contributes considerably for shaping journalistic frames. Gitlin (1980) pointed out, the tendency of reporters believing official sources rather than challenges increase the ability of the powerful to influence journalistic work. This indicates that ideological hegemony has impact on media framing and subsequent studies have been done on the relationship between ideological hegemony and media frame (Carragee and Rofes 2004).

Gramsci as cited by Carragee and Rofes (2004) defined hegemony as a process by which powerful secure to the established political order through the production and diffusion of meaning and values.

2.4.4 Factors Affecting Framing

The effect of frame is determined by several factors. According to Chong and Druckman(2007), the strength and repetition of frame, credible source, individual motivations, availability of information and conversation after the exposure of media frames affect framing outcome.

It is inevitable that the issue of strong frame is raised while discussing about framing effect. Chong & Druckman, (2007) noted “Strong frames often rest on symbols, endorsements, and links to partisanship and ideology, and may be effective in shaping opinions through heuristics rather than direct information about the substance of a policy” (p. 111).

Research findings pointed out, framing effects are also determined by receivers’ knowledge. Studies indicated less knowledgeable individuals are affected by framing than knowledgeable individuals. For instance Chong and Druckman, (2007, 112) concluded “People who are better informed about the issues are more likely to have established a frame of reference for their opinions and are less likely to be swayed by how other people frame the issues for them”. Other researchers on the other hand, report the opposite. Druckman & Nelson (2003), on the contrary, argued that knowledge boost framing effect because it increases the tendency that the considerations highlighted in a frame will be available to the individual.

2.4.5 Limitation of Framing Theory

Media framing theory is found within the theoretical context of media effects, particularly within media manipulation theories. Since media effect theories criticized on the huge attribution they give for media effect “powerful”, the framing theory shares this critic. In this regard, de Vreese, (2004) said it is difficult to be sure whether the audience focuses on the ‘frame’ or ‘facts’ about the news and it sees audiences as powerless or passive who do not resist the views of the media.

The other limitation of framing theory is lack of clear definition. Scheufele (1999) argued that many of the limitations of media framing theory relates to its lack of a clear conceptual definition and generally applicable operation. Regarding the limitation in conceptualization, Entman (1993) described framing as a scattered conceptualization (p,51)with previous studies lacking clear conceptual definitions and relying on context specific, rather than generally applicable operationalizations. Brosius and Eps, (as cited in Scheufele, 1999 p, 103), argued that framing is not clearly explicated and generally applicable concept rather it is just a metaphor which cannot state directly as research question. Partially, because of these vague conceptualizations, as Scheufele (1999) noted framing has been used repetitively to describe similar but distinctly different approaches and studies have irrationalized framing in combination with other concepts like agenda setting and priming.

Concerning research in framing Scheufele, (1999) said, because of the absence of commonly shared theoretical model underlining framing research, studies on framing are characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness. In addition, the researches, have been conducted to find media effect of framing based on experiment do not exactly show why and how news stories frames influence audiences or readers behaviour, attitude and cognitive.

Carragee and Roefs (2004) also criticized recent developments in research examining media frames and their influence on audience understanding. According to their argument, a lot of research in framing neglected the relationship between media frames and broader issues of political and social power. The neglect, as per their explanation, is caused by different factors including "...conceptual problems in definition of frames, the inattention to frames sponsorship, the failure to examine framing contests, and the reduction of framing to a form of media effects."(p, 214).

Researchers have tried to find usage of frame in news media (eg . Radu and Stefanita 2012 ; de Vreese, Peter and Semetko, 2001). Others also conduct studies to find out the impact of framing on audience understanding (eg. Schatz and Levine 2010, Brewer, et al. 2003). However, such studies that focus on the frames emphasized and on frame influence in some cases, as Carragee, and Rofes (2004) neglected the degree to which journalists discourse is shaped by external sources. They said since journalist interpretation of reality itself shaped by discourses out from news organizations, studies on identifying which type of frame is widely used in a particular media exaggerating the degree of journalistic autonomy in the framing process.

Specific information can be reported differently and these differences create dissimilar understanding about the same issue. At the same time, it is believed that people's participation in development is important. However, for the effective participation, the public needs to appreciate or accept what the government is doing. Hence, the media has a role to inform and shape the audience opinion toward the desired direction. Carragee & Roefs in their article, *Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research*, (2004) described media role in creating meaning "Essential to ideological struggle to establish and maintain the legitimacy of the existing political order is the production of meaning and values by cultural institutions,

including churches, schools, and the media” (p, 222). Head of states or leaders try to convince the public how beneficial or best the action of government is through different means. Media is one of such strategic tools political elites often exploit.

In summary, framing can be affected by various factors. The theory of framing is criticized for lack of clear conceptualization. However, this would not discredit its importance rather as de Vreese, (2005) noted it is becoming attractive subject of study. Hence, analysing how media present an issue is essential to understand framing theory and this study intention is identifying how inflation framed in the selected newspapers.

Chapter Three

3.1 Research Methodology

In this study, textual analysis was employed as the research method. In addition to the textual analysis, in-depth interviews with journalists were conducted to get information that can support the data gathered from textual analysis. Regarding qualitative approach Jane, (2003) said “qualitative research as an approach, is based on the interpretation of the world according to the concepts which are typically not given numerical value, such as ethno-methodology or certain kinds of interview”(p,18). Since meaning, implication and interpretation are central issues in this study, the present researcher selected qualitative approach to analyze news stories that covered inflation in Ethiopia in the three selected newspapers.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

Textual Analysis

This study used textual analysis as a method of analysis. Champbell et al. (2005) defined textual analysis as, “The close reading and interpretation of the meaning of culture, including the study of books, movies, and TV programs” (p, 527). McKee (as cited in Bainbridge, Goc, and Tynan 2011 p. 224) defined textual analysis as:

Textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. It is a methodology- data-gathering process-for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live.

The genesis of textual analysis can be traced back to its use in literature. Then, a significant shift from film or literary studies to media happened in 1974 when the first serious academic analysis of TV stories was conducted by Horace Newcomb TV (Chambbell, et al. 2005).

Bainbridge (2011) said textual analysis is a technique for examining the media output including advertisements, news, television series and films. It is also a method that helps researchers to think about all aspects of the content. It lets a researcher to examine expressions and words used by journalists. In addition, as Hall, (1975) cited in Flener (2008) stated, textual analysis is an interpretive method which allows researchers to consider all aspects of content, including omissions.

In textual analysis, the researcher constantly focuses on the media text and he or she defines what that means. According to Van Dijk, (1991), both textual analysts and ordinary language users focus on the meaning. In other words, their primary interest understands what the text or talk is about including its meaning and implications.

Using textual analysis the researcher tried to find out how the stories were framed in the selected newspapers. The researcher also tried to identify why the news were framed in such a way. However, as Jane, (2003) noted textual analysis alone cannot tell the intention of the writers and to find out the intention of the writer and to substantiate the data gathered from textual analysis interview is important. Hence, the current study interviewed few journalists who covered the news stories on the inflation during the period in focus from March 2008 to February 2009.

Studies on media framing

Framing has studied through diverse methods. It has studied by qualitative approach as well as quantitative approach. From several studies conducted through content analysis Radu and Stefanita, (2012) is one example. Radu and Stefanita, (2012) undertook content analysis on the most noticeable Romanian news portals – “Hotnews.ro”, and “Ziare.com” by focusing on two moments related to the economic crisis- Romania and International Monetary Fund first financial agreement at the beginning of May 2009 and Euro Summit for saving the Euro Zone at the end of October 2011. In order to identify the coverage of European topics and frames applied in reporting the recession, Radu and Stefanita, (2012) analyzed 11,570 news items.

The content analysis they used as a method was deductive, functioning on pre-defined frames- economic, conflict, moral, human interest, responsibility, powerlessness, paradigm change, and conspiracy. At the end of their research, Radu and Stefanita, (2012) found that the online media’s framing of the crisis emphasized the use of the responsibility, conflict and conspiracy frames consecutively. They said the responsibility frame in the news signifying the need for identifying solutions to control the crisis with the predisposition of punishing those who blamed for existing problem.

Radu and Stefanita, (2012) stated that online media advocates audience to ”blame the others”, instead of giving them the desire to find solutions, to respond and contribute in constructive debates. Hence, in their view, the online media do not have expert-like perspective, which was essential to bring citizens closer to real problems and to empower them purposefully act and react.

Another useful study in terms of methodology is Flener (2008) *Textual Analysis of Media Frames from National TV Journalists Covering Hurricane Katrina’s Evacuation Centers*. The

researcher analyzed conflict, human-interest, and a lack of responsibility frames through the lens of framing theory using textual analysis.

Flener (2008) examined words and frames of on-air news content of national television broadcast stations before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina at the end of 2005. The researcher gathered data from the three major broadcast networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. The study only focused on the news from Sunday, August 28, 2005, to Sunday, September 4, 2005 which referenced three specific large areas for disaster evacuees – the Superdome, Ernest N. Morial Convention Centre, and the New Orleans International Airport.

The researcher examined how journalists employ narrative storytelling and cultural story lines to present Hurricane Katrina for viewers. Those frames used in the three networks were discussed and broken down on a sentence structure level in each story. Flener (2008) analyzed the link between news items and the societal structure at the time to determine the frames journalists used to describe the disaster. The researcher pulled out syntax, scripts, themes, rhetoric, and identified potential frames in each sentence or group of sentences.

Flener (2008) found law and order, conflict, and responsibility as dominant frames. From the existence of those frames, Flener (2008) also tried to answer why the journalists presented the stories in such a way. According to this researcher, journalists used those frames because they follow socialized or accustomed news routines and focused on highly unexpected but well known occurrences.

Another relevant study in terms of method is Kim and Lee's (2003) *Textual Analysis of Journalistic Coverage from the 1997 Korean Air Crash in Guam*. The issue was about a Korean plan flight 801 crash in the territory of U.S that killed 228 passengers and crew members. The researchers intended to identify how Korean and United States journalists

framed two divergent crash causes - “pilot error” and “inhibition of conflict devices” and what assisted them construct their news frames. The researchers analysed media outlets of two countries. NBC News and New York Times from US and KBS News and Joong Ang Ilbo from Korea were included in the study.

Kim and Lee (2003) analysed the whole section of the stories from the selected media outlets and interpreted the findings. They found that the outlets of US and Korean linked the crash to differing causes. Korean outlets linked the crash to poor airport conflict devices, where as the US outlets linked the crash to pilot error.

