



**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATION & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

**THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN COMMUNICATING CORPORATE SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY IN MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES,  
COCA COLA BEVERAGES AFRICA, ETHIOPIA IN FOCUS**

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**Submitted to- Amanuel Gebru (PhD.)**

September, 2023  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**BY SEMEGNSH GEBREWOLD CHALLA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND  
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COMMUNICATION**

**Advisor**

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**September, 2023**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “The Role of Public Relations In Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility In Multinational Companies, Coca Cola Beverages Africa, Ethiopia In Focus” is my original work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any previously published material of any other person unless properly cited and given due credit. I further certify that this dissertation has not been presented or submitted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or publication, whether in English or in any other language.

This is a true copy of the thesis.

Semegnesh Gebrewold

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “The Role of Public Relations in Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility in Multinational Companies, The Coca Cola Beverages Africa, Ethiopia in Focus” written by **Semegnsh Gebrewold** has been submitted and partially fulfills the requirements of the Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication. The Public Relations and Strategic Communication specialization is based on the university's guidelines and meets the recognized standards in terms of originality and quality.

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## List of Acronyms

CCBA=	Coca Cola Beverages Africa
CSR =	Corporate Social Responsibility
EABSC=	East Africa Bottling Share Company
MNC=	Multi-National Corporation
NGO=	Non-Governmental Organization
PACS=	Public Affairs and Communication and Sustainability
PRP=	Public Relations Professional
PR=	Public Relations
SMS =	Short Message Service
SRB=	Sustainable Responsible Business
TV=	Television
WWW=	World Wide Web

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## **Abstract**

The study aimed to investigate the existing PR practices in CSR communication of Coca Cola Beverage Africa, Ethiopia using qualitative research approach. An in-depth interview with purposive sampling design was employed to select 5 informants and used as sources of primary data. Also, available secondary data were collected through document analysis and press releases from CCBA websites and Facebook pages. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and data collected from documents were also supplemented and analyzed under each themes and sub-themes of the study. The study revealed that the PR role is paramount to communicate the company's key CSR initiatives such as economic inclusion of women and youths, environmental protection, prevention of social pandemics, response to different social problems and rehabilitation of the natural hazard affected community members. Though, they are not satisfactory, the company is communicating CSR initiatives using different communication messages, channels and strategies to its primary stakeholders. A combination of different communication channels including electronic communications, mass media, press release, public meeting and inter-personal relations of different types are the common communication channels for the company's CSR works. Stakeholders are not found to be only passive receivers of the company's CSR information but also active participants and sources of information as well. Thus, the company's communication practice is in line with Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication model and hence fits with excellence theory. Low interests of Medias toward CSR projects, low public awareness, communication gaps, lack of institutional freedom and lack of scientific articulation to select appropriate communication model are among to be some of the challenges in the area. Finally, the finding of this study implies that the selection of media channels and communication message contents should be carefully considered during CSR works.

**Keywords:** public relation, corporate social responsibility, Coca Cola Beverage Africa, Ethiopia, Two Way Symmetrical Communication.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

The notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) appeared around the turn of the 20th century. Mitchell (1989), state that CSR is an increasingly essential element and have become global issues in the business world. It has a relatively long tradition rooted in ideas of philanthropy, but also as a reaction against business' social transgression. CSR, also known as corporate citizenship, or sustainable responsible business (SRB), is a type of corporate self-regulation combined into a business model. On the other hand, there are literally hundreds of definitions of public relations (PR). Scholars like Grunig & Hunt (1984), define it as a public relations is the activity of managing communication between the publics and its organization.

Despite the above conceptual definitions of PR and CSR, there are ongoing debates on the demand of PR for CSR programs. According to Frankental (2001), PR, in particular, has frequently been criticized for being shallow discipline intent at glossing up images of organizations. Some argue against placing the responsibility for CSR activities in the PR department of an organization.

Grunig & Hunt (1992), states that public or social, responsibility has become a main reason for an organization to have a public relations function and two-way symmetrical communication is the best means by which to assess social responsibility. According to Buhanita (2015), the role of PR is at the core of implementing corporate social responsiveness. Also, Eray (2016), states that PR, competent as a key communicator, today prescribes communication techniques to advance the core mission of business organizations. In its simplest form, PR is a communication tool. Therefore, in nearly all corporations with CSR programs, PR is tasked with communicating such efforts to the public. According to Reeves (2016), CSR and PR are important cogs in the wheel of companies' communication and image activities in the context of the communities in which they operate. Both concepts refer, each in its own representative way, to the procedure through which organizations choose to communicate with the various stakeholders involved in their activity. Zurita (2006), states as a corporate management function, PR has the responsibility to

communicate and promote CSR programs, but emphasizes that CSR is not identical as PR. Rather, corporate responsibility programs should be a collective attempt of public relations, management and employees. She asserts that PR performs environmental scanning functions, monitors potential opportunities or threats to CSR programs, communicates CSR information to the public, and builds community relationships (Zurita, 2006).

CSR and dialogue are stronger forms of engagement and more symmetrical relationships with stakeholders. Such engagement can help all parties understand each other better and can change their relationship from competition and confrontation to cooperation (Kaptein & Tulder, 2003). In addition, it ensures better communication about company activities, increases accountability and creates trust.

According to Grunig & Hunt (1992), CSR itself is possibly an example of symmetrical PR, but when it is communicated to third parties, it becomes advertising or public information. Rather than simply disseminating information, practitioners of this approach research stakeholder values and attempt to define the problem together before communicating a company policy or program on the issue. PR firms that strive for excellence practice two-way symmetrical communication, which can foster better relationships, leading to greater organizational effectiveness, stronger ethics and higher profits. Dozier (1989), also argued that the symmetrical PR model is the only model that is inherently compatible with the concept of social responsibility. In addition, Roper (2005), argued that symmetrical communication, although designed as a dialogic tool through which PR can be practiced ethically, can be used more as a tool to maintain hegemony.

Nevertheless, communication with regard to CSR remains a neglected topic. Lewis (2003) points out that many companies fulfill their social responsibilities but fail to adequately communicate them to their public. In addition, the trend of companies towards socially responsible activities is increasing and many multinational companies (MNCs) have established well-developed CSR programs and adhere to their code of conduct to conduct business ethically, promote economic growth, create larger labor markets and protect the environment, draw public attention to certain issues and use other areas to bring social goods into the world. Chapple & Moon (2005), found that organizations operating outside their national boundaries tended to report on their CSR commitments. Due to the role of multinational companies in developing markets, their CSR commitment and communication are also extremely important.

Tan (2009), argued that although many multinational companies have attempted to implement CSR in their operations, few have succeeded in doing so, particularly when operating in developing markets. Poor corporate governance coupled with a lack of transparency, human rights issues and rampant corruption, among other problems; characterize the work of CSR in most developing countries.

Coca Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA), a subsidiary of the Coca Cola Company, is a company incorporated in 2014G.C. Founded from the merger of SAB Miller plc. Headquartered in South Africa, “The coca cola company is a part of African Communities”, says William Asiko, President of the Coca Cola Africa Foundation. According to William Asiko, CSR sits at the heart of the CCBA and indeed it is given pride of place in its 2020 Strategy - it is critical to the sustainability of the Company. For CCBA, sustainability is a long term commitment to creating shared value for its business, its partners and the community it serves and believes that “When We Rise, Africa Rises”. Through three pillars – A refreshed Africa, An empowered Africa, and A healthy Africa, the CCBA seeks to serve by working together, creating social value and make a positive difference for the customers and communities.

In this study, the researcher tried to explore how excellent the PR practice in MNC’s, CCBA, Ethiopia, is in communicating its CSR program and managing CSR stakeholders with Grunig’s two way symmetrical communication model in focus, an area that has received limited attention in CSR research. The basic premise of this study is therefore that PR in a socially responsible organization would exhibit characteristics of “excellence” as defined by Grunig, and Dozier (2002). Specifically, this includes the practice enacted by the PR professional in communicating CSR and the model of practice employed by the PR professional.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

This study focus on the area of CSR communication related with the role of PR practitioners within multinational companies. Kotler (2003), stated that for most companies, the question is not whether to communicate but somewhat what to say, to whom, and how often. According to Ihlen, Bartlett, and May (2011), effective communication about CSR has been hindered by the assumption that communication is simply the transmission of CSR information from the company to its stakeholders. In reality, CSR communication is a challenging process that requires understanding of stakeholders, their information needs and communication channels. A central concern is the conceptual dilemma of CSR advertising communication. Stakeholders

want CSR information, but corporate messages can lead to backlash if stakeholders perceive them as excessive self-promotion. This double bind presents PR and CSR managers with a difficult communicative challenge.

Sen, Bhattacharya & Korschun (2006), find that stakeholders worldwide say that CSR actions influence their relationships with organizations. However, Bhattacharya & Sen (2004), proves that stakeholders have very low awareness of companies' CSR activities. This is extremely problematic for corporations. Thus, although it is reported that a company's CSR record can be an important decision criterion when selecting products and services, stakeholders are inadequately informed about CSR. Awareness is responsible for many of the benefits that companies derive from CSR. The key element is identification through CSR.

Sometimes public relations professionals are given the task of ensuring that an organization's reputation and images are presented to the public. Tilley's (2005), commentary on the perception of PR as a storytelling representative of an organization appears to be related to the perception of CSR reporting in developing countries. Molo (2009) argued that PR generally highlights good CSR and hides bad CSR from the public, so PR practitioners only play a window-dressing role. Benn, Todd & Pendleton (2010) also argued that PR scholarship has evolved from theorizing the traditional advertising role to articulating clear reasons for a managerial role for PR in CSR. However, many companies still viewed their PR staff only as a source of positive publicity.

As far as the researcher's review is concerned, so far, the roles of PR in communicating CSR programs of CCBA are not adequately researched in the Ethiopia context. Many researches were conducted on the areas of marketing communication; integrated marketing promotion, communication management, and the role of public relations in corporate organizations (Benn, Todd & Pendleton, 2010, Clark, 2000; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The focuses of these researches were not on the practice of PR in corporate organizations. However, the focus of the current research is on the role of PR in CSR programs of CCBA. Thus, this research tried to fill the thematic scope gaps of the aforementioned research findings.

Few researches conducted in CSR in multinational companies in Ethiopia haven't taken in CSR communication in relation with PR perspectives in to consideration. Moreover, some other researches were conducted on CSR practices and Green Supply Chain Management. For instance, Mulugeta (2021), conducted a research on Green Supply Chain Management Practices and Challenges taking CCBA, Ethiopia as a case. Also, Gereziher (2019), conducted research on

corporate social responsibility practice of multinational companies in Ethiopia focusing on the case of Heineken Brewery S.C. Likewise; Weleselassie (2018), conducted a research on the practices of CSR in Mesfin Industrial Engineering Company. However, the nature of these companies along with their CSR initiatives is different from CCBA. Due to this reason, the current research could bring new insight on the case of CCBA.

Finally, many other research findings were revealed different results on the practices of PR in CSR of CCBA (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006, and Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). However, the geographical scopes of these researches were focused on the developed nations and hence the findings of these researches couldn't explain the Ethiopian case. The current research would fill the geographical scope variation of the previous research findings conducted in the area.

Therefore, on one hand, the role of PR in Communicating CSR programs of companies is found to be challenged by many hindrances. As indicated above, CSR promotional communication dilemma, tendency of one-way communication preference, unclear demarcation of marketing promotion and CSR communication, increased stakeholder skepticism and decreases the credibility of CSR messages, low level of attention to CSR communication, and low awareness of stakeholders towards CSR messages are some of the challenges in the area (Clark, 2000; Grunig & Hunt, 1984, Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). On the other hand, as shown above, despite the existing challenges, there are research gaps in the area. Thus, this research tried to identify the challenges and fill the knowledge gaps of the area.

### **1.3. Objective of the Research**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the PR role in CSR communication in multinational companies in Ethiopia with special reference to Coca Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA), Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The general objective mentioned above is divided into the following specific objectives:

- To identify the roles of PR along with communication messages, primary stakeholders and communication channels in relation to CSR programs of the company

- To identify the company's communication strategies in relation to CSR communication Practiced by PR with Grunig's two-way symmetry model
- To identify the challenges of PR practitioners in communicating CSR programs of the company

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

The aim of the study is to answer the following research questions:

1. What activities (organizational role) does PR play in CSR programs?
2. How is the communication strategies of the company practiced in line with Grunig's two way symmetrical communication models?
3. What are the challenges of PR in communicating CSR programs of the company?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This research has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it would contribute to the broader debate on theorizing the traditional public role and articulate clear reasons for a managerial role for PR in CSR and the CSR communication dilemma. There have also been discussions about who can best communicate the corporate social relations activities of business organizations and what technique would be most appropriate in allocating the organization's CSR activities. Thus, by looking into the topic in the context of PR communication practice in CSR, the researcher believes the findings would be of a small contribution to the debated PR role as window dressing approach.

The researcher could help PR Practitioners to better understand the nature, importance and dynamics of as well as the relationship between the practice of PR and CSR. Moreover, the findings of this research could practically guide corporations and organizations in aligning PRs works with CSR. Furthermore, companies' may find it handy in while devising their strategic CSR communication plans, implementing CSR policies and programs.

#### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

Thematically, the thesis solely focused on the PR practice in CSR communication programs of CCBA, Ethiopia, Subsidiary of Coca Cola Company located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Under the umbrella of this thematic, the roles of PR in Communicating CSR, preferences of elements and contents of communication messages, primary stakeholders of CSR programs,

communication channels, communications strategies in relation with the Grunig's two way symmetrical communication model and associated challenges are addressed in the study. The geographical scope of the study is the location where CCBA is located in Addis Ababa Metropolitan Municipality, Lideta Subcity, Woreda 3.

### **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

The researcher is limited to a few secondary data; sufficient relevant literature research must be collected for the study. The absence of well documented and organized CSR annual plan and CSR annual report confined the researcher to use the sustainability section from the group website of the CCBA, Ethiopia and quarterly published internal newsletter of the company to fill the gap during document review.

### **1.8. Organization of the paper**

This research has five chapters. The first chapter deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, general and specific objectives of the study and significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study. The literature discussed in the work is discussed in the second chapter. The third Chapter deals with Methodology of the research study. Concepts of public relations in connection with CSR communication and in particular the four PR process models, Grunig and Hunts model of public relations were discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five summarizes the study and provides recommendation. Excellence theory, stakeholder theory and legitimacy theory are the underlying theory of the research in this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Definitions of Public Relations

The history of PR has its origins in the late nineteenth century with rapid expansion throughout the twentieth century in the United States and Europe. Grunig (1992), also mentioned the beginning of a trend in which organizations were compelled to be more accommodating of the public in their operations and emerges as a result of societal change and opposition. By the 1990s, public relations and communication management had become equated. This shift in the literature centered on the effective management of the public relations professional's practices.

A public relations is a term that is better described than defined. It is both an applied professional practice and an academic field that provides communication-centered and research-based approaches to understanding, informing, and intervening to adjust relationships between ideas, individuals, groups, and societies.

A public relations is a hybrid and complex subject that borrows practices and theories from various fields such as communication and psychology, media, and management (Theaker, 2004). Grunig and Hunt (1984), defined Public relations as managing of communication between an organization and its publics. Also, the discipline of public relations is concerned with the relationships and expectations that exist between organizations, their stakeholders, and society as a whole. According to Theaker (2004), organizational relationships and reputation, issue management, public affairs, corporate communications, stakeholder relations, risk communication, and corporate social responsibility are managed by Public relations as part of their professional responsibility.

Thomas & Lane (1990), defined PR as Public relations is a management tool used for improvement and support from a company's various internal and external publics. Another scholars like Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler (2009), definition's stated that public relations activities include activities centered on promoting a positive company image through community events and publicity. Therefore the primary functions of public relations are to create and

maintain excellent relationships within the organization's internal and external stakeholders, including individuals and private, governmental, and societal entities in general.

## **2.2. Defining Corporate Social Responsibility**

In recent years, CSR has gained prominence. There is no such thing as a true definition of CSR because of the uncertainty surrounding the nature of CSR and the definition of the concept varies, and different papers and textbooks define it differently, depending on when the literature was written and the ideological belief that underpins it.

The broader definition of CSR is concerned with the relationship that exists or should exist between global corporations, governments, and individual citizens. More specifically, the definition is concerned with the corporation's relationship with the local society in which it resides or operates. Another definition is concerned with the efforts made by a company to align its values and behavior with those of its various stakeholders. According to Koestoer (2007), Corporate Social Responsibility refers to companies' individual or collective efforts to address various social issues in their operating areas. Again, According to Aras (2008), CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their voluntary interaction with their stakeholders as well as in their business operations.

## **2.3. The relationship between Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility**

Nowadays, PR is done professionally. Furthermore, it is a tool that has evolved into a management strategy for communicating with members of the community and stakeholders. Horton (2007), explained public relations serve Businesses, government agencies, trade unions, voluntary associations, schools, hospitals, foundations, colleges, and religious institutions.

The connection between the practice of CSR and that of public relations is morally complex.

Most experts continue to debate the relationship between CSR and PR. Etang (2006), stated that for PR purposes, CSR is frequently managed by PR practitioners and is viewed as a part of the P R portfolio and techniques to establish relations with specific communities.

CSR requires communication and public relations for stakeholder relations and public positioning i.e. reputation or public opinion, as well as to justify internal spending on such programs. For public relations to position itself as a morally desirable practice that serves the public interest, CSR is necessary.

Clark (2000), argued that the similarities in the origins, theories, processes, and primary responsibilities of CSR and public relations triggered a new wave of interest in the occurrence in the public relations literature. Prominent themes are the claims that organizations seek to understand and manage their mutual expectations and understand the public and their stakeholders about social and environmental issues.

According to Kelly (2001), the concept of CSR, with its emphasis on organizations and stakeholders, has parallels with the concept of public relations, which focuses on the interdependence of organizations and stakeholders/publics.

According to Clark (2000), there was a strong need for PR to intersect in order to add value and reduce ambiguity within the PR and CSR. She identified a prescriptive approach to integrating the two disciplines by listing two steps that could result in integration. The first step was ensuring to include communication analysis while conducting a stakeholder's analysis and the second step was to incorporate a communication model into a strategic management that relied heavily on feedback, historical, social, and political audits mediated and non-mediated channels, , and monitoring public opinion.

Again, Clark (2000), compares what she sees as two distinct fields to investigate the relationship between public relations and corporate social responsibility. She concludes that, while the link between corporate PR and CSR is not fully developed, both disciplines seek to improve the quality of an organization's relationship with key stakeholders. She emphasizes the ability of public relations professionals to scan the political, social, and historical environments in order to contribute to the development of CSR programs. Furthermore, through CSR activities and PR tactics, both PR and CSR cultivate and foster organization-public relations with relevant community groups and individuals.

Reeves (2016), also explain public relations and corporate responsibility initiatives are inextricably linked due to similar functions and communication requirements. Both contribute to the company's relationship-building, reputation management, community relations, and risk-mitigation efforts. However, the connections between the two concepts elicit controversy and criticism.

#### **2.4. Multinational companies and corporate social responsibility communication**

According to Ferdausy & Shameema (2009), define Multinational corporations (MNCs) as businesses that have operations in more than one country. MNCs conduct a large portion of their

business in other countries. In terms of CSR communication, Kostova & Roth (2002), suggest that while designing CSR strategies, MNC subsidiaries are required to incorporate the expectations of local stakeholders in host countries, including CSR communication, in order to acquire local legitimacy and fulfill the requirements of the parent company and international stakeholders in order to maintain their international license to operate.

The increasing homogenization of institutional pillars enables local subsidiaries to adopt isomorphic behavior by standardizing their approach to CSR communication globally (Matten & Moon, 2008).

MNC subsidiaries have 'institutional freedom,' which allows them to develop CSR communication strategies that correspond to their parent companies, international stakeholders, and transnational institutions, as well as the discretion to seek the benefits either business, social, or both that they believe are best for them (Kostova *et al.*, 2008). In this vein, literature contends that rather than being constrained by institutions, local subsidiaries can shape, ignore, reproduce, and challenge existing institutions.

Black (1990) agrees that there is no government or organization of any sort that can operate in isolation of its publics. This means that every organization must have publics. What is important to note is that the status of publics of organizations can overlap as some employees of organizations may also double as shareholders in the same organization. What this means is that some employees of some organizations also acquire shares in the organizations making them shareholders in the organization where they are employed.

Wragg (1992), in his explanation outlines the publics of organizations under four taxonomies thus: Functional publics. These are the category that enables the organization to carry out their day to day functions. They include the employees, consumers or customers (including other related businesses) trade unions which represent them, suppliers of raw materials or contractors, components, or in the case of retailer, of the goods being sold. Media who reach the people with and opinions and work as a link ( press, radio, TV etc ) and the community; people who live near the organization's premises are stakeholders of companies (ibid).

## **2.5. Corporate Social Responsibility Communication**

CSR communication has become increasingly important as CSR has become a critical corporate agenda item, given that all organizational activities can only be communicated to stakeholders through communication.

According to Morsing (2006), CSR communication is a communication about the company's CSR efforts that is designed and disseminated by the company itself. May (2011), on the other hand, contends that such a simplistic view fails to demonstrate the underlying meaning of CSR communication, which is more than a tool or concept for management to disseminate CSR information. It also enables the development of new CSR perspectives through the construction and reconstruction of existing policies.

Similarly, Birth et al. (2008), contend that CSR communication aims to provide information that legitimizes an organization's behavior by trying to influence stakeholders' and society's image of the company.

According to Sjoberg, (2003), the potential impact of CSR programs on stakeholders is determined by the company's ability to communicate while also gaining consumer support. Also Andriof & Waddock (2002), suggest that CSR communication should emphasize interaction and dialogue between consumers and the company in order to demonstrate to them that the company comprehends their needs and desires.

## **2.6. CSR Promotional Communication Dilemma**

Once a company has decided on the range of its social responsibility, it faces another, and just as difficult, dilemma: how should the CSR is communicated to the stakeholders. On one hand, if the company wants to profit from its CSR by building a strong reputation as an ethical company, the stakeholders have to know about the CSR activities. On the other hand, if CSR is communicated too loudly, utilizing a marketing-like style, the stakeholders may see the company as calculating and sanctimonious.

Stakeholders want to learn more about corporations' CSR efforts. However, stakeholders are wary of corporations that are perceived to devote too much time and effort to CSR communication and Corporations may reap no reputational benefits from their CSR initiatives if their employees are unaware of them. When there is excessive self-promotion about CSR initiatives, stakeholders become cynical and skeptical. The challenge is to effectively communicate the CSR initiative without triggering a backlash, which is referred to as the CSR advertising communication dilemma (Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

Given the importance of CSR in consumer decision making and corporate reputation, corporations should communicate about their CSR activities. Maignan & Ferrell (2004) advocate for the incorporation of CSR into corporate communication and the need for more research into

CSR communication challenges because businesses cannot hope to reap concrete benefits from CSR unless they intelligently communicate about their initiative to relevant stakeholders (ibid).

CSR awareness can be increased through communication tactics such as advertising and promotional efforts. Consumers, on the other hand, want CSR facts but dislike hard sells. Negative attributions about CSR initiatives can be caused by too much effort in CSR promotion and harm an organization's relationship with stakeholders (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

According to Coombs and Holladay (2012), by focusing on message tone and costs, the concept of too much effort or conspicuous communication can be refined. Message tone refers to the perception that the message appears too frequently and prominently. CSR information can be integrated into a variety of corporate communication tactics, but it should not always dominate the message and should focus on facts rather than self-promotion. CSR communication benefits from a low-key tone that focuses on facts rather than the promotion of the corporation's involvement in CSR.

Stakeholders are concerned when corporations spend a lot of money on CSR promotion, such as advertising (Alsop, 2004). As a result, in addition to message tone, perceptions of the cost of promotion must be considered. If the company is serious about CSR, they should invest their money in the CSR initiative rather than advertising their involvement in the issue. Low-cost tactics may help CSR communication goals. While constricting, a low-key tone and low-cost tactics do not doom the effectiveness of CSR-related communication. Instead, overcoming the CSR promotional communication dilemma becomes a challenge.

CSR reflects a company's core values as a source of communication about organizational identity (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Given that this field of knowledge has been increasingly studied, PR has a hundred definitions. The Public Relations Society of America defines public relations as a means by which the public can express their desire and interest in our society's institutions and it interprets and speaks for the public to otherwise unresponsive organizations, as well as for those organizations in public (Etang, 1994). Thus, PR is a vital term used in company practices. According to Buhanita (2015), the central of corporate social responsiveness implementation is the role of PR. Thus, the followings points should be ponder to address the challenge of CSR promotional communication dilemma.

### **2.6.1. What to Communicate for CSR**

Regarding what should be communicated for companies' CSR, researchers have suggested that stakeholders would be interested in information related to what social causes companies support, such as environmental, public education, or health-related causes, and stakeholders' involvement in the company's CSR will vary depending on which social causes a company supports (Dawkins, 2004; Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Given the importance of stakeholder involvement in determining positive CSR outcomes (Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005), communicating the types of supported social causes with stakeholders is critical. Furthermore, providing information about why the company supports a particular CSR cause (i.e., intentions or motives) should be secured in CSR communications.

Because of their third-party credibility, independent communication sources such as the media or experts are regarded as more trustworthy than company-controlled communication (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005). According to Schlegelmilch and Pollach (2005), communicating CSR through third-party experts or an endorsed CSR communication process is one way to reduce public skepticism.