Another related study was by Tutt’s (2003) who investigated how different writers framed stories on the bases the same document. The source document for the study was the 23-page report, “Summary for Policymakers,” released on April 6, 2007, by Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report. The stories written about the IPCC report included five news articles from media sources and two news releases from oil companies responded to the report.

Tutt (2003) examined the framing of a technical report, news and news releases about the report. The researcher tried to identify what techniques were used to frame the stories? how support other rhetorical devices used by the authors? and how does framing affect the information flow from the source document to the story written about the report? Tutt (2003) used qualitative research approach-inter-textual analysis. The researcher tried to identify what information was excluded, included and emphasized in each documents of technical report, news release and news stories written based on the original document. The researcher examined what words and sources were used to emphasize important point. He also tried to find out the arrangement or placement of facts applied to highlight or deemphasize.

Tutt (2003) framing analysis revealed that writers of technical documents, corporate news releases, and news articles framed their documents mainly by selecting which facts to be included or excluded. The choice of facts as Tutt said “can either focus information into a call for action, as was done in some news articles, or it can dilute or de-emphasize information, as was done in the oil company news releases.” (P. 53). The positioning of information also found to be important. It was applied through placing proposition facts or quotes at the beginning and end of the document and sandwiching anti-position facts or quotes between pro-position statements.

3.3 The Subjects

The researcher selected print media as a subject of the research. Print media was selected because it allows the researcher to look into how the private owned media had framed the issue. Broadcast media particularly Television is monopolized by the state in Ethiopia so this would limit the research only to government owned media. However, because of constraints like time and resource, all print media were not covered, rather the researcher focused on three selected newspapers. Hence, based on their circulation, medium of language and focus (political, economy, and social issues), three newspapers were selected: *Addis Zemen*, *Negadras* and *Reporter*. The first is state owned while the latter two are privately owned. Since majority of the newspapers in Ethiopia are privately owned 77% (Mekuria, 2005), the selection of two newspaper is logical.

All the publications of the biweekly Amharic *Reporter* (Wednesday and Sunday) and the weekly *Negadras* were the focus of the study. Two publications (Tuesday and Saturday’s issues) of *Addis Zemen* were also included. Ideally, it would have been much better if the data were gathered from Wednesday and Sunday edition of *Addis Zemen* which is similar with the

dates of the *Reporter*. However, the researcher found only one story in publication dates. The same applied to Thursday and Monday with similar results. Hence, 96 publications of *Addis Zemen*, 96 publication of *Reporter* and 48 publications of *Negadras* were considered for analysis. The number of stories found in *Negadras*, which is a weekly newspaper, may seem balanced with the other two. Yet, *Negadras* deals with economy and business issues, thus the number of news were closer with the rest two. From the sample newspapers, all news stories about inflation were considered for this study. Thus the study was limited to news stories of the newspapers From March 2008 to February 2009.

Addis Zemen, the Amharic daily, is a government owned newspaper. It is one of the oldest newspapers in the country, established in 1941. The newspaper focuses on political, economic and social issues. *Addis Zemen*, has a circulation of 22,000 copies (Ward & Selam, 2011).

Reporter was established in 2003. It is privately owned newspaper which deals with social, political and economic issues. It is published twice a week in Wednesdays and Sundays. The Amharic newspaper *Reporter* has a circulation of 12,500 copies (Ward & Selam, 2011).

Negadras is privately owned newspaper with a circulation of 3,500 to 4,000. It focused more on business and economic issues. It was established in 2005 (Ward & Selam, 2011) and published weekly every Friday. The newspaper is out of publication since September 2012.

In addition to texts, the researcher used interview to gather data from the newspapers under consideration. Selected purposefully, six journalists who covered the stories were interviewed to corroborate the data gathered from news text. An interview guide that contained different questions regarding inflation was designed.

3.4 Time Frame

This study investigated news frame of inflation from March 2008 to February 2009 through textual analysis. This time frame was selected because it was the time when the inflation rate reached its pick at 64.2%. When the problem of an issue gets worse, the focus of media also increases. Hence, the time mentioned was when the media in Ethiopia focused more on news about the inflation.

3.5 Data Analysis

The researcher conducted a text analysis of news on inflation during March 2008 to February 2009 in order to identify the way the stories were framed. The analysis focused on how these newspapers described and defined inflation, how the effects of the inflation were framed, what factors mentioned as causes and how those causes were portrayed. It also considered the measures and recommendations as well as how they were described.

The analysis was conducted based on Entman's (1993) definition, "framing essentially involves selection and salience." To make the analysis, the first step the researcher had done was reading the text closely. A close analysis of the text was used to explore how the issue and its effects were presented, what information had been emphasised and de-emphasized and how sources were used. Furthermore, close reading was applied to understand words, phrases, examples, expressions and structure as key element in textual analysis. Pan and Kosicki (as cited in Flener , 2008, p.62) stated journalists use rhetorical devices to, "...invoke images, increase salience of a point, and increase vividness of a report."

Chapter Four

4. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

This chapter presents the results of textual analysis and in-depth interview. The data was collected from news stories of the three newspapers (*Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Negadras*) within the time period from March 2008 to February 2009. In addition, in-depth interviews with journalists of the sample newspapers were conducted. Thus, the findings is presented along with their analysis and interpretation.

4.1 How was Inflation Defined in the three Newspapers?

Addis Zemen

Addis Zemen defined inflation as a problem increases at the alarming rate. The newspaper also defined inflation evident in the country as an impediment to development. In Ethiopia, the inflation has been happening analogously with the effort made to ensuring economic development. By referring the simultaneous happening of the two - development and inflation, *Addis Zemen* depicted inflation as impediment to development.

Inflation was an impediment for development effort that people of Benishangul region take steadfastly. (*Addis Zemen*: March, 25 2008 p.17)¹

Furthermore, inflation in *Addis Zemen* was described as a problem which increases amazing and exacerbates as a result of the actions of certain section of society, particularly retailers.

There was no shortage of supply of products, however, the price of produces are increasing surprisingly with confusion created by illegal retailers. (*Addis Zemen*: March 22, 2008, p, 1, 2)²

An issue can be defined through its positive or negative effect. As the inflation rate continues growing, the negative consequence on livelihood of people with low and middle income has become worse. The economy of the country turned out to be more affected. Though inflation affected livelihoods of individuals and social life, much focus was not given by *Addis Zemen* except mentioning that inflation was challenging especially for low income section of the society.

Regarding defining of inflation, journalists interviewed from *Addis Zemen* said the focuses of the stories were retailers and consumers. Hence, emphasis was given to cover more on how retailers were worsening inflation and what the government was doing to stabilize inflation and alleviate consumer's problems.

In general, though inflation affects the life of individuals, business firms and the country's economy as a whole, no attention had been given to providing information about the effect of inflation apart from saying inflation is impeding people's effort to development in a single story with a single sentence (*Addis Zemen*: March 25, 2008).

Reporter

Inflation was defined in *Reporter* as dramatic and its pace of growth is alarming. This definition was revealed through words, statements and statistics.

The current inflation is shocking and its progress is horrible. (*Reporter*: May, 21, 2008 p.11)³

Words chosen to describe inflation above as “shocking” and “horrible” was to highlight the extent of its dramatic incidence. The other word that the newspaper used to magnify inflation was the metaphoric word, “Storm”. (*Reporter* May, 11, 2008 p,2)

The Addis Ababa Grain Retailers Association described the current price hike as a storm created by brokers or middlemen (*Reporter*: May, 19, 2008,p.2)⁴

A lot of examples were given to depict the rate at which inflation is increasing.

The price of manufacturing and agricultural food products is increasing daily. Within a week, the price of commodities increased by more than 50 birr. Before three weeks, the price of *teff* was 730 per quintal, now it is 800 birr and this is the first time *teff* is sold with that price. (*Reporter*: May, 7, 2008 p.10)⁵

In addition to using inflation as indicator of unhealthy economy (*Reporter*: March 19, 2008 p.1), inflation was also described as the most awful problem experienced in the country.

This information was mentioned in the news through source statements.

Ato Bekele, who takes care of six members of a family, expressed that this period had been the worst of all times he ever lived(*Reporter*: August 17, 2008 p.1)⁶.

Munash Taye, 62, a widow, the bread winner of her two children and three grand children said she has bought for the first time wheat that came as relief assistance and her children are eating *injera* made of wheat. “It is unthinkable to purchase *teff* with a monthly income of 200 birr, I am receiving from pension. How could I live if I have to pay house rent? I am really ashamed of seeing my children. The drought that occurred in 1977 hadn’t even challenged me to this extent.” (*Reporter*: August 17, 2008 p1)⁷

To depict the seriousness of the inflation and the sufferings of people as a result of inflation and poverty, proverb was also used.

The people who do not have food to eat may possibly devour its leaders (*Reporter*: March 19, 2008 p1)⁸.

In addition, the level of inflation was stated supported by research findings empathizing that inflation experienced in Ethiopia was the highest in Africa save that of Zimbabwe, (*Reporter*: December 17,2008, p 11). The newspaper defined the problem by showing its impact on individuals. As one of the stories indicated, the price of food forced residents to spend more than their income for daily consumption. The story explained that a person

with a salary of 1,000 birr can't spend money on transport, house rent, electricity and other expenses to have three meals a day (*Reporter: August 17 2008 p1*).

Since most people's earnings is allocated for food in developing nations like Ethiopia, the price increment on food items has effect on individual's spending, saving or budgeting. The magnitude of the effect of inflation on individual life was shown in the news reports of the newspaper. This fact can be seen from the below extract of news story of *Reporter*.

Sied, earns about 150 to 220 birr a month and has to pay rent for shelter he shared with his elder brother and Aman, a shoe shiner like him) as well as pay for school and transport. Since recently, they can't afford to buy *injera* with two birr and there are a lot of days they only have one meal a day (*Reporter: August 17 2008 p1*)⁹.

The description by *Reporter* above shows how poor people were pushed further to extreme poverty.

The impact of the inflation on business firms also included in the news stories. The income of hotels was going down because of the decline in number of customers. Five casks of draft used to be sold daily before the worsening of the inflation, but later finishing one cask become difficult (*Reporter: August 17, 2008 p1*).

The effect of the inflation on manufacturing industries also attracted attention. The shortage of supply and increase in the price of raw materials had an impact on the amount of production and this in turn affected their revenue and survival. An example of such effect of inflation was illustrated by closure of flour mills because of increment in the price of wheat. The factories could not acquire the necessary amount of raw material due to the price rise in wheat. This resulted in the closure of 60 flour mills (*Reporter: May 25, 2008, p, 10*).