### **2.6.2. Message content**

According to Friestad & Wright (1994), consumers are more likely to be suspicious of ulterior motives when the CSR message is primarily about a social issue rather than about the company or its products because such advertising does not fit their scheming scheme. To allay consumers' concerns about ulterior motives and increase advertising credibility, the company should emphasize the importance of the social issue and communicate a lack of self-interest by selecting topics that have no logical connection to the company's operations (Menon & Kahn, 2003). However, most CSR communication focuses on a company's involvement in various social causes rather than the social causes themselves. In this context, the company may highlight several factors in its CSR communication, including its commitment to a cause, the impact, which it has on the matter, why it takes part in a particular social initiative, i.e. CSR motives and the correspondence between the thing and the company business which is called CSR fit.

### **2.6.3. CSR Commitment**

A company's commitment to a social cause can be expressed through monetary donations, in-kind donations, or the provision of other company resources such as marketing know-how, human capital (e.g., employee volunteerism), and research and development capabilities for a specific cause. Commitment consists of several components: the amount of input, the durability of the association, and the consistency of the input (Dwyer, et al., 1987).

### **2.6.4. CSR impact**

Instead of focusing on the input side of its commitment to a social cause, a company can focus on the output side of its CSR efforts, i.e. causing its target audience. Emphasizing a company's CSR commitment or the social impact of its CSR efforts is an effective communication strategy because, as previous research has shown, CSR communication should be factual and avoid the appearance of boasting (Sen et al. 2009). Moreover, a company's CSR commitment and social influence serve as diagnostic clues to underlying CSR motivations.

### **2.6.5. CSR motives**

The question that should companies only emphasize altruistic, intrinsic motives in their CSR communication, ignoring business-related motives Or should they be forthright and admit the commercial motivations underlying their CSR initiatives is still a debatable issue. According to Forehand and Grier (2003), acknowledging extrinsic, corporate-serving motives in a company's CSR message actually increases credibility and reduces stakeholder skepticism, underpinning the potential boomerang effect of CSR communication. Therefore, a company should emphasize the convergence of social and business interests, and publicly admit that its CSR efforts benefit both society and itself (Porter &Kramer, 2006).

### **2.6.6. CSR Fit**

Another important communication factor is CSR fit, i.e. the perceived fit between a social issue and the company's business. Stakeholders often expect that companies will only have a logical connection to their core activities or promote social issues that fit well with. Suitability for corporate social responsibility may arise from common associations a brand shares with the cause, such as: B. Product dimensions, affinity for certain target segments or associations with the corporate image that arise from the brand's previous behavior in a certain social area (Menon

& Kahn, 2003). Corporate social responsibility fit is important because it impacts stakeholders' CSR attributions (Simmons & Olsen, 2006).

Low CSR fit due to the lack of a logical connection between a social issue and a company's business is likely to result in greater cognitive elaboration and greater salience of extrinsic motives, thereby reducing stakeholders' positive reactions to a company's CSR activities. Therefore, a company should emphasize the CSR fit of its social initiative if there is a match between the social issue and its business. If a company is not a natural good fit with the social cause it supports, it should further explain the reasons for its social initiative to improve its perceived fit. However, that in certain circumstances communicating low suitability can actually lead to more positive reactions from stakeholders; Targeting an inappropriate cause could lead a company to be more sincere in its motives, thereby increasing the effectiveness of its CSR communications (Menon & Kahn, 2003).

## **2.7. Key Elements for Effective CSR Communication**

Effective CSR communication is defined as communication that increases consumers' CSR knowledge or awareness, commitment, trust and perception of corporate reputation while reducing consumer skepticism (Morsing, 2006; Morsing & Schultz 2006; Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005).

According to Maignan and Ferrell (2004), effective communication between consumers and corporations can increase their identification with the enterprise's CSR activities. The inherent challenges of achieving transparent CSR communication can be overcome by developing an appropriate definition of communication objectives and channels, as well as understanding the communication context. Objectives should be defined in accordance with emerging issues and stakeholders. Therefore, the following considerations should be in place towards effective CSR communication.

### **2.7.1. CSR communication objectives**

Objectives should be defined in accordance with emerging issues and stakeholders. The relevant partners in a CSR dialogue need to be identified in order to provide grounds for investment in CSR conduct and a meaningful continued dialogue. These partners, sometimes labeled senders and receivers, are referred to collectively as stakeholders Maignan & Ferrell (2004). Defining

clear communication objectives for each stakeholder is important including three specific types of stakeholders: clients, employees, and shareholders.

An organization benefits from effective CSR communication in a variety of ways. CSR communication can be used to influence stakeholders' positive perceptions of the organization, such as when customers spread positive word about the organization's participation in CSR initiatives (Crane & Glozer, 2016). CSR communication also raises stakeholders' awareness of shared social concerns, which facilitates their identification with the company (Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

## **2.8. CSR Communication Channels used by public relation practitioners**

The public relations tactics list is a mix of controlled and uncontrolled media. Kim and Ferguson (2014) separated CSR communication channels into two categories: uncontrolled and controlled media channels. Advertising, brochures, the company website, social media outlets, newsletters, annual reports, and so on are examples of company-controlled media channels, whereas uncontrolled media channels include news media, expert blogs, and non-company social media (Kim and Ferguson, 2014).

Furthermore, in communicating CSR, companies employ a wide range of ways to reach stakeholders and targeted audiences, including corporate brochures, the Intranet, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, trade publications, and corporate websites (Sun, 2010).

Overall, studies asserted that no one single communication cues can be sufficient in addressing all strata of publics in an organization (Black, 1990). According to Wragg (1992), 16 basic techniques were outlined available to public relations practitioners to effectively reach their target publics, such as press release, case histories or studies, feature article, advertorials, editorial interviews, event press support, analysis briefings, financial reports, political lobbying, newsletters and publications, video and film, conferences and seminars, product launches, special events, promotional items, and corporate image.

### **2.8.1. Sustainability Reporting (social reports)**

According to Ballou and Heitger (2005), corporate sustainability reporting is a rapidly growing area of corporate reporting that involves disclosing nonfinancial and financial information to stakeholders other than shareholders. The reports provide information to various stakeholder

groups about the reporting organization's ability to manage key risks that are of concern to the stakeholders.

According to Tschopp (2005), a social report that is not governed by standards or external guidelines risks becoming merely a marketing tool, failing to meet the needs of stakeholders such as investors, lobbyists, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Having the report audited by an independent consultant is the best way to convince stakeholders that a company is as good as its corporate citizenship report (Keeler, 2003).

Furthermore, Reynolds (2003), asserts that CSR reporting is the concern of public relations since it is a management function that work together with the local community and society as a whole in the best interests of its companies. Currently, corporate organizations are hiring CSR experts to help them communicate their Corporate Social Initiatives (CSI) to the public.

### **2.8.2. The Internet and Social Media**

As a subset of the Internet, social media plays an important part in permitting two-way dialogic communication. Qualman (2012), claims that social media sites can maintain communication and connection between companies and the public due to their instant feedback features. The author believes that this gives organizations an advantage in strategic communication management. Social media is broadly regarded as a channel through which corporations communicate with their stakeholders, while also connecting stakeholders with one another, resulting in unregulated public conversations with unrestricted use of words (Mangold and Folds, 2009).

The Internet has also had a significant impact on public relations practices. Corporate websites are being promoted on the Internet as a communication system for attracting stakeholders (Penning, 2011). PR website pages include email addresses where stakeholders can submit additional questions and purchase PR professional information. Public relations professionals are in charge of locating and responding to email inquiries from stakeholders. This necessitates clarity in terms of how important PR sites are in relationship building.

The Internet promotes the dissemination and exchange of information and ideas. Clark (2000), acknowledges that the Internet allows for audience participation and thus has a high potential for active audiences seeking information on corporate responsibility. As a result, anyone can download CSR brochures and comment and/or criticize this information through their own

channels (uncontrolled by organizations) such as blogs, forums, Facebook groups, Twitter, and Ning networks, to name a few.

### **2.8.3. Corporate Websites**

The use of websites is now considered the PR industry's first long-term communication strategy, enabling integrated two-way communication between the organization and its stakeholders. Certain public relations scholars describe websites as unidirectional, with the primary goal of disseminating information to present a particular corporate image to the organization's stakeholders. Contemporary public relations professionals adhere to new technologies, such as website creation and dialogic communication (Taylor & White, 2000). Websites are considered a fundamental tool for transferring significant duties and the ability to communicate through websites is of great importance (Ki & Hon, 2006).

### **2.8.4. Online outlet for CSR public relations**

According to Coombs and Holladay (2012), the online environment offers some one-of-a-kind opportunities for unrestricted CSR public relations. There are websites dedicated to presenting and discussing CSR information. If a corporation can distribute through these channels, the message's reach and CSR credibility are greatly increased. CSR International, SustainabilityForum.com, and CSRwire.com are a few popular websites.

CSR International is a well-known online source of CSR information. CSR International works to promote good CSR practices. It can be followed on Twitter, via RSS feed, or by joining its email list. SustainabilityForum.com is a clearinghouse for CSR-related information that includes news, blogs, and discussion forums. Their CSR news frequently includes stories about various corporations' CSR initiatives. The website includes a blog and an archive of CSR research as well as CSR news from SustainabilityForum.com.

### **2.8.5. Public Relations Professional as Strategic Communicator of CSR**

Corporate responsibility has become a hot topic for many large corporations today, and even smaller businesses are beginning to look for ways to improve their public image by communicating their participation in a variety of activities. Furthermore, CSR activities must be properly communicated in order to combat the growing skepticism of corporate communication, particularly among companies that exaggerate their social behaviors (Holme & Watts, 2000). Through dialogue and negotiation, PR cultivates relationships between an organization and the

general public. Arguments have erupted over who is best suited to communicate business organizations' CSR activities and what technique is best for assigning organizational CSR activities.

The use of public communication through PR is linked to its social responsibility. The job of a PR specialist is to help a company recognize and represent the excellence of its mission with a specific end goal. The role of public relations is to seek and pursue current public interest in the community so that their initiatives are aligned (Mackey, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, CSR is the result of relationships. In order for business organizations to engage in viable and sustainable CSR activities, the course of relationships and communications technology decisions must be carefully considered.

PRPs attempt to persuade stakeholders to learn new information, change their feelings, and take certain actions. Persuasion, according to (Pfau & Wan, 2006), is the use of correspondence to shape, change, and strengthen judgment, influence or emotions, understanding or reasoning, and behavior. As a strategic communicator, PRP uses CSR communication to persuade the audience by influencing their emotions and feelings in favor of the best organization and PR experts believe that using CSR as a strategy will attract more customers to the business organization. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned role of public relations was communication. Rather than communicating all programs or activities, organizations frequently serve the community organically and only publicize broad data or significant achievements. To avoid boasting or bragging about programs, some practitioners only promote extreme achievements through traditional channels. Each organization's communication preferences differed, guided by their organizational values and cultures.

## **2.9. Effective CSR Communication Dimensions**

### **2.9.1. Informativeness**

One of the most important aspects of CSR communication is informing or communicating with the general public about what a company is doing to be socially responsible. CSR communication should therefore contain detailed information about a company's CSR activities, e.g. B. what type of social cause the company supports, why the company supports it, how long the company supports it, what impact the company's CSR commitment can have, etc. However, stakeholders have a poor understanding of a company's CSR obligations and the social issues in

which it is involved (Bhattacharya & Sen 2004; Du, Bhattacharya & Sen 2010). Companies must actively educate stakeholders about social issues, such as why society requires their involvement in a particular social issue, why they support the social issue, and what impact or result they have on the social issue (ibid.).

### **2.9.2. Third-party endorsement**

Third-party endorsement is closely related to public acceptance of CSR related messages. Before accepting messages for attitude changes, the public tends to evaluate the trustworthiness of the message source (Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005). If the public believes that the source has ulterior motives for communicating or is not credible, they are less likely to accept the messages. Third-party endorsements are thus one method of increasing source credibility in the CSR communication process (Crane, 2001). By including recommendations from credible third parties, such as: non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in an organization's CSR communication process, the credibility of the third parties can be transferred to the organization, thereby reducing public skepticism.

### **2.9.3. Personal relevance**

Many scholars have argued that the success of CSR communication depends heavily on people's willingness to accept the intangible characteristics of a company. Accordingly, as Schlegelmilch and Pollach (2005), show CSR is often viewed as the domain of a company's ethics and intangible characteristics. To increase public acceptance of CSR communication, companies should convey CSR communication messages to stakeholders by including personally relevant examples. When people see personal relevance in persuasive messages, they are more likely to accept the messages and change their behavior as recommended (Marques & Mackie, 2001). According to Kim and Ferguson (2018), personal relevance in CSR communication refers to communication messages that relate to people's personal life experiences or are relevant to personal interests.

### **2.9.4. Self-efficacy**

According to Bandura (1995), self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief that he or she can achieve an outcome or perform a proposed behavior, and it is closely related to a person's belief that the proposed behavior will lead to a desirable outcome. Ensuring self-efficacy in persuasive

messages is considered one of the most powerful indicators of behavior because it influences people's decision to perform or complete the behavior.