In addition to the impact of inflation on diversified sectors, *Reporter* included possible threat it may pose to the country.

The problem is becoming social and political crisis beyond its direct impact on the economy. The Ethiopian Democratic Party expressed its concern that the unlimited crisis observed in our country may lead to all rounded crisis (*Reporter*: June 4, 2008, p. 2)¹⁰.

Reporter depicted the effect of inflation in individual lives and its widespread impact at every level including on small business firms and manufacturing industries.

Negadras

Negadras described inflation as a problem increasing at alarming rate.

New price cap was set for food grain to stabilize inflation that increase at the alarming rate since the last three years (*Negadras*, May 4 ,2008 p, 1)¹¹.

In this newspaper, inflation was also defined as critical in affecting cross sections of the society. It dwells on the increasing nature of the inflation and how its effect was widespread.

Even people with higher income are challenged by the inflation let alone those with low income as a result of soaring price of food grain (*Negadras* , May 16, 2008 p, 3)¹².

Negadras did not provide enough information on how the inflation affects economic or social lives of individuals. On the other hand, the effect of inflation on business firms was underlined. The effect was represented in vicious circle. As the stories indicated, the price of input or raw materials was sky rocketing and in turn producers were forced to increase price on products.

Such effect was illustrated with example. One of the news that narrates about the price increment on milk described the increase by showing change in price. According to the

story the price increased from 5.50 birr to 8.00 birr for a litter, because of price increases in fodder from 100 birr to 260 birr a quintal making it unlikely for people to get such essential needs.

If the price hike in milk continues with current pace, people with middle income in urban areas could not afford to provide children with milk. (*Negadras* : August 1, 2008 p, 8)¹³.

Journalists of *Negadras* interviewed for this study said that since the newspapers focus was on economy and business the stories gave emphasis on impact of inflation on business firms (Journalist E and F : *Negadras*). Regarding the impact of inflation on the life of individuals, one of the journalists said that the effect of any problem on individuals has to be included in news in order to show how the problem is affecting the livelihood of people. She added,

If I didn't include how individuals were affected while I report on inflation, it would be unfair and not right.

Indeed, all the three newspapers defined the problem. *Addis Zemen* described inflation as a problem resulted from mainly aggravated intentionally by retailers. Words like 'amazing' were used to describe the worsening of the inflation. Inflation has impact on individuals' life, especially on poor people who depend on meagre income to sustain themselves. It also affects the economy of the country since this trend discourages domestic as well as foreign investment (Kibrom, 2008). However, *Addis Zemen* did not include such facts. In defining the problem with its impacts, no information was found in the news stories how individuals and business firms were affected by the inflation. The possible effect of the inflationary problem on the political instability of the country was not mentioned either. The result suggested that the newspaper tended to ignore providing the readers with the impact of inflation in different levels.

Reporter used metaphor, proverb and words like ‘horrible’ to describe the extent of the problem. The newspaper also used examples to portray how the price of commodities increased consistently. On the *Reporter* news, the impact of inflation on individual, business firms and the country’s political instability were included. However, the impact of inflation on domestic as well as foreign investment was not mentioned.

Negadras defined inflation as a problem which increases in an alarming rate. Like *Addis Zemen*, no metaphor was used in *Negadras* to describe the extent of the problem and its aggravation. The impact of inflation on individuals’ lives and domestic or foreign investment was not included in the news stories either. However, the newspaper incorporated the impact of inflation on business firms.

The focus of *Negadras* newspaper was business and economy, which contributed to dwell mainly on the impact of inflation on business firms whereas the centre of attention by *Addis Zemen* was describing causes of inflation and its treatment recommendation. In summary, *Reporter* performed a great deal in defining the problem than *Addis Zemen* and *Negadras*. *Reporter* had given more coverage to the impact of the inflation on individual and societal levels. *Addis Zemen* had limitations in discharging such responsibility. *Negadras* presented the effect of inflation in relation to income of business firms. However, it failed to present the effect of inflation on individuals as well as economic and political aspects of the country.

4.2 How were Causes of Inflation Portrayed in the Newspapers?

Addis Zemen

In the stories reported by *Addis Zemen*, diverse causes were mentioned. Some of the causes were elaborated while others were just mentioned in the middle of the story without

repetition and detail. The increase of price of oil, inflation expectation, disparities between supply and demand, the price rise of food and non-food commodities in international market and the increase in amount of cash were causes which did not get focused but mentioned. In addition, long market chain, increase in bank credit, increase in income of rural people, change in agricultural marketing system, increase in price of construction materials and economic development were also mentioned as source of inflation. However, all the information related to these causes were stated in a single sentence or used as a passing remark.

Following the global rise in oil price there is price increment on commodities (*Addis Zemen*: March 15, 2008, p,1)¹⁴.

The current inflation evident at global level, the increase of income of rural people with advancement of agriculture, change in agricultural marketing system and price rise of construction materials in towns are among reasons to be cited (*Addis Zemen*: March 22,2008 p,1)¹⁵.

The other reason cited as source of inflation was retailers. Retailers were described sometimes as source as well as catalysts for the worsening of the problem. Information about retailers was discussed widely in the stories. It was placed in the lead, body as well as background of the news stories. The issue of retailers as source or catalysts of inflation was emphasized with repetition. The repetition was realized by reiterating the same information and by including detail in continuous paragraphs.

In the stories, retailers' intention, their actions, and others' perceptions toward their activity were discussed extensively. Responsibility of retailers for the inflation was also stated by different sources in the story/stories to help emphasize the issue. The former primer, consumers, government officials, producers and retailers (deemed innocent) reiterated

blame on the retailers. The following extract shows the repetition of information blaming retailers.

Mesalemya Ehel Berenda retailers said greedy retailers are the one who create inflation on food grain (*Addis Zemen*: March 22, 2008, p, 1)¹⁶.

In the same news the same information was stated with the statement made by the sources.

Retailers who want to remain anonymous say there was no shortage of supply of produce, however, the price of produces are increasing surprisingly with confusion created by illegal retailers (*Addis Zemen*: March 22, 2008, p,1)¹⁷.

The stories did not blame retailers entirely as a cause of problem; they rather made others accountable as a cause. To put a distinction between responsible retailers and the innocent, words or adjectives (started by government officials) were used. Retailers who hoard commodities beyond the allowed amount and sell commodities over the set price were labelled as “greedy” or “illegal”. The distinguishing names were used interchangeably in the stories.

Measures were taken against some greedy retailers who tried to get profit beyond margin by the task force set for the purpose at various levels. Retailers who horde food grain, cooking oil, soap and other basic commodities in the warehouse over the allowed amount are accountable after their shops are legally sealed off (*Addis Zemen*: April 11, 2008 p,17)¹⁸.

Though the absence of competitive market was noted as cause for the inflation, it was mentioned in *Addis Zemen* to describe how retailers use the limitation of market system to get extreme profit. In addition, shortage of supply was cited as a cause of inflation. Nonetheless, it was presented as a result of retailers’ deliberate act than the outcome of poor agricultural productivity or due to other causes.

Journalists working for *Addis Zemen* cited reasons why the stories focused on retailers. According to their argument, retailers are closer to public than other causes listed

contributing to inflation. In addition, they said accessing experts in the field to explicate about other possible causes of inflation was difficult. One of the journalists said,

These two reasons forced us to dwell on retailers and consumers. This in turn may seem that repetition was imprinting in minds of the public that inflation was caused by retailers (Journalist A: *Addis Zemene*).

The other journalist believes that retailers were the main catalyst for the problem.

The retailers are fixing prices as they wish and considers this as their right, he added, I believe retailers exacerbate inflation. We have to show the problem and indicate direction for solution” (Journalist B: *Addis Zemen*).

He also recognizes that a lot of money was circulating resulting in the creation of high demand for commodities due to the government’s huge infrastructural projects. However, the journalist did not include this fact in any of his stories because he thought retailers were closer to the public than any other causes including the government’s huge investment or oil price increase in international market (Journalist B: *Addis Zemene*).

Reporter

In *Reporter*, price hike of commodities in international market, price increase on raw materials and agricultural input, change in price of transport, shortage of supply, huge investment of government, cessation or reduction of external support, economic development, brokers and erratic rain were stated as causes as well as catalysts of inflationary situation. These causes appeared individually or in group in a sentence placed at the middle of the story without detail and repetition.

Inflation became worse because of the increase in oil price, the decrease or termination of external food aid, failure to realize food self sufficiency, cessation of import of products from some countries and the use of some grains for bio- fuel purpose (*Reporter*: May 4, 2008, p,11)¹⁹.

The current inflation is resulted because of mismatch between supply and demand of food products and thus emphasis need to be given to increase productivity (*Reporter: May 25 2008, p10*)²⁰.

Speaking about causes one of the journalists said,

Inflation was one of the issues reported on media without having deeper knowledge about it. There could be many causes and I believe the main reason behind inflation was the gap between demand and supply”. (Journalist C: *Reporter*).

In *Reporter* there was a detailed coverage about retailers. The information about retailers was placed in the lead, in the body and background of the story. The retailers were described as the catalyst of inflation. Like in *Addis Zemen*, the words “greedy” and “illegal” were also used in the stories reported by *Reporter* newspaper.

The retailers are creating artificial shortage in a matter of hours without any change observed on the products. Thus, the business community knows such retailers and need to give due attention (*Reporter: May 4, 2008 p, 10*)²¹.

However, different from *Addis Zemen*, the stories of *Reporter* included facts that show inappropriateness of the accusation against retailers.

Trade is an action of negotiation between retailers and consumers; the former to sell product with increased price and the later to buy with lesser price and requires decision of two parties and not an issue of sympathyprice hike would resulted if the market fail in the hands of few retailers. It was noted that there are more than 2,000 food grain retailers, flour mill owners and suppliers in Addis Ababa alone (*Reporter: May 4, 2008, p,10*)²².

As opposed to single outlook entertained by *Addis Zemen* that retailers were getting benefit from inflation, *Reporter* included opposite outlook by presenting rejection of such assumption with source statements.

We ourselves bothered...the people has to understand our problem too. The change in price came from the source of the products and it is not fair to blame us (*Reporter: May 7 2008 p, 10*)²³.