Therefore, including messages that can strengthen or ensure self-efficacy regarding a company's CSR activities, For example, an explanation of how people can participate in CSR or how their participation can affect CSR outcomes is crucial to the success of CSR activities. CSR communication process (Kim & Ferguson, 2018).

### **2.9.5. Self-promotional message tone**

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, tone is defined as a quality, feeling, or attitude expressed by the words someone uses when speaking or writing. The tone of a CSR communication message is strongly related to public skepticism toward a company's CSR communication. In particular, a self-congratulatory or promotional tone in CSR communication may be viewed as too conspicuous, leading to greater public skepticism (Coombs & Holladay 2011; Schlegelmilch & Pollach, 2005). Therefore, previous research has recommended avoiding a self-promotional or self-congratulatory tone when communicating a company's CSR efforts (Schlegelmilch & Pollach 2005). If the public perceives CSR communications to be too promotional or self-congratulatory, the company may have more self-serving motives in supporting social causes (Coombs & Holladay, 2011).

The self-promotional tone of CSR communication leads people to attribute self-interested motives to the company. Kim and Lee (2012) also recommended that honesty is the best policy strategy for communicating the company's CSR without intentionally omitting or exaggerating the activities. Therefore, CSR messages based on the honest presentation of factual CSR information should be considered for the success of the CSR communication process.

### **2.9.6. Consistency**

Consistency in CSR communications may be treated differently than sharing information about the continuity of a company's CSR commitments or the frequency of communications. it is considered as an important part of the CSR communication content about the company's CSR activity itself While expressing the continuity of the company's CSR commitment (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010).

If a company communicates its CSR haphazardly, for example because the company's statements change from time to time, the company's CSR communication fails due to the increasing skepticism and distrust of the public. The consistency of the company's CSR communication

should be viewed as a crucial part of communicating CSR aspects. Consistency in this study refers to how continuously the company communicates about its CSR goals, rather than communicating the continuity of the company's specific CSR activities or the frequency of communication.

### **2.9.7. Frequency**

CSR communication frequency can be defined as the number of CSR communication attempts by a company through interpersonal and mass media channels. An increase in advertising costs is closely related to the frequency of CSR communication. Additionally, previous research has shown that the public tends to be sensitive to advertising costs, particularly in the context of a company's CSR activities. The public is more likely to express negative attitudes toward the company that spends a lot of money promoting CSR (Dawkins, 2004; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Since previous research has shown that CSR communication all too often tends to influence the company's perceived CSR motives and public perception of a company's advertising costs is increasing, this aspect must be considered in the process of CSR communication.

### **2.9.8. Transparency**

Transparency is identified as a prerequisite for relational elements of an organization such as commitment, trust and accountability and is also part of the environmental conditions that can influence external and internal decision-making processes of the organization (Jahansoozi, 2006). CSR communication transparency can be defined as the openness of disclosing CSR information, both good and bad. Transparent disclosure of CSR communications can increase trust and accountability towards a company, thereby reducing public skepticism towards its CSR activities. By presenting the successes and failures of the company's CSR process, the company can ensure transparency in CSR communication (Coombs & Holladay, 2011). Many scholars have argued that transparency is an essential factor in organizing public relations and CSR communication, as it is fundamental to building trust between parties and increasing the credibility of the communication process (Coombs & Holladay, 2011; Jahansoozi, 2006).

## **2.10. Theoretical Frameworks of the Study**

There is no one theory that will explain all PR practices. Choi and Cameron (2005) argued that there is no one best way of managing organizations and practicing PR that is optimal for all situations. PR practitioners consider several theories when they make decisions about how they can build successful relationships with their publics. The researcher used excellence theory, stakeholders theory and legitimacy theory to explore the practice that the PR department done in CSR communication and CSR stakeholders management within its stakeholders.

### **2.10.1. Excellence theory**

Using the Excellence Theory in Public Relations, the functions of public relations in reporting CSR activities are analyzed. The theory also explained the value of PR to organizations and society based on the quality of relationships with the stakeholder public and the social responsibility of management decisions. It describes that the main value of public relations lie in the relationship between the organization & its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The question that this theory tries to answer is how must public relations be practiced & the communication function organized for it to contribute the most to organizational effectiveness (Grunig, 2000). It introduced symmetrical communication model to increase customer's satisfaction with organizations.

The theory of excellence established criteria for the ability to develop this appreciation. First, the relationship that exists between the company and its various stakeholders demonstrates the essential role of public relations. To function effectively and excellently, dialogic communication based on two-way symmetrical communication is important for identifying and engaging stakeholders (Kent & Taylor, 2002). The authors point out that through dialogue and negotiation, organizations and their stakeholders can achieve reciprocity, reciprocity, participation and openness in addressing concerns. Additionally, symmetrical, two-way communication can be the most key factor in aligning interests and overcoming a challenge between a company and its stakeholders. When there are contrasts, the social divide is eliminated by creating a win-win situation (Grunig et al., 2002). Furthermore, Hon and Grunig (1999), suggest that PR has the ability to adapt to, respond to, respond to, and modify the practices of dominant alliances. Listening is essential for building relationships, especially with the company and its stakeholders. Therefore, PR and its relationship-building forces should be assumed to be

able to maintain security and achieve shared results between a business organization and its public.

### **2.10.2. Stakeholder Theory**

According to Freeman (1984), Stakeholder theory is used in a number of PR studies around CSR. Stakeholders include anyone who affects or is affected by the organization as it goes about achieving its goals. Grunig and Repper (1992) suggest that stakeholders and publics can be categorized in terms of stages of the strategic management and issues cycle as key components of PR.

According to Heath (2005), Stakeholders are important to PR professionals because in public relations they are fundamentally the public and Stakeholder theory provides public relations practitioners with a theoretical foundation to expand their understanding of how individuals, groups and external organizations influence their business. The central to PR practice is maintaining an excellent communication with its various publics and PR, CSR and Stakeholders theories therefore are related in many ways; they all focus on the relationship between organizations and society or various publics or stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

The theory is allowing the corporation to maintain a strong interrelation and interconnection with community and business components. If the aim is achieved, the company will gain the trust and loyalty of all stakeholders.

The Stakeholder theory also emphasizes the importance of business organizations in paying attention to their stakeholders or publics, not just their shareholders and profits. Therefore in this research this theory would help the researcher to know and identify the CCBA's PR practice in its CSR stakeholder management when approaching its CSR programs.

### **2.10.3. Legitimacy Theory**

The legitimacy theory has a very rich disciplinary background based on management theory, institutional theory, and stakeholder's theory. Suchman (1995), proposes that legitimacy is a general perception or assumption that an entity's actions are right, desirable, or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions. When there is misalignment between, or disputes about, organization and stakeholder perspectives, legitimacy gaps emerge (Sethi, 1979) and issues emerge for the organization (Heath & Palanchar, 2008).

According to this theory, public relations work is to ensure alignment of business and societal expectations as a component of business goal attainment. As such, there is significant alignment in defining social responsibility between the main stream CSR and the public relations literatures.

Despite the widespread acceptance of organizational legitimacy as a central concept in management theory, public relations researchers and practitioners have recognized its importance in building and maintaining organizational public relationships, i.e. building and maintaining stakeholder expectations has been slow to be recognized. An integrated organizational legitimacy emphasized the importance of public relations practice in creating and managing the displays of organizational legitimacy. Communication is very essential in legitimacy theory because the business organization need to provide only what is needed and what is congruent to the norms, values and expectations of the community, so that the organization can be an entity that is legitimately considered by the community as a unit that serves them (Deegan, 2000).

As to this theory, communication is a tool that has become a management strategy to communicate with community members and stakeholders and currently, PR plays an important role in companies. The connection between corporate public relations and its use of effective communication and relationship management, and social responsibility is still developing. This connection suggests that PR and CSR have similar objectives; both disciplines are seeking to enhance the quality of the relationship of an organization among key stakeholder groups.

Therefore, in this study, legitimacy theory is used as a theoretical guideline how PR practices of CCBA in CSR programs change the perception of its primary stakeholders. Moreover, this theory guides the research upon how PR practices of the company building and maintaining the expectations of stakeholders via its CSR programs.

#### **2.12.4. Public relations model**

This research study aims to look at practicing CSR communication from a PR point of view. Grunig & Hunt's recognized and frequently cited work *Managing Public Relations* from 1984 presents four models which an organization may employ when conducting PR. This research study will use **Grunig's two-way symmetric model** as a communication model to evaluate the PR communication practiced regarding CSR programs in the company.

**The two-way symmetric model** is characterized by a dialogue on equal terms between the organization and the public and the intention is to create mutual understanding (Grunig, 1992). According to Grunig (1992), a symmetrical PR is fundamental to being ethical as it allows multiple social perspectives to be integrated into organizational decisions.

Furthermore, Hon and Grunig's (1999) observation suggests that PR has the ability to adapt to, respond to, respond to, and modify the practices of dominant alliances. This ability to listen is fundamental to building relationships, especially with business and its public. Therefore, PR and its relationship-building powers should be viewed as adept at maintaining security and achieving shared outcomes between a business organization and its public.

Therefore, Grunig and Hunt (1984), created four models of Communications:-

1. **Press Agency or Publicity Communication model** is a one –way communication model that gets audiences to behave the way the organization wants them to react by using persuasion and manipulation.
2. **Public information Communication model** is considered as the PR as an in-house journalist using a one-way communication model which disseminate organizational information through press releases and other one way communication techniques.
3. **Two-way asymmetrical Communication model** is a two way communication model characterized by imbalanced information and doesn't research the thoughts of stakeholders towards specific organization, although it manipulates and persuades audiences to behave the way the company wants them to.
4. **Two-way symmetrical Communication model** is a two way communication model which is the focus of the research study. This model promotes mutual understanding, respect between the stakeholders and its organization by solving conflicts and negotiate with the public.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Descriptions of the Study Area

CCBA, Ethiopia is the largest bottler of Coca-Cola products in Ethiopia, having served the country for more than 60 years. CCBA is established for making profit at the core of its business with the mission and vision of “people are at the core of our business” so that the works benefits the community and follow the principle of “the right way of doing business”. CCBA is a contracted company working on producing different coca cola products and engaged in the marketing and production and bottling. Also it controls the 5 factories in Ethiopia located at Addis Ababa, Dire dawa, Bahir dar, Ambo and Sebeta. This Research study mainly focused on CCBA plant based in Lideta Subcity, Woreda 3 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

#### 3.2. Research Philosophy, Approach and Design

##### 3.2.1. Research Philosophy

Creswell (2014) stated that research philosophical worldviews or paradigms are the general philosophical perspective on the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. According to Creswell (2014), there are four philosophical research worldviews. The paradigm chosen for this study is the constructivism or interpretivism paradigm.

Creswell (2014) stated that this paradigm states that people acquire subjective meanings for certain things depending on their experiences. Their meanings are diverse and lead the researcher to look for different points of view rather than a few categories or concepts. Rather than beginning by constructing a theory or pattern of meaning, the researcher uses more open-ended questions to listen carefully to people and address the process based on the interaction between individuals and interpreting the meaning that others have about the situation.

The researcher chose this paradigm for this study because the main objective of this study is to evaluate the public relations practice in terms of communicating the organization's CSR activities to the public. As a result, the researcher tried to find out different perspectives on this topic based on the participants' experiences and data from other sources.

Therefore, the data is collected and the meaning of practice PR in CSR activities and communication within the PAC unit of the CCBA is interpreted or qualified through the researcher's interaction with a participant using open-ended questions and from other data sources.

### **3.2.2. Research Approach**

A Qualitative research approach was employed for this research study. This approach is selected so as to collect primary data from the direct words of key informants. This approach helped to understand the lived experiences of informants with brief description hence it can show true picture of the issue under study.

### **3.2.3. Research Design**

This research study applies descriptive research design with a qualitative research approach. Rahi (2017), stated that research design defines a process of collecting and interpreting data with clear objectives. According to Akhtar (2016), descriptive research design answers the questions “What, Who, Where, How and When”. It is used to study the current situation and more commonly in social sciences, such as socioeconomic surveys and activity analysis.

Thus, this research design was chosen for this study since the researcher intends to develop an in-depth analysis which is conducted through several techniques used to gather and analyze data and deep understanding about the roles and activities of the PR practitioners in relation to CSR practice of CCBA.

## **3.3. Data Sources and Data Collection Tools**

### **3.3.1. Data Sources**

In this study, primary and secondary data are crucial to achieve the overall objectives of the study. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with CCBA participants. In addition, document analysis and social media review were employed so as to collect secondary data by reviewing the content posted in the group website of the company with specific CSR reports in Ethiopia from sustainability section of the group website.

### **3.3.2. Data Collection Tools**

#### **3.3.2.1. In-depth Interview**

The in-depth interview is similar to a conversation in that there are two individuals discussing a topic of mutual interest and ideally the discussion is relaxed, open and honest (Mason, 1998). The researcher conducted face to face interview using semi- structured open ended questions, audiotape the interview and transcribe the audio interviewed with Amharic language that help produce opinions from participants and to understand how the PR is practicing CSR communication in the CCBA in Ethiopia.

#### **3.3.2.2. Document Review**

In descriptive research studies, many methods of data collection are used. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Analyzing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analyzed (Bowen, 2009). Two or more data sources will help to support the research answers. The paper examined both web-based sustainability report disclosures in acknowledgement that the internet has revolutionized how companies disseminate information to their stakeholders. Therefore, this study also used document review analyzed the contents and themes by providing a basis for a detailed and thorough discussion of the research problem. The document and social media review included sustainability annual e-reports accessed from the company's group websites and Facebook pages.

### **3.3.3 Sampling Procedure**

The key informants of this study were specialized individuals from public relations directorate, the communication specialist, Director of the company, sustainability affairs manager and sustainability affairs expert who had a better orientation and understanding on the practice of CSR communication and played a key role in decision making process of PACS department. They involved in the CSR communication process and stakeholders management of CSR and sustainability affairs working together. These informants were 3 females and 2 male participants selected from Lideta sub city Wereda 3 in Addis Ababa by using purposive sampling. The researcher selected a total of 5 participants and carried out semi structured in-depth interview.

The entire interview was conducted through face to face on a one-on-one basis and the researcher collects the data through both audio recording and note taking techniques. According to Timothy (2015), the aim of qualitative research is not to generalize from a sample to a population rather to describe and interpret the phenomenon. Thus this sample size is sufficient.

Here the researcher tried to brief the participants profile in accordance with the study area. Beginning with the public relation directorate, the researcher interviewed **interviewee 1** from PACS department. Interviewee 1 is a professional public relations practitioner who has been working in the organization for about three years and engaged in different CSR projects of the company. Identifying CSR projects that align with the implementation of the company's CSR pillars and communicating with internal and external stakeholders is part of the responsibility of interviewee 1.

In this category, the other key informant, **interviewee 2**, is the sustainability affairs manager of PACS department who has been working in the company for five years. Interviewee 2 has a specialized skills of managing stakeholders by identifying different governmental and non-governmental offices, different beneficiaries that aligned with the company's CSR goal and mission and communicating with primary and secondary CSR stakeholders.

The third key informant, **Interviewee 3**, is the communication specialist of PACS department graduated from journalism department and has been working in the company for two years. Here Interviewee 3 holds the responsibility of the dialogic communication of the company within the general publics and supports the PR directorate through updating information on important issues. Every designed messages of the company including sustainability reports are frequently shared and posted by Interviewee 3 through managing all the social media platforms accessed by the company like face book, instagram, CCBA group websites, telegram and yammer and print Medias like newspaper and internal newsletters where the company utilizes the medias to disseminate information for the general publics. Yammer is a unique platform designed for coca cola Company that allows employers of the company to share and update information.

The fourth key informant on this list, **Interviewee 4**, is the director of the company who has been working for the company above fifteen years and positioned at the top level management of the company. Interviewee 4 has a special and better lived experience on the monitoring the PACS department as a whole. In this case, Interviewee 4 plays an important role in making decision together with the other PACS members regarding CSR practices and Communication guidelines.

The other informant is **Interviewee 5** holding the position of sustainability affairs expert and working in the company for the past two years. Interviewee 5 mainly receives feedbacks and comments from primary CSR stakeholders who has been communicated through telephone, emails and in person and reporting back for the sustainability affairs manager. Again, Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of sustainability programs and, if necessary, recommend changes to address strategic gaps together with the PACS department is part of the job description of sustainability affairs manager.

### 3.3.3.1. Profiles of key informants of the study

Institutions	Code assigned	Position
CCBA, Ethiopia	Interviewee 1	Public Relation Directorate of CCBA
CCBA, Ethiopia	Interviewee 2	Sustainability Manager of CCBA
CCBA, Ethiopia	Interviewee 3	Communication Specialist of CCBA
CCBA, Ethiopia	Interviewee 4	Director of CCBA
CCBA, Ethiopia	Interviewee 5	Sustainability Affairs Expert of CCBA

### 3.4. Data Analysis Methods

A thematic data analysis technique was used in this research. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It organizes and describes your data set in minimal and detailed manner. However, it often goes beyond this and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Having the above conceptual understanding and importance of thematic analysis in mind, Themes of the study were searched after several steps. After data collection, relevant data processing steps like checking and rechecking for errors, editing and data cleaning were issued. In addition, data consistency and completeness were checked. Following this, all collected primary audio data were transcribed in detail into word documents in Amharic language and then translated into English language. Next to this, codes were drawn for the translated text and so as to reduce overlap and redundancy of codes, several codes were collapsed to recurrent themes as per the three specific objectives of the study and analyzed accordingly. Finally, many sub-themes were drawn and analyzed under each main theme. Data collected from documents were also supplemented and analyzed under each

themes and sub-themes of the study. Overall, the thematic analysis techniques passed the steps like Familiarization of the meaning of each collected data, grouping the huge data into group of codes, generating themes and sub-themes from the coded data, reviewing searched themes and sub-themes to align with specific objectives of the study, defining and naming themes and writing ups of the analysis under each searched themes and sub-themes. To this end, interactive thematic analysis strategy was applied in this research.

### **3.5. Ethical Consideration**

Admassie (2010), has clearly pointed out that “research must be regulated by ethical norms and values.” In this regard, the researcher will follow all ethical guidelines while collecting data from in-depth interviewees and key informants. Thus, all information obtained from the sources were kept and treated confidentially. The data were analyzed and interpreted without naming any of the informants. The different assumptions and theories that were utilized from other sources (books, journals, research reports and social media) were properly cited and acknowledged.

In doing so, a letter of informed consent was prepared and plainly read and explained to the participants. The researcher has communicated the target of the study orally to the study participants. Efforts were made to aware Participants that they have the right to refuse to participate and to stop participation at any time.

### **3.6. Ensuring Validity and Reliability**

In this study, combinations of different methods for data collection were used. As indicated above, in-depth interview was a principal data collection tool in which diverse and direct voices of informants were addressed on the subject understudy. Using this method, experiences of PR personnel on the practices of PR in CSR programs of the company were collected so as to address the detailed objectives of the study. In addition to this method, efforts were made to triangulate the trustworthiness of the collected primary data through document analysis from different sources. Data collected using in-depth interview was complemented through data accessed from the company’s website and Facebook pages. In doing so, information released in the form of news, press releases and mass awareness rising in different timeframe works in relation with CSR programs of the company were utilized and supplemented with the firsthand data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Here, the PR activities, messages, strategy and models practiced by CCBA are coded as recurrent patterns and hence analyzed as the thematic issues of the subject understudy. Under each thematic issue, sub-themes are searched and analyzed. Finally, each thematic issues and sub-themes are discussed in relation with the major findings of previous researches conducted in the area.

The overall Role of PR in CSR programs of the company are analyzed. As far as practices of PR is concerned, existing PR structure of the company, major roles of PR personnel, the role of PR in the initiatives and pillars of CSR , primary stakeholders PR in CSR Programs and PR messages to address company's primary stakeholders of CSR are analyzed and discussed below.

#### **4.1. Existing Organizational Structure of the Company**

CCBA has formal organizational structures that are established having the roles of owning public relation activities during different CSR program implementations. Accordingly, CSR activities and programs are categorized within sustainability programs under the department of legal affairs, public affairs and communication and sustainability called PACS unit. The unit has PR manager, Sustainability (CSR) manager, communication specialists, Sustainability expert and director of CSR having specific roles and mandates each. However, structurally, the PR and communication department of the company is merged with other unrelated departments like legal counseling department which is found to be unusual in other similar companies. Under this unit, the PR Directorate is assigned in different tasks having shared objective of communicating the Company's CSR programs to different stakeholders.

#### **4.2. Major Roles of PR Directorate in CSR programs**

##### **4.2.1. The Roles of Public Relation Directorate in CSR Programs**

During the Company's CRS programs, the PR manager has given many roles. Among the others, identifying the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the designed CSR program is the primary task of the PR manager. Next to the identification stage, the PR manager, communicates the overall

intention and implementation of the program to the public through different PR tools. In this regard, an informant disclosed the following PR practices that are considered in construction of water project CSR program of the company.

*...Currently, we have an ongoing water project in Bahirdar as its integral part of CSR program to the community. To realize the program, as a PR, we had communicated the identification of the site and objective of the program with the targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders through public consultation as initial stage of the program. As part of it, we have identified the potential of the company and other collaborative companies working their business in the region that have the same vision and objectives align with our company. In doing so, we had convinced the stakeholders and the community. Though it is in process, we are constructing huge water project with a company's CSR motto of drop of water in the working the project. Due to the extensive PR practices in placed, the program is now on the verge of completion. (Interviewee 1)*

Furthermore, doing analysis about the company's political, economic and environmental implications of the designed CSR program of the company is also a major role and responsibility of the PR in CCBA. These roles and practices of PR are intended to avoid scam and public dissatisfactions. Subsequently, stakeholders mapping is the prominent role of PR to make sure that whether the CSR program reaches to beneficiaries or not. In addition, making the government active participant is a key PR tool and practice during implementation of CSR programs of the company.

The other task of the PR in CSR works is organizing events, preparing key messages and contents to make sure whether stakeholders are communicated properly or not. Thus, in each CSR projects of the company, PR practices are scrutinized and communicated properly. An informant added his account on the issue as:

*...Our company seriously cares about the role and practices of PR during CSR programs. There is a common belief that PR practices during CSR should be taken as sales drive for the business so that every PR practices must be communicated properly... (Interviewee 1)*

Therefore, as to the responses of above informant, CCBA considered the practices of PR as integral task of the company during the plans and implementations of CSR programs. Due to this firm belief, the company established PR units and utterly work towards it. To this end, different PR tools like paid media, earned media, social media (websites, Facebook) and other platforms are in placed to initiate and communicate the CSR stakeholders of the company.

Furthermore, as to Holme and Watts (2000), CSR activities must be properly communicated in order to combat the growing skepticism of corporate communication, particularly among companies that exaggerate their social behaviors. In line with the above findings, For Ertem (2016), through dialogue and negotiation, PR cultivates relationships between an organization and the general public.

Moreover, this finding is in line with the central assumptions of excellence theory. According to the theory, the foremost importance of PR targets on the interaction between companies and its general communities. The theory recognized that proper way of PR communication in companies CSR programs is a bridge between companies and communities.

#### **4.2.2. The Roles of Director in CSR Programs**

The director has the role of leading and managing the overall activities of the company placed at the top management position in the company including the PR practices in CSR programs. Accordingly, CSR initiatives of serving the community, economic inclusion and establishment basic social institution for the community are implemented by the decision of the director. Along with the CSR initiatives, the director also monitors and evaluates the PR practices in placed during the CSR programs.

Furthermore, the director has the mandate to make relationship with stakeholders, give strategic direction, and solve operational challenges faced during implementation of CSR programs through discussion with other concerned bodies of the company and mother companies. Accordingly, the CSR policy of the company that indicates the focus areas, potential supporters of the program, ways of implantation and other issues is formulated by the supervision of the director. Allocating budget for the program including its sources, priority of beneficiaries is also decided by the director. Thus, the overall plan, implementation, reporting and evaluation of CSR programs of the company along with the proper PR practices communicated in the program are the official mandates of the director.

#### **4.2.3. The Roles of CSR Manager in CSR Programs**

The CSR manger in CSR programs of the company has its own role in the PAC unit. Important of all, the manager has a mandate of decision making in the corporation communication process. In the structure, there is a professional expert under sustainability department who have given the

role of undertaking CSR programs of the company. The CSR program is implemented based on the needs of the beneficiary community. To this end, the CSR manager along with sustainability expert under her assesses and analyzes the community needs in line with the business interest of the company and bring for the decision. The manager also has the role of portraying PR messages in a manner that promote the objectives and mission of the company. On the other hand, the proposed PR messages are not communicated in the ways that potentially damage the business of the company. An informant who works in this unit express the idea as:

*...We designed PR messages and communicate them in a careful manner during initiations and implementations of CSR programs. To this end, the PAC affairs manager collaborates with communication specialist each other on issues like how to design communication messages, prefer communication channels and strategies to address the stakeholders. All communication practices are delivered in line with the objectives of the business of the company. Thus, the role and practices of PR is given high emphasis in our company. (Interviewee 2)*

Thus, according to the above informant's personal account, the role of PR is very high in CSR programs of the company. Due to this reason, all PR practices including contents and elements of message, selection of the communication channel and the strategies to communicate the messages are scrutinized by the communication team. These findings are similar with the previous research findings conducted in the area. For example, according to Roberts (2004), PR personnel in CSR projects are accountable for preparing text messages, discourses; media briefs, and own different social media communication outlets. As to this study, such communication personnel are mandated to manage numerous communication tasks using different communication cues like through interactive personal memo, email dispatches and other ICT based communication alternatives.