This information was also depicted through example. According to one of the stories, the retailers procured a quintal of *teff* for 750 birr from the source and sold it with 800 birr. The retailers said they pay transportation fee and labour cost and thus their profit is minimal. (Reporter: May 7 2008 p, 10) The newspaper also included information that rejects the accusation of retailers against the alleged storing of commodities. According to the argument presented in the newspaper, storing is part of retailers work as a means of transition between origin and final consumer so the regulation that enacted because of the supposed trick that retailers increase price through accumulation was inappropriate (Reporter: May 4 2008 p, 10).

Although the newspaper included information about retailers' accusation, one of the journalists admitted that the report should not portray retailers as a source of inflation. He said:-

The nature of market makes few business people to have the capacity of controlling price. It should not be the retailers who were considered as the cause for inflation rather it was the imbalanced market system.(Journalist C: *Reporter*).

The other journalist has given example of government's act of diverting the attention of the people by blaming retailers for the problem which led the newspaper to give more focus on retailers. The newspaper has to cover what is going on so journalists tend to cover both the blame about retailers and the inappropriateness of the accusation (Journalist D: *Reporter*).

Negadras

Unlike the former two newspapers, few causes of inflation were mentioned in *Negadras*. These were: increase in the price of commodity in the world market, shortage of supply, monopolization and retailers. Compared to the former two newspapers, focus on

mentioning causes given by *Negadras* was limited. However, like the other newspapers level of focus given for causes was different. The price increase in international market was mentioned in relation to a specific commodity with respect to cooking oil cited once in a story without further detail.

Because of the price rise on cooking oil worldwide, the organization obliged to increase 1.95 Birr per a litre on the existing price from March 10, 2008. (*Negadras*: March 14, 2008 p.9)²⁴

Another cause for the inflation stated was problem in supply of agricultural products as a result of erratic rain fall that reduced yield.

Presently, farmers do not have production at hand (*Negadras*: May 16,20008, p3)²⁵.

The cause of price rise on fruit and vegetables was attributed by *Negadras* to the monopolization of vegetables and fruit by two distributors creating favourable condition for them to manipulate the market price. This issue got detail coverage by describing that the producers of vegetables and fruits were on the hands of two business firms who brought a huge impact on the price. It also compared the price with which the two companies secure vegetables and fruits from the producer government firm and the price with which they sell to consumers. The argument was supported by example. The firms received pepper for 1.67 birr per kilo from the producer company and sold it for up to 8.00 birr to the next market and paid only 20 birr per quintal for transporting product and the cost of transport brought no major difference on the final selling price (*Negadras*: April 18 2008 p, 11)

In *Negadras* retailers were mentioned as a cause. The newspaper also used the word “illegal” to retailers who accused of worsening inflation.

Soap producers and distributors noted that the price instability observed on soap was created by retailers (*Negadras* March 21 2008 p17)²⁶.

Similar to *Reporter*, *Negadras* included information that shows the inappropriateness of accusation. As one of the story indicated, the retailers were abused by the taskforce without court's guilty verdict (*Negadras*: April 4, 2008, p. 20). In other story, which noted the accusation of retailers because of selling pepper beyond the fixed price of 450 birr per 17 kgs, the allegation was described as unacceptable. According to the story, the accusation was not proper because retailers were purchasing it from producers over the price that was fixed by the government.

The farmers sell the pepper for 600 birr then the retailers add 50 to 60 birr profit margin. This is common. Retailers can't sell with 450 birr. They buy pepper with higher price. They have to get profit. They can't sell with lesser than price they brought. The government need to make an investigation on farmers. (*Negadras*: March 21, 2008 p, 3)²⁷

The newspaper gave focus on the inappropriateness of accusation on retailers. According to one of the newspaper' journalists, emphasis was given to inappropriateness deliberately.

The focus of the newspaper was economy and thus we paid attention to the voice of the business people and we also focused on consumers. When we stand by the retailers, it means that we are shedding light on possible source of problem. We tried to tell the government that the direction it was following was not right and cannot stabilize market. It will be when the government ensures the rights of retailers that the market will stabilize (Journalist D:*Negadras*).

As the journalist said the source of the problem was shortage of supply and shortage of supply did not come from retailers.

With the improvement of supply the market can be stabilized. It cannot bear fruit to speak about free market without improving supply and this may not be going beyond propaganda. There was shortage of supply as I also witnessed in the *Atikilt Tera* (the main vegetable market place found in Addis Ababa)." (Journalist D:*Negadras*).

In conclusion, varying media messages may be resulted from an issue because of the way it is framed. What newspapers include, emphasize and omit in the story influence the message. In stating the cause of the problem, *Addis Zemen* was found to be fairly given emphasis. Different causes were incorporated in the news stories. However, most of the causes were de-emphasized. They were stated without detail and repetition. They were also placed in the body part of the news stories. In contrast, retailers who sometimes were described as catalysts and sometimes as a cause for inflation were emphasized. This was made salient through repeating the same message and including detailed information. The news stories tell why and how retailers worsen the problem. According to the stories, retailers create artificial shortage of supply, increase price on goods unfairly and disseminate rumours to accumulate wealth. Adjectives which debase retailers were also used. In addition, others negative stance towards them was included.

The exclusion which was described as essential as inclusion of information in framing by Entman (1993), was applied in portraying causes. Government's huge infrastructural construction(World Bank 2007 and IMF 2008) and change in farmers supply experience (EDRI 2007 and FAO 2008), mentioned as causes of inflation by different reports and researches. However, these facts were not included in the stories. Since these causes have significant contributors for inflation, omitting these made the stories to be incomplete in mentioning major causes. In addition, the information including the response of retailers who were accused of worsening inflation, the amount of commodities retailers can horde and the acceptability of price set in free market economy were not included in the stories. Furthermore, retailers obtain supply of commodities from producers and the stories of *Addis Zemen* never went into comparing price they secure from the producer and the price they were selling so that to know their profit margin. Since the retailers were accused of increasing

price to get improper profit, the information was necessary. The omission of such facts can lead readers to deduce that the retailers were the sole causes for inflation.

Reporter listed diverse causes. However, inflation expectation (Kibrom, 2008) and change in farmers supply (EDRI 2007 and FAO 2008) were not included as a cause of inflation in the newspaper. The exclusion of such causes would make the stories of the newspaper incomplete as these causes have significant share for the problem. Most causes were defocused and few causes including retailers got emphasis. Retailers were also described as a cause in few cases. However, different from *Addis Zemen*, the newspaper included information that shows the inappropriateness of accusation against retailers. The price hike that occurred after regulation of price, the disparities between accusation against retailers and trade law were some of the information evident to show the inappropriateness of the accusation taken by the government. Next to retailers, shortage of supply was emphasized than the rest of the causes mentioned in the *Reporter*. Erratic rainfall and closure of factories were also included as cause and effect respectively for shortage of supply.

Unlike *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*, few causes were mentioned by *Negadras*. Most of the causes noted by reports and researchers of international organizations were not included in the stories. Concerning emphasis, except the increment on the price of oil, the other causes particularly shortage of supply were discussed in detail. The inappropriateness of accusation regarding retailers also captured attention.

The selection, emphasis and omission used to portray causes of inflation brought disparities between newspapers in giving information. Although retailers were not mentioned in researches and international organizations' reports as a cause, they were emphasized by both private and state owned print media. *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter* mentioned diverse causes

whereas *Negadras* stated few. Concerning giving emphasis and including different outlook on the same issue, dissimilarity in balancing of information has been found between the private and government newspapers. *Addis Zemen* portrayed retailers as a main cause of inflation. No information was incorporated in the stories that show the inappropriateness of accusation against retailers. *Reporter* and *Negadras*, on the other hand, incorporated information against retailers and response about the inappropriateness of accusation against retailers. In other words, the newspapers have given the option to see the point of view of retailers by including information about how the price of commodities already went up from the source, and the inflation was not something that was manipulated by retailers. This would enable the readers to notice the inappropriateness of the blame against retailers. In short, the inclusions of such information by the two newspapers helped to fairly access diverse views regarding the role of retailers in the inflation.

4.3 Moral Judgment

Evaluating causal agents (particularly retailers) and their effects in the news stories enabled to reach on moral judgments. *Addis Zemen* described inflation as a problem worsened by retailers. It described selfish interest of retailers to merely drive maximum profit by hoarding commodity and increase price. This has been compelling readers to evaluate that retailers were socially unconcerned and only minding as how to maximize profit.

The version of *Reporter's* news stories on the other hand encompassed that retailers were not the ones benefiting from the inflation as such. It also reasoned that storing of goods was normal chore of retailers which the government denounced as illegal. According to *Reporter*, retailers were rather part of the community and affected equally by the problem and not getting fair profit they were expecting with explained supply shortage besides the blame by

the government as cause. This argument of the newspaper can persuade readers to empathize with retailers.

Negadras attributed the cause of inflation mainly to shortage of supply. The price fixing measure by government on commodities were affecting seriously the income of retailers since the price with which they secure the goods from the source and the price with which they sell to consumers was almost the same. Even they were forced to sell in price which is less than the price they secure. The newspaper described that forcing retailers to sell commodities with low price with barrel of gun was as unacceptable action by any means. This implied the unfair treatment of retailers by the government. The stories of *Negadras* that highlight the accusation of retailers with alleged reason of hoarding commodities were also another unjustifiable blame against retailers.

4.4 How were Solutions of Inflation Portrayed?

Addis Zemen

Addis Zemen mentioned diverse measures taken by the government to address the inflation. Distribution of commodities with low price, lifting taxes from food related items, price fixing, punishing retailers, monetary policy, encouraging establishment of consumers associations were measures noted in the newspaper. Some measures taken against inflation were emphasized, and some others were de-emphasized. The de-emphasized measures were stated without detail and repetition.

Measure on monetary policy was mentioned once at the body part without detail. Lifting turnover tax and value added tax from food items, on the other hand, stated with the acceptance the measure got and the change it brought about. In stories reported after the lifting of tax, result of the measure was depicted with example. Food grain price increased

from 50.00 birr to 60.00 birr within few days prior to lifting tax, then following the lifting of the tax from food items, change on price of food grain was observed (*Addis Zemen*: March 22, 2008, p1).

The result of lifting of tax bears was also showed in *Addis Zemen*.

The lifting of the tax ensured the benefit of the region as well as poor and consumers of the country (*Addis Zemen*: March 25, 2008 p, 17)²⁸.