#### **4.2.4. The Roles of Communication Specialist in CSR Programs**

Like other PR personnel, the communication specialist in the structure of CSR unit has many roles. In most cases, the communication specialist shares communication messages using different platforms like in paid Medias, publically shared Medias, privately owned Medias and social media. Likewise, the communication specialist in collaboration with other communication personnel participates on the identification and selection of projects that are helpful for the community. Besides, the sustainability team communicates with different stakeholders of the

company like the individuals, government or NGOs in general and CSR program targets in particular through different communication tools. This section also has the role of publicizing the CSR works of the company not only for partners, supporters and stakeholders but also for other government, non-government bodies and the public in general. The assumption behind the communication of all the direct and indirect stakeholders is because the company is working with them so that it is important to publicize the transparent and impartiality of the work.

Therefore, as to the responses of different PR personnel, the roles of PR and PR personnel are too paramount in CSR projects of the company. Despite the different task divisions of PR personnel, their ultimate objective is to make the PR practices effective. Thus, both the managers and experts own the communication tasks of the company during CSR works. They design, plan and publicize communication messages using different communication channels and models. This finding is similar with the findings of Reeves (2016), Zurita (2006), Holme and Watts, (2000). Accordingly, for Reeves (2016), in nearly all corporations with CSR programs, PR is tasked with communicating such efforts to the public. According this study, PR is vital cog in the wheels of communicational and image activity of companies within the context of communities where they operate. Similarly, as to Zurita (2006), a corporate management function, PR has the responsibility to communicate and promote CSR programs. According to this finding, CSR programs should be a collective effort of public relations, management and employees. PR performs environmental scanning functions, monitors potential opportunities or threats to CSR programs, communicates CSR information to the public, and establishes relationships with the community.

#### **4.2.5. The Role of Sustainability Affairs Expert**

The Sustainability affair Expert has a lot of role in PACS department. Among this, Creation and development of the company's short- and long-term sustainability strategies and Research regulatory compliance requirements that impact the company's operations is included.

Development and implementation of social responsibility initiatives and Development of communication materials for employees about a company's sustainability goals is one of the roles of the expert. Also, Organization of company-wide voluntary environmental activities such as, exploring ways to integrate recycled materials into a company's production line is part of the

responsibility of the sustainability affairs expert. The expert plays an important role in Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of sustainability programs and, if necessary, recommends changes to address strategic gaps together with the PACS department and Partner with vendors committed to promoting environmentally friendly initiatives.

Therefore, together with the Public Relation Directorate and sustainability manager in PACS department, the sustainability affairs expert is assisting the communication process regarding CSR programs using both print and digital media by addressing stakeholders about CCBA's CSR initiatives and beneficiaries.

#### **4.3. The Role of PR in the initiatives and pillars of CSR Programs**

CCBA has many initiatives and pillars of CSR in the areas where it operates its business. Economic inclusion, establishment of public institutions and environmental protection are found to be key Pillars and initiatives of CSR in the company. Under each CSR pillars, the practices of PR is given due attention. Every initiative is communicated to the relevant concerned bodies, stakeholders and the community at large through different communication modalities. As to the informants of the study, as far as sustainability of the company is concerned, CSR is compulsory and to this end PR is a tool to publicize the work. An informant discloses his view in the following way:

*...We know that CSR initiative very paramount for our company because we sell our product to the community. It is a matter sustaining the business. We have areas that should be given back for the community with different priorities because we stay in the business in Ethiopia for about 62 years and we believe that in addition to making profit, we have to benefit the community. For this reason, we are engaging in different CSR programs and we communicate the program using different communication tools like using mass Medias and social Medias. ((Interviewee 1 & 2)*

Another informant also adds the following points:

*...As part of CSR, first we have to give back for the community, second working with the right principle and guidelines and paying tax deserved for the government is important and that is why we have survived for more than 62 years. Thus, for all CSR initiatives, communicating the stakeholders is very critical and we are doing that. (Interviewee 4)*

Therefore, according to the above informants' views, CCBA have strongly established principles and practices of serving the community in different area and communicating it using appropriate communication tools and strategies.

#### **4.3.1. Economic Inclusion as CSR Program**

The company assumed economic inclusions especially dealing with empowering females and youths as CSR. With, this principle, the company had given different business trainings for the female youths for the last 5 and 6 years by professional to fulfill it CSR. Supporting them financially and creating job opportunity were the intended objectives of the program. Furthermore, the company selected many females and youths and benefited them by recycling and selling the plastics byproducts. This CSR initiative had also environmental protection concern. In this program, about 15,000 females and youths are benefited in which many of them become economically self-sufficient who they are earned monthly income of 3000 birr on average. During these CSR initiatives, the company had communicated its stakeholders in different ways. An informant explain the PR practices as

*...We had communicated our economic inclusion CSR programs properly. We made it to broadcast by government and private mainstream Medias. We communicate our stakeholders with our Facebook page and website. We had public meeting with the beneficiaries and concerned government bodies many PR practices. Thus, as much as possible, we had tried to communicate our works. (Interviewee 1, 2 & 4)*

In addition to the primary data collected from informants, document review utilized from CCBA group website clearly showed that economic inclusion of Women and Youth are the major pillar of CSR of the company. According to the review, each CSR decision of the company is to make a chance for the community to do the right thing. The company has a CSR motto we must help care for the people and communities we depend on to succeed. Under this motto, one way to support communities is by empowering women and youth. In the company's website, the following statement is marked to show its concern to CSR works.

*...“Across local communities in the territories, we give back every year to help make them stronger and more prosperous.”(CCBA Group Website)*

As indicated in the company's website, the objective of this CSR initiative is because women and youth are integral to the company continent's shared success, the company seeks to empower them by enabling their economic inclusion through training and community programs

throughout the company's markets. The company's approach to women and youth empowerment programs is that they be targeted at current or potential entrepreneurs with the possibility to link to the Coca-Cola value chain today or in the future. As indicated in the websites, this CSR program exceeded its goal – in total, six million women around the world gained access to business skills, financial services, assets and support networks of peers and mentors, giving them the confidence, skills and resources to thrive while also helping to create sustainable communities. Furthermore, as part of the Company's CSR program, the company reached close to 60% of unemployment in Africa being among the youth, economic inclusion of young people is critical.

Therefore, as to the direct accounts of the above informant and document analysis, economic inclusion and empowerment of women and youths is integral pillar of CSR project of the company and these works were communicated to the responsible stakeholders using a combination of different communication tools like mass Medias, social Medias and public meetings.

#### **4.3.2. Establishment of Public Service Institutions as CSR Program**

The company is giving back for the community through establishments of public service provider institutions like schools. So as to create suitable learning environment, the company builds elementary and high schools in different times. During these times, PR was played an important role to publicize the responsible organs and stakeholders. Here three informants express the CSR practices implemented by PR as:

*...As a CSR program, our company did a lot for the last few years. For example we have built a school having 8 classrooms and library upon the establishment of our new factory in Bahirdar. Moreover, we have also built a school in Sebeta before 2 years ago, 3 months before the establishment of our new factory. We have built a G+1 school having 12 classrooms and library in ambo before 6 months. We have communicated the works using different plat forms like in TV, radio, Facebook, newspapers brochures and mass meetings. (Interviewee 1, 2, & 4)*

#### **4.3.3. Environmental Protection as CSR**

The company has CSR programs intended to protect environment and other natural resources. The company's environmental protection initiative is called “**world without waste**”. Nowadays, the company has a program of plastic collection and recycling and supporting youths. Here The

PR Directorate takes part in communicating the youths who are involved in the collection plastics so as to encourage and strengthen the plastic collection process.

*...“CCBA and all its bottling partners with the PR directorate are leading in the industry to help collect for recycling a bottle or can for one we sell by 2030. Regardless of where it comes from, we want every package to have more than one life.”(CCBA Group Website)*

Therefore, the researcher interpreted that the PR Directorate takes the lion’s share in awareness creation of the company’s different CSR pillars in order to achieve the mission and vision of the company.

#### **4.3.4. Fulfillment of Basic Communal Public Needs of the Community**

The company also has CSR projects targeted on fulfillment of basic communal owned necessities of the community. As part of it, there are initiatives to construct water projects for the community. The company believes that water is critical and need to have parameters to measure and ensure whether the communities living in the areas of the company have access to water or not. Based on this parameter, if the community has not access to water, the try to construct water project and provide pure drinking water for the community. An informant discloses the company’s experience on the issue as:

*...Water project is very expensive for the community to build so that we are trying to take parts our CSR in area. For example, we have constructed 6 water projects and provide for the community in Diredawa specifically in Hule Bule before two years ago and more than 7000 people are served with this service. We also fund for an NGO called drop of water and sign an envoy to collaborate and build a big reservoir in Bahirdar before one year ago. When this project is finalized, 17, 000 households will be served with pure drinking water. These sustainability works are properly communicated in different communication tools and models. (Interviewee 1)*

Despite the above expression of an informant, the practices of PR in CSR programs are not as such well integrated by proper communication tools and strategies. Accordingly, an informant illustrates his view on the practices of PR during CSR projects as:

*...I can’t say that we have communicated all the CSR projects and efforts in a well-integrated manner. We have communication gaps. We didn’t communicate all CSR works implemented by the company appropriately. Due to this reason, people don’t know what we are doing. We didn’t communicate it properly using Medias and we have identified this as our gap. To*

*fill the gap, we start communicating digitally using social Medias. Now, we are on Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, and instagram. (Interviewee 1 & 4)*

#### **4.3.5. Participation on the Social Problems of the Community**

CCBA has CSR concerns on the different social problems and seasonal phenomenon of the community. The company has also CSR plans to contribute on the recovery of the community from unanticipated natural hazards like flooding. An informant narrates practical experiences of the company on the issues as the followings:

*...The communication department specifically the PR Directorate and the communication specialist are assigned to ensure and evaluate how the sustainability tasks are communicated properly. We have also started payment mainstream Medias to publicize our CSR projects and progresses. For example, so far, we have invited Medias during school project inauguration. During Covid-19 pandemic, we provide preventive materials in kind for different members of the community which were valued 6.5 million birr. The supports were delivered by Ethiopian Red Cross Society and Addis Ababa, Dire dawa and Mekelle city administrations. We have communicated these supports using different mainstream Medias. Public and Private TVs and Radios have given wide media coverage for these CSR initiatives. (Interviewee 1&3)*

In addition to the above primary data, information gained from CCBA group website indicated that the CSR participation of the company during different incidents and social problems of the community is too high. For instance, it is reported in the company's website that People affected by the war in Northern Ethiopia have been provided with relief worth 6 million birr by Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA), including school materials and Minute Maid juice. As to this report, the materials were handed over to Atse Yohannes School, Mekele Hospital, and two IDP centers in Tigray Region when CCBA in Ethiopia MD, Daryl Wilson visited the war-affected area. Besides, the review of the website showed that CCBA in Ethiopia also donated to the drought-affected areas of Oromia and the Ethiopia-Somali region earlier this year.

Furthermore, document analysis made based on the company's 2020 strategy showed that CSR sits at the heart of the CCBA. Indeed, CSR is given pride of place in the strategy and seen as critical to the sustainability of the Company. As indicated in the document, for CCBA, sustainability is a long term commitment to creating shared value for its business, its partners and the community it serves and believes that "When we rise, Africa Rises." Through three pillars – A refreshed Africa, An empowered Africa, and A healthy Africa, the CCBA seeks to serve by working together, creating social value and make a positive difference for the customers and

communities. These CSR initiatives and visions are well communicated to the stakeholders using different online communication platforms using their facebook pages, instagram and websites.

Therefore, as to the diverse voices of the informants and the document review, CCBA is participated in different CSR projects. Economic inclusion, environmental protection, prevention of social pandemics, taking part to solve social problems and supporting the community during natural hazards are some of the areas in which the company is contributed and plan to contribute more. Though, they are not satisfactory, the company is communicated these CSR contributions using different communication messages, tools and models. In most cases, these works are publicized to the stakeholders and society through mainstream Medias, Social Medias, and sometimes via public meetings. This finding is supported by stakeholders' theory and legitimacy theory. According to the central essence of stakeholders' theory, CSR programs of corporations maintain a strong interrelation and interconnection with community and business components. As the theory, if companies achieve their CSR and communicate it accordingly, the company will gain the trust and loyalty of all stakeholders. The above mentioned CSR initiatives of CCBA fit with the central assumption of this theory.

Moreover, According to legitimacy theory, public relations work is to ensure alignment of business and societal expectations as a component of business goal attainment. As to this theory, corporations can be responsive and interactive as well as reactive to social needs in their CSR programs. CCBA considered the aforementioned CSR programs and communicate them in accordance with the central argument of this theory.

#### **4.4. Primary Stakeholders in CSR Programs**

As indicated earlier, CSR works of CCBA are targeted and communicated to its primary stakeholders. The stakeholders comprise different portions of the community that might be either internal or external. In this regard, beneficiaries from different places, government, NGOs and the society at large are primary stakeholders of the company. Thus, the contents, tools, channels and strategies of communication are primarily intended to address these stakeholders. In fact, the stakeholders are identified and determined based on the nature of the specific CSR project. For instance, if the nature of the planned CSR project is donation, government, NGOs, targeted beneficiaries and Medias will be the primary stakeholders and hence the contents of the communication will be designed to address these bodies. Four informant pinpoints their point on the issue as:

*...We had CSR projects focused on the construction of water pipes in different. During the implementations of these projects, the local community and government where the projects were constructed were our primary stakeholders. Besides, partner NGO working in area and Medias that gave coverage were also our stakeholders. Due to this reason, we have communicated these bodies through different ways from the initial to the completion of the tasks. We wrote letters to the government bodies and NGOs. We had invited different Medias and PR personnel to publicize the work. We had community consultation with the beneficiaries to launch the projects. (Interviewee 1, 2, 3 &4)*

#### **4.4.1. Internal Stakeholders**

The internal stakeholders of the company are people and entities that directly and indirectly participate in the operation of the company's business in general and implementation of CSR projects in particular. Company's employees, managers and different departments that have participation on different CSR works are the primary stakeholders. Because these actors have their own impact on the operations of CSR works provided for the targeted community in one or another way. Thus, PR messages, tools and strategies designed to address the internal stakeholders are somehow peculiar from the communication messages prepared for external stakeholders. In most cases, these internal stakeholders are communicated using Quarterly Internal Newsletters, letters, announcements posted on internal boards, phone calls, emails, group telegrams; inter personal communication and group meetings. Contents of the messages are intended as informing notifications, calls, commands, urges, decisions and warnings.

This finding is in line with the findings of previous researches and theoretical assumption of stakeholders' theory. According to Wragg (1992), employees are primary stakeholders that enable the organization to carry out their day to day functions including CSR programs. Furthermore, as to stakeholders' theory, Stakeholders include anyone who affects or is affected by the organization as it goes about achieving its goals (Freeman, 1984). Therefore the researcher understands that there is an effective communication among internal stakeholders of the company.

#### **4.4.2. External Stakeholders**

Depending on the nature of the CSR project, the company has many external stakeholders. Beneficiaries of CSR projects are key external stakeholders of the company. Most of the time, these stakeholders are communicated through meetings, campaigns and promotion. Messages

that raise awareness and understanding; seek acceptance, initiation and support and consultation; publicize the objective and contribution of the company are the core contents of the communication. Two informants reflect their points on the issue as:

*...Beneficiaries who are addressed in our CSR projects are primary external stakeholders because without the participation of these actors, the project implementation couldn't be effective. For instance, we had different CSR projects in Addis Ababa, Lideta sub city, Ambo, Diredawa, Bahirdar and Ambo. Thus, our communication tools are targeted to address these bodies mostly using community meetings and consultations. (Interviewee 1 & 3))*

Besides, the government at different level is the primary stakeholder during CSR project plans, implementations and evaluations. These include federal, regional, zonal, woreda and city administrations of the government. Based on the nature of the project all the social, political and economic sectors of the government are external stakeholders. The participation of the government as key external stakeholder of the company expressed by an informant in the following way:

*...Government as an entity is our key stakeholder. For example, whenever we built a school at Sebeta so the first stakeholders we considered are the community themselves because we took their land to build the school. The Government specifically mayor of the woreda and managers of the woreda were active actors. Generally, the stakeholders of this project were all bodies that were involved, supported and engaged in the plan and implementation processes. Thus, during the work, we have invited people from different stakeholders to communicate and let them know about the project. People from national bank, investment commission, ministry of trade and industry were invited and communicated during the inauguration of the project. (Interviewee 5)*

Furthermore, Medias like print, broadcast, online and mainstream media are external stakeholders of the company's CSR works. These stakes are found to be crucial to publicize the work for the public. The company's communication department invites these stakeholders using different modalities including media briefs and press releases. Non-governmental organizations and other partners are also external stakeholders of the company. An informant expresses his view on the issue as:

*...As CSR project, we had plastic recycling initiative. Individuals who organized to collect the plastics are from different woredas and sub cities; government sectors like water and sewerage office, Dry rubbish Scavenging agency, ministry of labor and social affairs, women and children affaires and NGOs were external stakeholders of the project and communicated accordingly. (Interviewee 1)*

Therefore, as to the direct accounts of the above informants, CCBA has many external stakeholders that are determined based on the intent of the specific project. In nutshell, the beneficiaries of the CSR projects, government, NGOs, Medias are the external stakeholders of the company. To this end, communication messages, contents, tools and models are developed and delivered based up on the nature and objective of the project. This finding is supported by previous research findings conducted in the area. According to Wragg (1992), media who reach the people with and opinions and work as a link (press, radio, TV etc) and the community; people who live near the organization's premises are stakeholders of companies.

Likewise, as to Coombs & Holladay (2012) Stakeholders want to learn more about corporations' CSR efforts. Dawkins (2004) and Morsing & Schultz (2006) also indicated that stakeholders would be interested in information related to what social causes companies support, such as environmental, public education, or health-related causes, and stakeholders' involvement in the company's. Similarly, as to Schlegelmilch & Pollach (2005), given the importance of stakeholder involvement in determining positive CSR outcomes communicating the types of supported social causes with stakeholders is critical. According to this study, providing information about why the company supports a particular CSR cause (i.e., intentions or motives) should be secured in CSR communications. Maignan & Ferrell (2004) also advocate for the incorporation of CSR into corporate communication in a manner that businesses cannot hope to reap concrete benefits from CSR unless they intelligently communicate about their initiative to relevant stakeholders. Likewise, for Coombs & Holladay (2011), the presence of partnerships with or endorsements from other credible third-party organizations has been identified as an important key to reducing consumer skepticism in CSR communication. Based on these selection criteria, government, NGOs and beneficiaries are the most common external stakeholders of companies in their CSR initiatives.

More importantly, this finding is in accordance with the central assumptions of Excellence theory and stakeholders' theory. According to excellence theory, in order to sustain any business, it must consider the business stakeholders as well as the management. Thus, in line with the central idea of this theory, CCBA has internal and external stakeholders to its CSR initiatives. Also, stakeholders' theory claims that PR practitioners should identify their primary stakeholders in CSR program which may include individuals, groups, and external organizations affect their company. Thus the researcher understands that the PR Directorate achieve excellency regarding

identification of CSR stakeholders and Beneficiaries to align with mission and vision of the company.

#### **4.5. Contents and Elements of PR Messages in CSR Programs**

The messages that are intended to be communicated during the plans and implementations of CSR projects are designed and delivered with careful considerations. Though, the contents of messages are dependent on the nature of the project, efforts are made towards the clarity and simplicity of them. To this end, the contents of the messages pass through different interrelated steps and team evaluations. First of all, along with the plans of the CSR plans, communication messages are drafted appropriately. Next to this the drafted messages are evaluated as what to communicate with the government, beneficiaries or nonprofit organizations. Finally, the evaluated communication messages will be briefed to the different media actors for publication. For instance if the CSR project is on the construction of school, the key messages would be informing the school type, how it is built, the targeted beneficiaries will be set and delivered to the public.

Most of the time, the objective of the CSR work; driving principles towards the task and the expected positive outcomes and impacts on the beneficiaries are contents of the communication messages. Furthermore, transparency and completeness of the communication messages are considered.

In some cases, communication messages that are intended to persuade the stakeholders specifically the decision makers like the government are designed during CSR project plans. However, persuasion is not as such common in CSR projects instead mutual understanding or consensus is more preferable because sometimes the company's priority and stakeholders and beneficiaries needs may differ. Whenever, specifically communicate end products of CSR projects, the company communicates beneficiaries, stakeholders and other concerned stakeholders of the issue.

On the other hand, communication messages that target to promote, aware the brands, and a marketing tool or image building of the company's product. The company has a principle stated as CSR is a matter self-initiated responsibility and communication messages that have business promotion nature are not appropriate and hence not used during the CSR projects. Because, CSR works are aimed to help the community not to promote the business. Likewise, every stories of CSR are not publicized in Medias rather core contents are selected as per the intended objective

of the communication. In most cases, CSR works are communicated during inauguration with the intention of provoking and initiating other similar companies to follow the company's footprint and experiences. The key contents of communication messages during the startup and operation phases focused to initiate the support of other partners and ownership belongingness of the beneficiaries to words the CSR project. Thus, the communication messages of the company are designed and communicated to publicize its contribution of CSR and then to call and appear as role model for other companies. Besides, the public relation of CCBA during CSR works has objectives of promoting the culture of CSR. As to an informant, the company has the following Public relations experience in relation with CSR.

*...Basically, we didn't use CSR as a marketing tool or image building because CSR is a method of business promotion. For instance, we built schools and water pipes for the community in different areas. In these projects, we helped many community members and we believe that this is compulsory which the minimum contribution of the company is. However, whenever we communicated it to the stakeholders, we didn't exploit it for marketing purpose. Instead, we had public discussion with the beneficiaries and other concerned stakes as if the initiative is the social responsibility of the company. (Interviewee 1)*

Therefore, the objective and contents of the designed communication messages of the company is just to broadcast the project is done by the Company and assure the communities sense of ownership. In connection with this, at the beginning of the CSR project, the community members are communicated in public meeting to pledge willingness of giving their communal lands and sites for the intended project constructed by the company. In doing so, the company's communication team tried to respond dilemmas in relation with land ownership of land and other natural resources proposed for the project construction or building.

Besides, the communication department of the company organizes public meeting with the local stakeholders where the company is operating its business at least annually. The central messages forwarded in such type of meetings focused to evaluate the outcomes of CSR projects. Besides, general information about the company is delivered to the surrounding stakeholders. Accordingly, an informant narrates the nature and contents of communication messages as:

*...We don't advertise CSR works. If there is basic news that should be broadcasted, we release it. Contents of communication messages released for the communities are not value laden statements that are only shared by the company but they should be factual information. We don't communicate CSR works to promote our market instead works that have been done to help the*

*communities in the areas of environmental protection; job creation and women empowerment are communicated appropriately. (Interviewee 1)*

Another informant further adds her points as:

*...We only communicate the factual information of CSR works only for one season and anyone can access the information. Such types of communication messages couldn't be repeated or re-communicated as advertisements. This is what makes communication in CSR different from other company's marketing communications like promotions and advertisements and this is the guiding principle of Coca Cola Beverages Africa. (Interviewee 3)*

Therefore, as to the statements of the above diverse informants, the contents, elements and objectives of CSR works communication messages in CCBA is somehow peculiar from marketing communication. As to them, communication messages that have nature of promotion, advertisement, and aware the brand of the company are not appropriate ways to CSR projects. The company has guiding principle communication messages designed for CSR should avoid such nature of communication. To this end, the contents or elements of communication messages during CSR works are designed in a scrutinized manner and broadcasted after evaluation by the communication team. Moreover, efforts are made to make the communication messages factual, clear and simple before they are publicized. This Finding is in line with other research findings of Batchariyan & Sen (2010); Dahiya & Singh, (2012); Coombs & Holladay (2012) and Morsing & Schultz, 2006 and Kim & lee, 2012). According to these research findings, if CSR is communicated too loudly, using a marketing-like style, the stakeholders may see the company as calculating and sanctimonious. For instance, for Kim and lee (2012), trustworthiness is the proper principle to communicate company's CSR related information and hence misleading and unrealistic information may deteriorate the trust of stakeholders towards the company's information.

Likewise, according to Batchariyan & Sen (2010), consumers are more likely to be doubtful of hidden causes when the CSR message is communicated like as marketing advertisement. As to them, much effort in CSR promotion can lead to negative reaction of the public towards CSR initiatives of company's and this in turn negatively influence the company's honesty by its stakeholders.

Dahiya & Singh, (2012) also indicated that the credibility and acceptability of any information system in CSR depend upon how much accurate, cost-effective, reliable, timeliness, aggregate information produced and also its user-friendly form, easy to access and well protected from

unauthorized accesses. Similarly, as to Coombs & Holladay (2012), CSR information should focus on facts rather than self-promotion of the company's product.

More importantly, the above finding is at the crux of legitimacy theory. As to the argument of this theory, company's acceptability in CSR is attained through appropriate, correct, or suitable within some publically built system of customs, standards, views, and descriptions PR messages. As to the theory whenever there is inaccurate release of information, acceptability breaches develop.

#### **4.5.1. Channels of Communication in CSR Programs**

After the designing and setting of CSR communication messages, the appropriate channels of communications are selected by the communication team of the company. To this end the communication channel and media is proposed and selected based on its public trust and coverage. In this regard, the following are the widely used communication channels for the CSR works of the company. It can either be through mass media or interpersonal communication. Thus, it can be said that the company is using conventional Medias like print, electronic and mass Medias.

Before broadcasting and communicating CSR works, the company has mechanisms of preference of communication channels for each works. Subsequently, news that deserve social media coverage and news that deserves national media are not equal. The preference is assessed based on the impact of the CSR project and the recipients of the message. For instance CSR project that has wider geographical coverage is preferred to be broadcasted in national mass medias where as small events are preferred to be released by social medias. Basically, there are different Communication channels for internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, the detailed appropriate media channels of the company selected in CSR works for internal and external stakeholders are analyzed below.