The measures on retailers were emphasized in the newspaper. The regulation and punishment applied to illegal retailers blamed for stockpiling commodities, refusing to display fixed price list and increasing price unfairly. The stories explained about the measures taken. According to the explanation, the government established a taskforce to regulate price and control illegal retailers. The taskforce was formed at all levels and effectively working all over the country. As one of the stories indicated, from the investigation conducted by the taskforce, 1,076 business organizations were found involving either in hoarding commodities, declining to display set selling price list, working without licence or working on prohibited business activities. Based on the findings of the taskforce, a news story gave accounts of measures taken.

For most of the retailers who involved in illegal activities, warning and advice is given and they are rectifying themselves from the illegal activities. The shops of 364 retailers were sealed off as they are not ready to rectify from their illegal acts. The licences of 14 retailers were revoked and while files were charged on 101 others (*Addis Zemen*: April 29, 2008, p, 2)²⁹.

Similar measures were taken against retailers accused of holding goods in other parts of the country. In Tigray, for example, retailers were arrested because of storing commodities. In such a way, more than 75 retailers who put out of sight food commodities were arrested (*Addis Zemen*: April 19, 2008 p,17). The news contained description of measures taken and

the result of the measures. The effectiveness of measure for example was shown through source from 'innocent' retailers.

Because the retailers are forced to display the price list of the commodities, there was an amazing decrease in price and this has pleased him. Displaying selling price list gives chance for the consumer to see the price and bargain with the price he /she feels is fair (*Addis Zemen*: March 22, 2008, p1)³⁰.

The news also elucidated that the public accepted the measures taken by the government and needed to be continue.

The move is bringing good result. However, with slowing down of its ambience some retailers are reverting to their usual act which calls for stronger measures. Stabilization of price that was brought about on few goods need to be practical on other goods. The control and measure taken on illegal business people should continue in sustainable manner (*Addis Zemen*: April 29, 2008 p, 2)³¹.

The news also incorporated the legal ground of the regulation that forces retailers to display their selling price of commodities in a clear manner based on the proclamation number 300/29/1995 (*Addis Zemen*: March 29, 2008 p,1).

The distribution of wheat and other commodities with low price was another measure which was highlighted. The distribution of wheat was made through *kebele* administration shops whereas the other commodities have been distributed through Merchandise and Wholesale & Import Trade Enterprise (MEWIT) and government agricultural firms. According to the stories the distribution was takes place for two reasons - to solve the shortage of supply and subsidize low income section of the society as well as to get rid of retailers from market chain as they are liable for the price hick. In one of the news which lay blame on retailers for price increase on soap, distribution of the soap for consumers and associations directly was given as a solution.

Soap producers have finalized preparation to sell with factory price for consumer associations, MEWIT, *kebele* shops, staff working in governmental and private organizations (*Addis Zemen*: March 15, 2008, p1)³².

The measure taken to improve shortage of supply through distribution was described with the result it brought about. As one of the news indicated, the price of processed food products decreased because the factories could get wheat from government agricultural firms (*Addis Zemen*: July 29, 2008 p,1) .

In addition, enhancing productivity was mentioned as the only sustainable solution to address problem of inflation in the lead in one of the stories and utilizing of the *meher* (main crop season) properly and being cooperate with relevant stockholders are mentioned as activity that should be implemented (*Addis Zemen*: June 28, 2008,p 1).

Addis Zemen portrayed government measures as effective. No limitation of the measures was included in the news. Regarding the presentation of measures as faultless the journalist said,

We reported on the stand of government about the issue and the measures taken to control inflation. The consequence of the measures requires expertise explanation. However, the experts capable of giving this explanation are in polarized position. Those groups who support the ruling party said one thing and those opposing said another. However, we cannot even get any of them. The banks were also not clear about the monetary condition of the country. (Journalist A: *Addis Zemen*)

In addition to informing the public about what the government was doing and how effective the measures were, the newspaper recommended readers how to protect themselves from unfair price and where they can get commodities with low price.

Concerning the recommendation, the journalist said:

We directed the consumer where to get the required commodities. We gave coverage to issues pertaining to calming down the consumers such as formation of

consumer associations and not rushing to buy goods with a fear that it will continue going up (Journalist B: *Addis Zemen*).

Both journalists of *Addis Zemen* said no information was omitted regarding inflation intentionally. One of the journalists, however, noted that some necessary information might not have been included because the expertise was not helpful in giving information. The other journalist blamed experts who were reluctant to give information about the negative consequences of inflation. Though the blame was against expertise, Journalist A admitted that the journalists were expected to follow the principles of newspaper, and this may determine the way of presentation.

Reporter

Reporter mentioned what measures were taken to stabilize inflation. Distribution of commodities, restriction on money borrowed from bank, subsidizing imported goods, regulating and punishing retailers were measures cited in *Reporter*. Some of the measures were mentioned once without any detail in the body part.

The amount of money borrowed from banks to fill shortfall of budget was restricted to 2.7% of the national income and the government's credit need to be implemented in line with plan (*Reporter*: March 19, 2008, p1)³³.

Improving supply through productivity and subsidizing oil, wheat and cement were presented in similar fashion. On the other hand, measures regarding lifting tax from food items were emphasized. The information about lifting of tax and import of commodities were stated in intro, body and background part in detail. The stories included facts about the importance of taking such measures, the amount of money the government lost and the amount of commodity the government imported. In contrast to *Addis Zemen* that noted only the positive impact of the measures, *Reporter* included the consequences of those

measures which was undesirable, in the same story as well as in the follow up stories. This information was stated in the lead with repetition and detail. The news indicated that measures on monetary policy, export restriction on few types of food grains, direct and indirect subsidy were ineffective.

Regarding to measures on monetary policy, the news explained why it didn't work. According to one of the news, the structure of the economy is linked with traditional farming and change in interest rate would not bring much change to the sector. Hence, the relation between monetary policy and price of food grain is minimal so using monetary policy would not be feasible to address the inflation (*Reporter*: April 9 ,2008, p, 9).

The other news also pointed out the measures including fixing price, regulating import and export undertakings can affect economic growth and retard development (*Reporter*: April 13, 2008, p, 11).

The measure taken against retailers received attention in *Reporter*. The information containing measures taken against retailers was mentioned repeatedly. It has been also given important place-lead in the news.

In Gonder town 10 retailers were sentenced to imprisonment and fined after found guilty of market instability by storing various food products in their warehouse (*Reporter*: March 23, 2008, p, 33)³⁴.

There was disparity between *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter* newspapers towards portraying the result of measures taken against retailers. The measure taken by the government was described as effective in *Addis Zemen* while *Reporter* portrayed it as ineffective. The information about ineffectiveness of measures on retailers placed in the lead with repetition and detail. According to the news, the measure on retailers exacerbated the situation (*Reporter*, May 7 2008, May 11 2008).

Though the government established a taskforce, the price of food grain and food items keep on increasing. ... The price of *teff* was 500 birr when the taskforce was established, now it costs 760 birr and this is shocking (*Reporter*: May,11 2008, p2)³⁵.

Economic development was the only solution recommended by the newspaper. According to *Reporter* the problem of inflation will be addressed through economic development (March 18, 2008). Regarding providing recommendations for readers, disparity has been found between *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*. Establishing consumer associations and purchasing commodities from government supply channels were listed as solutions by *Addis Zemen*. *Reporter* on the other hand did not give any recommendations to its audiences. One of the journalists said that the recommendations which were given by government couldn't solve the problem. This journalist said it would be not fair for the newspaper to recommend about the issue it has no knowledge about. This journalist said it would be not fair for the newspaper to recommend about the issue it has no knowledge about.

Why would I try to frame an issue to the public which I have no authority to do and which I have no knowledge to do so. It is not honest and ethical. Because why would I tell the public that ...if you stick to the government supply channels, all your problems regarding price and cost of living will go down. This is not true. The robust and correct policies will be the one which brings lowest inflation without compromising growth too much. The solution is thus economic growth (Journalist C: *Reporter*).

Reporter included measures with their undesirable effect. Speaking about selection of information, both of the journalists of *Reporter* said the newspaper included all information that should be included. They argued since it is independent media there is no limitation in what the journalists include in their stories. In addition, most reporters covering the issue of

inflation have their background in business and economics. Regarding the focus given for ineffectiveness of measures taken to lessen the impact of inflation, the journalist said

We can show the limitation of the measures taken by the government and this is one of duties of the newspaper. (Journalist D: *Reporter*).

Negadras

Different from *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*, the number of measures listed in *Negadras* was minimal. The distribution of wheat, price fixing, and regulation the market were the measures stated in the news stories of the newspaper. All the measures mentioned were stated with their limitations.

We toured and observed few of the 80 outlets of MEWIT in ten sub cities and witnessed they are selling 20 liters of cooking oil to an individual by inquiring Kebele identity card as condition. We approached two individuals, one who is returning from the outlets and commented that MEWIT is focusing on selling commodities that are not in demand and have no major price difference from the market (*Negadras*: March 14, 2008, p 9)³⁶.

The distribution of wheat was also described as ineffective. According to one of the stories, the distribution was benefiting retailers and individuals who work in distribution outlets at *kebele* administration instead of helping low income families. In spite of selling to households with low income, the wheat was distributed to youngsters who resell it to retailers and this worsens the life condition of the poor people. The other story showed some individuals who work in the distribution get involved in defrauding thousands of quintal of wheat (*Negadras*: August 23 2000, p2).

The intention of National Bank of Ethiopia in taking measures to help address the problem was another issue mentioned by news of *Negadras*. The report included the impact of the measure.

The measure will minimize the lending capacity of banks and increase their expenditure that will lead them to bankruptcy (*Negadras*: March 21, 2008 p,1)³⁷.

Like *Reporter*, both the measure taken against retailers and its limitation were included in the stories of *Negadras*. Accordingly, arrest and sealing off shops when retailers found selling commodities beyond the fixed price were among the measures taken. For example, one of the stories said 10 shops of retailers who were accused of selling pepper over the fixed price set (*Reporter*: March 21, 2008 p17).

Unlike *Addis Zemen*, the news in *Negadras* stressed the inappropriateness of the measures rather than the benefit they brought. The news included views of experts from the field of economics that highlight forcing retailers to follow fixed price system with barrel of gun is not proper by any standard. The newspaper also showed how the measures taken were contradicting with the late Primer's own statement that goes "...We do not use force to control inflation". The news also incorporated stance of opposition political parties that signify the measure taken by the government has implication for the ruling party which will enable to gain political benefit in getting city dwellers vote for it in the next election (*Negadras*: April 4, 2008 p1).

According to the interview with the journalist of *Negadras*, there is nothing the newspaper is shying away from writing on the issue unless there is shortage of space and information. In addition the explanation by the journalist of *Negadras* as to why the newspaper focused on the ineffectiveness of measures taken against retailers found to be different from *Addis Zemen*'s description.

The government fixed price on certain commodities. The retailers were unable to supply those goods with the price cap. As a result certain commodities disappeared from the market. The retailers were labelled with humiliating expression such as, 'exploiters' and 'greedy'. If there is shortage of supply, there will be a rise in price.

We argued with our news analysis that boosting of supply is the solution rather than restricting retailers. The government squeezed the retailers with the measures taken. There was no way to get loan from the bank and on the other hand it was blaming the retailers for the shortage of supply. The measures taken by the government was generally spontaneous. The regulation put in place to solve the problem could not be effective for more than two months. Our newspaper often recommended its stance to address the problem which is increasing agricultural productivity and economic development” (Journalist D: *Negadras*).

Regarding mentioning measures taken to address the inflation, *Addis Zemen* applied the same technique used to describe causes of inflation. Some measures get emphasized while others are defocused. The defocused measures were mentioned*** at the body part without details. The focused measures, on the other hand, stated in the lead, and explained with details in the body of the news stories. Particularly the measures taken against retailers were emphasized. The stories elucidated information of effectiveness of the measures, acceptance by the public and appropriateness of the measures. The recommendations explicit for the newspaper readers were also described the appropriateness of the measures taken by the government. Concerning the consequence of measures, the newspaper gave coverage to the positive outcomes of the measures taken by the government, but not what these measures may bring in the long run to the economy. Therefore, it can be said that the newspaper has limitation in providing facts about negative side of government measures and this implies that the newspaper advances only the government’s point of view.

Reporter included information on what the government was doing to stabilize inflation and unlike *Addis Zemen*, it included the negative outcomes of the measures in the long run. The description of outcome of measures against retailers was different from that of *Addis Zemen*. *Addis Zemen* reported that, measure pertinent to regulating price had lowered the price of some commodities. However, *Reporter* reported that the price of commodities increased after the measures were applied.

Negadras also differed from *Addis Zemen* in portraying government measures. The information that demonstrated the problem of the distribution of some commodities, the possible impact of monetary policy on the banks, the inappropriateness of imposed regulation on retailers were examples included in the stories to depict the ineffectiveness. However similar to *Addis Zemen* the long run impact of the measures taken by government on the country's economy was not included in the story.

Through inclusion, emphasis and exclusion of information the newspapers defined the problem, causes of problem and solutions. As the result, *Addis Zemen* defined inflation as a problem worsened intentionally by retailers to unfairly accumulate wealth. Thus, continuous regulation and punishment as well as encouraging establishment of consumers association were put forth as solutions. *Reporter*, on the other hand, defined inflation as dramatic phenomenon which was caused by different factors particularly because of the gap between supply and demand. Thus, the solution would be advancing economic development. *Negadras* attributed the cause to different causes mainly shortages in agricultural produce so increasing production and productivity would be the way out.

4.5 Source Usage of the Newspapers

Source is important in news reporting. In framing of news, sources has important place. Different sources are used in the newspapers. According to the analysis, most of these sources are quoted from meetings, press conference, reports and other occasions in all the three newspapers. Though there is a similarity in quoting, the source usage of newspapers is different. It is better to looks into the source usage of each newspaper as follows.

Addis Zemen used government officials, consumers and retailers as sources of information. The newspaper referred to retailers to describe how government measures on retailers were effective. For that particular story, all the sources were retailers who believe illegal retailers are the source of problem and the measure taken by the government brought change in lowering of price of food grain. Consumers are also used as sources in a single story to depict the effectiveness of the measure. Except these two stories, all the remaining stories used government officials. The newspaper did not use economist, researches, researchers, international organizations, opposition parties, central statistical agency or any other report.

Regarding why the newspaper relay on government source, one of the journalist said:

Intellectuals pertinent to the field reluctant to speak in media as they feel they are considered as supporters of the government and at same time when they give their views to the private media they would be associated with the opposition parties. It is the National Bank of Ethiopia which is relevant body to give information on monetary issue of the country, nonetheless it is virtually impossible to get information from it (Journalist B: *Addis Zemen*).

Reporter on the other hand used economists, international organizations, central statistical reports, retailers, consumers, government officials, factory owners, opposition political parties, producers and distributors as a source of information. In the newspaper, two or more sources who have different view are used in a single story.

Similar to *Reporter*, *Negadras* used different sources. The newspaper used economists, private banks, consumers, producers, government officials, retailers, ranchers, Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations, Central Statistical Agency, political parties and MEWIT as a source of information. Researchers, research of international organizations like

IMF is not used as a source. Like *Reporter*, *Negadras* used two and more sources who have opposing view in a single story.

In conclusion, *Addis Zemen* relied on government officials to gather information whereas, *Reporter* and *Negadras* used diverse sources for their news that covered inflation. In this regard, the finding is similar to what Ashenafi found in 2011. Ashenafi (2011) in his thesis *The Framing of Political Parties by the Ethiopian Print Media in the 2010 Parliamentary Election*, found that *Addis Zemen* used government officials and the private newspapers used opposition parties as a source. Though *Addis Zemen* journalists said that they depend on government officials because of expertises unwillingness, the newspaper did not use reports, researches, and as additional sources. As Gitlin (1980) said, the tendency of journalists to believe and take solely official sources than those who challenges make it easy for the powerful to influence journalistic work. Hence, depending only on government sources or on specific sources can reduce the opportunity of audiences to get other's view. It also creates opportunity to the powerful who want to influence public opinion by their ideologies through media.

Chapter Five

Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this research was to identify how Ethiopian print media framed inflation. The researcher used textual analysis as a technique to conduct the study. The findings revealed that the newspapers have framed their news stories mainly by selecting which facts to include or exclude, emphasize or de-emphasize as well as by positioning the information within the news stories. This chapter provides summary and conclusion of the study.

A subject of public concern can be presented in diverse ways and the difference in presentation shape individuals' opinion towards the issue. As inflation is important economic issue, media is interested on how the issue has to be presented. Hence, this study tried to find out how print media in Ethiopia framed inflation during the period from March 2008 to February 2009.

The analysis of framing of inflation in the selected newspapers was made based on Entman's(1993, p52) conceptualization of framing theory which says "... to frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and /or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52).

Qualitative approach was used to address the research questions of how the problem, its causes, and treatment recommendations were defined in the selected newspapers reports about inflation. From among the print media in Ethiopia, *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Negadras* newspapers were selected based on amount of circulation, use of Amharic language

and coverage of economic issue. Textual analysis was used as techniques of analysis on the data gathered from news text and in-depth interview.

This study found out that because of inclusion, emphasis and exclusion of information, the newspapers differed in framing inflation. *Addis Zemen* did not include the comments or opinions of retailers about accusation made against them and the weak sides of measures taken by the government. In contrast, *Reporter* and *Negadras* included information that reveals the inappropriateness of accusation and the weak sides of measures taken by the government. As a result, *Addis Zemen* framed inflation in such a way that it was a problem caused and worsened intentionally by retailers, who unfairly accumulated wealth. It recommended continues regulation and punishment as well as encouraging establishment of consumers association as solution. *Reporter*, on the other hand, defined inflation as dramatic phenomenon which came about by different causes especially because of the gap between supply and demand so the solution would be prudent economic development. *Negadras* defined inflation as a problem increases at the alarming rate happened because of different reasons particularly because of shortage in agricultural product. Increasing production and productivity is the solution it gave to solve the problem.

According to Entman's 1993 definition the presence or absence of sources manifest the existence of frames. Similarly Tuing and Hassim (2009) noted, media can manipulate its news framing by using sources who have the same point of view with its agenda. Concerning usage of sources, dissimilarity has been found between the private and government newspapers. *Addis Zemen* utilized few verities of sources as an input. Except in two stories, all stories quoted government officials. *Reporter* and *Negadras* on the other hand, utilised diverse sources. Because they used different sources, the readers of the newspapers able to

access to detail and diverse information which would help to understand about the issue better instead of getting one-sided view.

Journalists *Addis Zemen* explained why they framed the stories in such the way they did. One such reason was the unwillingness of important sources to give analysis on issue mainly emanated from fear of association with political parties. Covering the issue of inflation by journalist without having deeper understanding is more likely to misinform the public. For *Reporter*, freedom on the part of the journalists to cover issues without imposition and having background in economics and business education were the grounds for the framing to come out as such. Lastly, for *Negadras* it was mainly because of the focus of the newspaper on business and economy which compelled it to side with business firms.

The presence or absence of certain words and phrases, the usage of proverbs and metaphors are considered as framing devices. *Addis Zemen* employed words (adjectives) blaming retailers with words and phrases such as ‘illegal’, ‘greedy’ and ‘profit amassing’. In addition to ‘greedy’ and ‘illegal’ *Reporter* employed words such as ‘horrible’ and ‘shocking’ to magnify extent of inflation. All the three newspapers used examples to highlight their important points that required attention. In addition, sentences which is essential in framing and which provide the reinforcing aggregate of facts or judgments as Entman (1993) noted were used to magnify important points. *Addis Zemen* portrayed retailers as a cause and catalyst of inflation. It also described government measures as effective. To highlight these points the newspaper included sentences which provide thematically reinforcing aggregate of facts. *Reporter* and *Negadras* also used such sentences to illustrate the inappropriateness of accusation against retailers and the limitations of measures.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- *Addis Zemen* relied on government officials. This reduced readers' opportunity to diverse views on the topic. Therefore, it needs to entertain diverse sources who have different outlook about the same issue. In addition, since experts' explanation is important for economic issues like inflation, journalists should use them as source as much and often as possible.
- Non-human sources like researches or reports are essential in the process of news gathering and reporting too. So it is prudent to refer to documents and reports related to the issue.
- The press needs to use at least two sources in news story in order to balance and verify information offered from sources.
- It is better to assign journalists who are trained or have understanding of relevant economic issues at least for Economy pages so that they could give an in-depth and knowledge based reports.
- The stories on both the government and private newspapers need to be attractive. Incorporating human face in news stories is one way that can captures readers' attention. Thus the newspapers should use human face in their stories.
- Media is expected to serve as a bridge. Providing information that can show the impact of a problem on individuals' and societies is important. Hence, the media should pay attention to include the impact of an issue on different level.
- The press has to cover drawbacks or limitations of measures. This gives more information about the issue for the public as well as helps policy makers to improve their regulations or policies.

- The knowledge gap experienced by reporters on issue of inflation has contributed for the incompleteness of information on the issue. The lack on the part of the reporters to have basic understanding of economic issues contributed for the other failure to show the real cause of inflation and inform the solution, which forced the audience to see inflation from the polarized direction - the perspective from the private media (*Reporter* and *Negadras*) on one hand and *Addis Zemen* on the other. Thus, journalists need to have at least some basic background knowledge and familiarity with the subject for a knowledge based reporting not to mislead the public to a wrong direction.

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Appendix- A

List of key informants

Informant	Position	Newspaper
1 Ato Getachew Senaye (male)	Deputy Editor in Chief	<i>Addis Zemen</i>
2 Ato Fekadu Mola (male)	Economy and Politics page Editor	<i>Addis Zemen</i>
3 Ato Asrate Seyome (male)	Senior Editor	<i>Reporter</i>
4 Ato Berhanu Fekadu (male)	Senior Editor and Economic Page Editor	<i>Reporter</i>
5 Metasebeya Kasaye(female)	Senior Editor	<i>Negadras</i>
6 Ato Ayalew Asres (male)	Editor in chief	<i>Negadras</i>

Appendix B

Interview questions for journalists and editors

1. What is your attitude towards inflation in general?
2. Do you think your reports had any influence on the readers?
3. How do you get response from readers?
4. What were the central ideas of your stories?
5. Who were the dominant sources in your reports about inflation?
6. Did you use all possible sources?
7. If you didn't use what was the reason?
8. Did you intentionally shape or organize the stories in certain way?
9. What factors affected your framing of your stories?
10. What do you think were the causes of inflation?
11. Why you focused on certain causes and deemphasize others?
12. Why most of the stories lack interpretation of causes?
13. What do you think were the effects of inflation?
14. Why didn't include effects of inflation in different level? (individual, firm and country)
15. Who do you think was responsible in solving the problem?
16. What do you think were the solutions for inflation?
17. What were the messages of your stories?
18. Do you think including human face is important?
19. Did you use human interest frame? If not why?
20. The measures taken to solve problem of inflation were described as faultless (*Addis Zemen*. Why?
21. Why didn't you include different opinions?

22. Did you include all necessary facts? If not why?

23. Did you omit facts intentionally?

Appendix C

The Amharic version of extracts which were used as example in chapter four.

አዲስ ዘመን

የቤኒሻንጉል ክልል ህዝብ የተጀመረውን ልማት ቀጣይነት ለማረጋገጥ በቁርጠኝነት በመንቀሳቀስ ላይ እያለ የተከሰተው የዋጋ ግሽበት ማነቆ እንደነበር ጠቁሟል።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 16 2000 ገፅ 17)¹

የምርት አቅርቦቱ ቀድሞም ቢሆን የቀነሰ እንዳልነበረ አመልክተው ነገር ግን ህገወጥ ነጋዴዎች በሚፈጥሩት ውዥምብር የምርቶች ዋጋ መጠን በሚያስገርም መጠን ሲጨምር እንደነበር ጠቁመዋል።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 13 2000 ገፅ 1)²

ሪፖርተር

በአሁኑ ሰዓት ያለው የዋጋ ንረት አስደንጋጭ ሂደቱም አስፈሪ ነው።(ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 13፣ 2000 ገፅ 11)³

አዲስ አበባ እህል ነጋዴዎች ማህበር እየታየ ያለውን የዋጋ ንረት ደላሎች የሚፈጥሩት ማዕበል ብሎታል። (ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 11 2000 ገፅ 2)⁴

የዋጋው ለውጥ ካለፈው ሳምንት ጀምሮ በየዕለቱ እየጨመረ መጥቶ በአንድ ሳምንት ልዩነት ውስጥ ብቻ ከ50 ብር በላይ ጭማሪ አሳይቷል። በነዚህ ገበያዎች ያነጋገርናቸው የጤፍ ነጋዴዎች እንደገለጡልን ከሶስት ሳምንት በፊት አንደኛ ደረጃ የሚባለው ጤፍ ከ700 እስከ 730 ይሸጥ የነበረ ሲሆን በዚህ የጊዜ ልዩነት ውስጥ ይህን ያህል ጭማሪ ሲያሳይና አንድ ኩንታል ጤፍ 800 ብር ሲሸጡ የመጀመሪያ ጊዜያቸው ነው።(ሪፖርተር፣ ሚያዝያ 29 2000 ገፅ 10)⁵

ስድስት አባላት ያሉት ቤተሰብ እንደሚያስተዳድሩ የገለጹት አቶ በቀለ የአሁኑ ዘመን ከኖሩበት ዘመን ሁሉ እንደከፋቸው ይናገራሉ። (ሪፖርተር፣ ነሀሴ 11 2000 ገፅ 1)⁶

ባለቤታቸው በሞት በመለየታቸው ምክንያት ሁለት ልጆችና ሶስት የልጅ ልጆቻቸውን የሚያስተዳድሩት ወይዘሮ ሙናሽ ታየ የ62 ዓመት አዛውንት፣ በህይወታቸው ለመጀመሪያ ጊዜ በእርዳታ የሰንዴ ግዢ መፈጸማቸውንና ልጆቻቸውንም የሰንዴ እንጀራ ማብላት መጀመራቸውን ይገልጻሉ። “በወር የማገኛት ጡረታ 200ብር ነች ጤፍ መግዛት የማይታሰብ ነው። የቤት ኪራይ ስለሌለብኝ እንጂ እንዴት መኖር እችላለሁ ; የልጆቼን አይን ሳይ የምገባበት ይጠፋብኛል። በ77 ድርቅ ገባ ተብሎ እንኳን እንዲህ አልተቸገርኩም ነበር።” (ሪፖርተር፣ ነሀሴ 11 2000 ገፅ 1)⁷

የሚበላው ያጣ ህዝብ መሪዎቹን ሊበላ ይችላል።(ሪፖርተር መጋቢት 10፣ 2000፣ ገፅ 1)⁸

የሰኢድ የወር ገቢ ከ150- 210 ብር ይደርሳል ሰይድ ያሉበትን ወጪዎች ሲዘረዝርም የብት ኪራይ(ከታላቅ ወንድሙና እንደሱ በሊስትሮነት ስራ ከተሰማራው አማን ጋር ነው ተከራቶ የሚኖረው) የማታ ትምህርት ክፍያ የምግብ ወጪ ይገኙበታል። ... ከቅርብ ጊዜ ወዲህ እቤታቸው ውስጥ እንጀራ ገዝተው ለመብላት እንኳን እንዳልቻሉና ለአንድ ደረቅ እንጀራ ሁለት ብርና ከዚያ በላይ ማውጣት እንደሚከብድ ገልጾ በቀን ከአንድ ጊዜ በላይ የማይበሉባቸው ጊዜያት እንደሚበዙ ይገልጻል።(ሪፖርተር፣ ነሀሴ 11፣ 2000 ገፅ 1)⁹

ችግሩ በአለም አቀፍ ሁኔታ ከኢኮኖሚ ችግርነት አልፎ ወደ ማህበረሰብና ፖለቲካዊ ቀውስነት እያመራ መሆኑንና ፡ በእኛ ሀገር እየታየ ያለው ገደብ ያጣ ችግር ወደ ሁለንተናዊ ቀውስ ሊያስባን ይችላል ሲል የኢትዮጵያ ዲሞክራሲ ፓርቲ ስጋቱን ገልጿል።(ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 27 2000 ገፅ 2)¹⁰

ነጋድራስ

ካለፉት ሶስት ዓመታት ወዲህ በከፍተኛ ፍጥነት እየጨመረ የመጣውን የዋጋ ግሽበት ለማረጋጋት በእህል ዋጋ ላይ አዲስ የዋጋ ተመን ወቷል።(ነጋድራስ መጋቢት 26 2000፣ ገፅ1)¹¹

በምግብ እህል ላይ እየጨመረ ያለው የዋጋ ንረት እንኳን ዝቅተኛ ገቢ ያለውን ቀርቶ ከፍተኛውን ገቢ የሚያገኙትንም በጣም እንደሚያስቸግራቸው ገልጸዋል።(ነጋድራስ፣ ግንቦት 8 2000 ገፅ 3)¹²

የወተት ዋጋ በዚሁ ሁኔታ ከቀጠለ መካከለኛ ገቢ ያለው የከተማ ነዋሪ በተለይ ህጻናት ልጆቹን ወተት ለማጠጣት ወደማይችልበታ ደረጃ እንደሚደርስ ነዋሪዎች አስረድተዋል።(ነጋድራስ ሀምሌ 25 2000 ገፅ 8)¹³

አዲስ ዘመን

በአሁኑ ጊዜ የአለም አቀፍ የነዳጅ ዋጋ መጨመርን ተከታሎ የሽቀጦች ዋጋ ጭማሪ እየተስተዋለ መሆኑን ጠቅሰው...(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 6 2000፣ ገፅ 1)¹⁴

በዓለም ገበያ የታየው የዋጋ ግሽበት ፣ ከግብርና እድገት ጋር ተያይዞ የገጠሩ ሕብረተሰብ ገቢ መጨመር፣ የግብርና ግብይት ስርዓት ለውጥ ማሳየትና በከተሞች የኮንስትራክሽን ዕቃዎች መናር ተጠቃሽ ምክንያት ናቸው። (አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 13 2000 ገፅ 1)¹⁵

በእህል ዋጋ ላይ የዋጋ ንረት የፈጠሩት ስግብግብ ነጋዴዎች መሆናቸውን የመሳለሚያ እህል በረንዳ ነጋዴዎች አመለከቱ።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 13 2000፣ገፅ 1)¹⁶

ስማቸው እንዳይገለጽ የጠየቁ የቅባት እህሎች ነጋዴ በበኩላቸው የምርት አቅርቦቱ ቀድሞም ቢሆን የቀነሰ እንዳልነበረ አመልክተው ፣ ነገር ግን ህገወጥ ነጋዴዎች በሚፈጥሩት ውዥምብር የምርቶች ዋጋ መጠን በሚያስገርም መጠን ሲጨምር እንደነበር ጠቁመዋል።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 13 2000 ገፅ 1)¹⁷

አንዳንድ ስግብግብ ነጋዴዎች አግባብ የሌለው ትርፍ ለምግኘት በሚንቀሳቀስበት ወቅት በየደረጃው በተቋቋመው ግብረ ሀይሎች ህጋዊ እርምጃ እየተወሰደ ይገኛል።በተለይም የምግብ እህሎች፣ዘይት፣ ሳሙናና ሌሎች መሰረታዊ የሆኑ ሸቀጦች ከሚፈቀደው መጠን በላይ በመጋዘን ደብቀው የነበሩ ነጋዴዎችን ሕጋዊ በሆነ አሰራር በማሸግ ለህግ የማቅረብ ስራ እየሰራ ነው።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ ሚያዚያ 11 2000 ገፅ 17)¹⁸

ሪፖርተር

የነዳጅና የእህል ዋጋ መጨመር፣ የምግብ እርዳታ መቀነስና ማቆም በምግብ እህል ራሳችንን ባለመቻላችን ወደ ሀገር ውስጥ በግብር የሚገባ ምርት በአንዳንድ ሀገሮች በመቆሙና ለባዮፊውል አገልግሎት በመዋሉ የዋጋ ንረቱ እየተባባሰ መምጣቱን ተናግረዋል።(ሪፖርተር፣ ሚያዝያ 26 2000 ገፅ 11)¹⁹

በአሁኑ ሰዓት ያለው የዋጋ ንረት የምግብ ምርቶች ፍላጎትና አቅርቦት ባለመጣጣሙ የመጣ በመሆኑ ምርታማነትን በምሳደግ በትኩረት መስራት ያስፈልጋል። (ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 17፣ 2000፣ ገፅ10)²⁰

በሰዓታት ውስጥ በምርቱ ላይ ምንም ዓይነት ለውጥ ሳይኖር አርቴፊሻል አጥረት በመፍጠር በዋጋ ላይ ለውጥ የሚያደርጉት ነጋዴዎችን የንግዱ ህብረተሰብ ስለሚያውቃቸው ሊቆጣጠርና ትኩረት ሰጥቶ ሊለያቸው ይገባል ... በአጭር ለመክበር የሚፈልጉ አላስፈላጊ ውዥምብር የሚፈጥሩ ነጋዴዎችን የንግዱ ማህበረሰብ ሊቆጣጠራቸው ይገባል ::(ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 26 2000፣ ገፅ፣ 10)²¹

ንግድ ነጋዴ ጨምሮ ለመሸጥ ሸማች ቀንሶ ለመግዛት በሚደረግ ድርድር የሚካሄድ በመሆኑ በሀዘኔታ የሚካሄድ ሳይሆን የሁለት ወገን ውሳኔ የሚጠይቅ መሆኑን ... የንግዱ ክፍለ ኢኮኖሚ የዋጋ ንረት ላይ ተጽዕኖ የሚፈጥረው ጥቂት ነጋዴዎች ገበያን ሲቆጣጠሩ እንደሆነ ሆኖም ብዙ ነጋዴዎች መኖራቸውን ገልጸው በአዲስ አበባ ብቻ ከ2000 በላይ የአህል ነጋዴ ወፍጮ ቤትና አቅራቢዎች መኖራቸውን ጠቁመዋል::(ሪፖርተር ሚያዚያ 26፣ 2000፣ ገፅ 10)²²

እኛ ራሳችንን እየከበደን ነው:: ህብረተሰቡ የኛንም ችግር መረዳት አለበት:: የዋጋ ለውጡ የመጣው ከዋናው ቦታ ስለሆነ በእኛ ማማረሩ ተገቢ አይደለም::(ሪፖርተር፣ ሚያዚያ 29 2000 ገፅ 10)²³

ነጋድራስ

በአሁኑ ወቅት የዘይት ዋጋ በአለም አቀፍ ደረጃ በመጨመሩ ምክንያት ከመጋቢት 1 ቀን ጀምሮ በአንድ ሊትር ዘይት ዋጋ ላይ አንድ ብር ከ95 ሳንቲም ጭማሪ ለማድረግ ተገዷል::(ነጋድራስ፣ መጋቢት 5 2000 ገፅ 9)²⁴

ገበሬው በአሁኑ ሰዓት በእጁ ላይ ምንም ምርት የለው (ነጋድራስ ግንቦት 8፣ 2000፣ ገፅ3)25

በልብስና በገላ ሳሙና ላይ የዋጋ ንረት የፈጠሩት ነጋዴዎች እንደሆኑ የሳሙና አምራቶቻችንና አከፋፋዮች አስታወቁ:: (ነጋድራስ 12 2000 ፣ገፅ 17)²⁶

ነጋዴ በውድ ገዝቶ ነው የሚሸጠው ነጋዴው ደግሞ ማትረፍ አለበት ነጋዴው ያልገዛበትን ዋጋ ሊሸጥ አይችልም ገበሬው 600 ብር ይሸጣል :: እኛ ከዚያ በላይ 50-60 ብር አትርፈን እንሸጣለን:: ይህ ደግሞ ያለ ነው:: መንግስት መጀመሪያ ገበሬውን ይመርምር::(ነጋድራስ መጋቢት 12 2000 ገፅ 3)²⁷

አዲስ ዘመን

የታክሶቹ መነሳት የክልሉን ብሎም የሀገሪቱን ድህና ሸማች ህብረተሰብ ጥቅም ያስከበረ ነው::(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 16 2000 ገፅ 17)²⁸

በነዚህ ህገወጥ ተግባሮች ላይ ለተሰማሩት አብዛኛዎቹ ነጋዴዎች ምክርና ማስጠንቀቂያ ተሰጥቷቸው የእርምት እርምጃ እንዲወስዱ የተደረገ መሆኑን ...በምክርና ማስጠንቀቂያ ያልታረሙ 364 ነጋዴዎች መደብሮቻቸው እንዲታሸጉ የ14ቱ ንግድ ፍቃድ መሰረዙን እንዲሁም 101 ላይ ክስ መመስረቱን አስታውቀዋል::(አዲስ ዘመን፣ ሚያዚያ 21 2000፣ ገፅ 2)²⁹

ነጋዴዎች የዋጋ ዝርዝር በግልጽ ጽፈው እንዲለጥፉ መደረጉ በዚህም በሚያስገርም ሁኔታ የዋጋ መቀነስ መከሰቱ እንዳስደሰተው ገልጾ ገዥው የተለጠፈውን ዋጋ አይቶ ተከራክሮና በመሰለው መንገድ ወስኖ እንዲገዛ ዕድል አግኝቷል::(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 13 2000 ገፅ 1)³⁰

የተጀመረው እንቅስቃሴ ጥሩ ውጤት እያስገኘ እንደነበር አስረድተው እንቅስቃሴው አሁን ቀዝቀዝ በማለቱ አንዳንድ ነጋዴዎች ህገወጥ ትርፍ ለማጋበስ ስራቸውን መጀመራቸው ቁጥጥሩ ጠበቅ እንዲል ጠይቀዋል::... በተወሰኑ የምርት

አይነቶች ላይ የታየው የዋጋ መቀነስ በሌሎችም ምርቶች ላይ ተግባራዊ እንዲሆን የዋጋ ማረጋገጫ ስራ ተጠናክሮ መቀጠል እንዳለበት ጠቁመው በህገወጥ ነጋዴዎች ላይ የሚደረገው ቁጥጥርና እርምጃ ዘላቂ በሆነ ሁኔታ ሊቀጥል ይገባል። (አዲስ ዘመን፣ ሚያዚያ 21 2000፣ ገፅ 2)³¹

የሳሙና አምራቾች ለተደራጁ የሽማቾች ማህበራት፣ ለጅንኦች፣ ለቀበሌ ሱቆች፣ መንግስታዊና መንግስታዊ ላልሆኑ ድርጅቶች ውስጥ ለሚሰሩ ሰራተኞች ተደራጅተው ለሚመጡ ወገኖች በፋብሪካ ዋጋ ለመሸጥ መዘጋጀታቸውን አመልክተዋል።(አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 6 2000 ገፅ 1)³²

ሪፖርተር

መንግስት ለበጀት ማሟያ ብሎ ከባንክ የሚበደረው ገንዘብ ከብሄራዊ ገቢው 2.7 ብቻ እንዲሆን ተደርጓል። የመንግስት ብድር በተቀመጠው እቅድ መሰረት ብቻ እየተፈጸመ ነው።(ሪፖርተር፣ መጋቢት 10፣ 2000፣ ገፅ 1)³³

በጎንደር ከተማ በህገወጥ መንገድ የተለያዩ የምግብ ፍጆታዎችን በመጋዘናቸው በመደበኛ የገበያ አለመረጋጋት ፈጥረዋል ተብለው ክስ የተመሰረተባቸው 10 ነጋዴዎች በአስራትና በገንዘብ ተቀጡ።(ሪፖርተር፣ መጋቢት 14 2000፣ ገፅ 33)³⁴

መንግስት ህገወጥ ነጋዴዎች ለመቆጣጠር ግብረ ሀይል ቢያቋቁምም የአህልና የተለያዩ የምግብ ሸቀጦች ዋጋ እያሻቀበ መሆኑ ተጠቆመ።(ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 3፣ 2000፣ ገፅ 2)³⁵

ነጋዴራሰ

ጅንኦች በአስሩ ክፍለ ከተሞች ውስጥ ካሉት 80 የሽያጭ መደብሮች ውስጥ ጥቂቶቹን ተዘዋውረን በተመለከትንበት ወቅት 20 ሊትር የሚይዘውን ዘይት ለአንድ ግለሰብ በቀበሌ መታወቂያ ደብተር አማካኝነት ሲሸጡ ለማየት ችለናል። :... ግዢ ፈጽመው ያገኘናቸውንና የፈለጉትን ዕቃ ባለማግኘታቸው ባዶ እጃቸውን ሲመለሱ ያጋጠሙንን ሁለት ግለሰቦች ...እንደገለጹት ድርጅቱ የሚያከናውነው ሽያጭ በአብዛኛው የሚያተኩረው ብዙም ተፈላጊነትና ከገበያው ጋር ብዙም የዋጋ ለውጥ በሌላቸው ዕቃዎች ላይ ነው።(ነጋዴራሰ፣ መጋቢት 5 2000፣ ገፅ 9)³⁶

እርምጃው የባንኮችን የማበደር አቅም በመቀነስ ወጪያቸው እንዲጨምር የሚያደርግ በመሆኑ ለኪሳራ ሊዳርጋቸው እንደሚችል ተናገረዋል።(ነጋዴራሰ፣ መጋቢት 12 2000 ገፅ 1)³⁷