##### **4.5.1.1. Internal Channels of communication for CSR**

Internally, the company communicates its stakeholders using different channels. Internal communication sites are widely used in this regard. For example, **Yammer** is a software product in the Microsoft system which is commonly used for internal communications (employees) by Coca Cola Company including CCBA. Likewise, the company's business social Medias such as organizational telegram, outlook and email are important channels to communicate its

employees. To use Yammer, all employees need to have business email of the company. Using this platform, all internal stakeholders (employees) have access to communicate on the company's issues including CSR issues. Three informants disclose his points on the issues communicated in this channel as

*...On the platform, we communicate the plans we have on CSR initiatives; where we implement the plan; stakeholders we need to support and other related issues of CSR. Accordingly, whenever we have implemented different CSR works in Ambo, Bahirdar and Diredawa, our employees as integral part of the job were communicated using Yammer to engage in the projects. We also communicated the employees using the organization secured telegram group. (Interviewee 1, 3 & 4)*

In addition to the above concept, the company also communicated its employees with messages posted on internal notice boards. Using this platform, the employees are communicated the CSR works of the company projects from the plan to the execution phases. Notices of participations and general information of the CSR works of the company are communicated using this platform. Besides, as part of internal CSR communication, the company has quarterly newsletter published per quarters. Using this modality, major achievements in relation with CSR works of the company are communicated for employees in every 3 months. Finally, the company has communication modalities through employee quarterly organized meetings.

#### **4.5.1.2. External Channels of communication for CSR**

In addition to the above internal communication channels, the different external communication channels in which CCBA employs for its CSR related works are presented, analyzed and interoperated in the following sections.

##### **4.5.1.2.1. ICT Based Communication Channels**

It is obvious that the use of ICT is important options of channels of communication for companies in the era of globalization. Websites, different social media pages like Facebook, LinkedIn, tweeter, instagram and telegram are the dominant ones. Accordingly, CCBA of Ethiopia found to communicate its primary stakeholders by using many of these ICT based communication channels. The company has its own group website to communicate its works including CSR works under sustainability section. Though the website is not actively owned and managed by CCBA, it is important to gather public opinions and comments. In fact, the reason behind the poor management of the website is associated with the international nature of the company in which the website is not only specifically to Ethiopia's branch but also for other

14 African countries as well centered in Atlanta. However, the company website administered in Atlanta is accessible as coca cola.com that is based in Atlanta and its international one. But, the company has its own dedicated website page in Ethiopia under the group website that is administered and provided contents by communication department. Using this page, Ethiopian based CSR initiatives in the areas of water pipe construction, economic inclusion and environmental protection are communicated to stakeholders. An informant depicts his views on the usage of website as:

*...For Ethiopia section, our department provides factual information and makes an update on CSR works of the company using our websites page. The sustainability CSR works communicated in the page includes the environmental protection, water, consumer well-being. Messages of CSR works that we do appeared in the website. (Interviewee 1, 3, & 5)*

In addition to website, Facebook is the widely used communication channel of CCBA. In this platform, the company's publications and audios in relation with CSR works are posted officially. Moreover, direct words of the officials pronounced during CSR works are appeared in this communication channel. Overall, small or large gatherings, inauguration events, formal events and anniversary in relation with CSR works of the company are communicated using this channel.

In addition, using social Medias like email and Telegram, the company communicates its stakeholders that new and unfamiliar. More specifically, those international stakeholders who live in abroad are communicated in these types of modalities.

Therefore, in line with other communication channels, ICT based communication channels particularly website, Facebook, email and others are commonly used channels to communicate CSR works of the company. This finding is supported by previous research findings. Accordingly, Qualman (2012) found that social media is playing an important role in enabling two-way dialogical communication. As to this study, social media sites can sustain communication and relationships between businesses and the general public due to their instant feedback features.

#### **4.5.1.2.2. Mass Media Channels**

In addition to the above communication channel, the company also releases its CSR works using mass Medias including radio, television, newspapers. The communication team of the company firmly believed that mass Medias are powerful communication channels to share and exchange

messages or information with wide and large audiences. Thus, radio and television broadcasting and the on-rush of digital technologies have influenced strategies for reaching rural communities. According to the informants' responses of the study, though the use of mass media is very common for other marketing related communications, it is very rare for CSR works. An informant reveals his ideas on the issue as:

*...We also communicate our CSR works using multimedia with standardized qualities. For this purpose, we feed audios, videos and pictures with high resolutions for Medias in addition to their own. We arrange relevant people for an interview, documentary or graphics used for broadcasting. (Interviewee 1)*

#### **4.5.1.2.3. Public Meetings**

Public meeting is a participatory communication approach based on dialogue, which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders. In this regard, the company arranges public meeting to discuss and communicate its stakeholders on the company's CSR projects and potential areas of interest to work with. In such types of communication platform, the company invites community level stakeholders or representatives like elders, cultural figures, religious leaders, youths, females and representatives from concerned governmental and non-governmental offices. In addition to the communication team, the company has stakeholders' management team organized to handle this specific task. In doing so, one to one discussions are held and feedbacks are received for further improvements. Two informants express the company's experience on this as:

*...For huge CSR of the company in which multi million beneficiaries potentially used, we announce the project using different communication channels. For example, the CSR works that have been done by the company in Sebeta and Addis Ababa (building of School and construction of water pipe) were communicated through public meeting with the communities at the planning and startup phases. (Interviewee 1, 2, & 5))*

Therefore, as to the direct accounts of the above informants, in addition with other communication channels, public meetings are taken as important communication channel of the company to address its internal and external stakeholders. This finding i.e. the preference of public discussion is supported by other research findings conducted in the area so far. For instance, a study conducted by Kaptein and Tulder (2003) indicated that public dialogue is a stronger form of engagement and more symmetrical relations with stakeholders. According to

this study, such engagement can help all parties to understand each other better, and can shift their relationship from competition and confrontation to cooperation. In addition, it provides better communication on corporate activities, increases accountability and builds trust.

#### **4.5.1.2.4. Inter-personal communication**

Inter-personal channels literally involve face-to-face exchange between two individuals. Accordingly, some CSR works of CCBA are communicated using this channel. This is especially evident whenever the company wants to aware government officials that have power to decide on the proposed CSR projects for instance to gain land for the CSR projects. Likewise, this channel of communication is used to convince powerful and iconic representatives of the community on the proposed CSR work at its startup phase. To this end, the communication department of the company which supports the PAC unit through direct involvement on the communication work of such type. In this regard, official address of the company like office phones, emails, and its physical address are well communicated for key stakeholders. An informant explains the preferences, manners and processes of this type of communication channel as:

*...Sometimes, we communicate most of our stakeholders in person and official means of communications. For instance, if the stakeholder we communicate has higher position, we communicate him/her through official letters, emails, and phone calls and in person so as to ease the communication process. (Interviewee 1)*

#### **4.5.1.2.5. Press Release**

Press releases are found to be important communication channels for CSR works of the company. This modality is preferred to release new inaugurations, progress and evaluation outcomes for selected and limited Medias so as to broadcast it. We don't **advertise** CSR and sustainability works rather we **communicate**. During this time, precautions are made to not **promote** the product of the company rather factual information on CSR related works are delivered. An informant illustrates the precautions made during press releases as:

*...During press release, we don't promote our products instead the focus is on CSR works. We promote our products in the marketing department. Even the responsible departments for CSR communication and marketing communication are different. CSR works are communicated by communication department whereas the marketing works are communicated by marketing*

*departments. Thus, serious considerations are made to not communicate CSR works as marketing communication. (Interviewee 1)*

Another informant further adds her point on the issues as:

*...In most cases, we prepare press releases for CSR works. For example, whenever we built school in Ambo, there were selected Medias that invited and released the news on the issue. Medias that participated in the press release communicated as the company has built school as its responsibility of CSR concern. In that time, Instead of promoting the company's product and brand, they promoted the CSR work. (Interviewee 2)*

Again, another informant adds the following points on the use of press release

*...We provide press release for media whenever we have CSR related events. We invite the media to check and do an interview and then release news on the issue. For this reason, we prepare fact sheets to give clarity for the audience. (Interviewee 5)*

Therefore, according to the above informants' responses, CCBA uses a combination of different communication channels for its CSR works. Accordingly, different electronic communications, mass media, press release, public meeting and inter-personal relations of different types are the common communication channels of the company. As to the informants of the study, these communication channels of the company are open to stakeholders and the public at large so that everyone can access them easily. In addition to the open accesses of communication, stakeholders also can visit the CSR works in person. This finding is also supported by the findings of previous researches conducted in the area. For instance, for Black, (1990), no one single communication method can be sufficient in addressing all strata of publics in an organization. Likewise, Wragg (1992) outlines 16 basic cues available to public relations practitioners to effectively reach their target publics, such as press release, case histories or studies, feature article, advertorials, editorial interviews, event press support, analysis briefings, financial reports, political lobbying, newsletters and publications, video and film, conferences and seminars, product launches, special events, promotional items, and corporate image.

According to Coombs & Holladay (2012), CSR information can be integrated into a variety of corporate communication tactics. Likewise, for Kim & Ferguson (2014), CSR communication channels could be controlled and uncontrolled media channels. As to them, advertising, brochures, the company website, social media outlets, newsletters, annual reports, and so on are examples of company-controlled media channels, whereas uncontrolled media channels include news media, expert blogs, and non-company social media.

Sun (2010) also depicted in communicating CSR, companies employ a wide range of ways to reach stakeholders and targeted audiences, including corporate brochures, the intranet, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, trade publications, and corporate websites. The use of websites is now considered the PR industry's first long-term communication strategy, enabling integrated two-way communication between the organization and its stakeholders. Certain public relations scholars describe websites as unidirectional, with the primary goal of disseminating information to present a particular corporate image to the organization's stakeholders. Taylor & White (2000), also presented that contemporary public relations professionals adhere to new technologies, such as website development and dialogic communication.

#### **4.6. CSR Reporting mechanisms**

Like other marketing works of the company, CSR works of the company are reported to the responsible bodies at different phases of the projects. There is reporting mechanisms for the responsible internal stakeholders' monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually in newsletters and employee meetings. In the normal annual reporting formants of the company's, there is a single column dedicated for report of CSR works. The contents of the CSR report are indicated by the informant as the following:

*...The reported issues in relation with CSR include the number of objectives of the projects; beneficiaries in the projects; types of CSR works implemented and its impacts for the communities. (Interviewee 1)*

However, CSR works are rarely reported to external stakeholders instead they are communicated using different communication platforms. Despite this fact, some CSR works of the company are reported to the concerned stakeholders specifically for concerned government bodies.

Therefore, CSR initiatives of the company are reported to different stakeholders using different platforms. This finding is in line with the findings of other researchers. For instance, according to Williams (2008), CSR reporting is the careful, prudent, and official release of voluntary or important information about an organization's social activities. Likewise, as to Amaladoss & Manohar (2013), in order for CSR to produce the desired result, such as contributing to a favorable reputation, organizations must strategically communicate their CSR activities through regular mandatory and voluntary reporting. This communication is frequently crucial in shaping the image of the organization for favorable reputation assessments. Furthermore, Reynolds (2003), claims that CSR reporting is the responsibility of public relations as it is a management

function that interacts with the local community and society as a whole in the best interests of its companies.

From this, the researcher understand that the company didn't documented any published CSR annual report rather PACS department just report to CCBA, South Africa, Headquarter of CCBA and the CSR Contents and Messages are selected and shared in the group websites of sustainability section. Therefore any stakeholder who wants to check CSR annual report of the company couldn't get the document which is a big communication gap that should be improved by the communication department.

#### **4.7. PR Communication Strategies in CSR Programs**

CCBA has its own communication strategies that are considered along with guiding communication guidelines and principles. In fact, the company's communication strategy is found to be project based and there is no specific communication strategy applied for CSR works alone. Since the company is international by its geographical coverage, these communication guidelines have international nature. However, despites its international nature, efforts are made to consider the local culture context during communication. The experiences of the company explained by an informant as:

*...We do have CCBA guidelines as a group which is not specific to the Ethiopia context.*

*However, whenever communicate the local community, we try to contextualize the nature and strategy of the communication including the CSR communications. (Interviewee 1)*

As communication strategy, there is an established guideline that CSR works should not be publicized in manners that promote the products of the company. To communicate CSR works, the company prefers two way communication strategies. In other words, CSR related issues of company are releases by the company's communication team to the community and in turn feedbacks, opinions and suggestions are also gathered from the opposite direction i.e. from the community to the company using different platforms specifically through public meetings. Thus, information is not only provided from the company to the community but also received from the community to the company. In doing so, the concerned stakeholders including the community are not only passive receivers of our CSR related information but also they contribute their part and actively involved in the implementation of CSR works of the company. In this regard, an informant pinpoints the following experiences of the company during CSR works as:

*...The stakeholders participate and forward their views on the implementation of our CSR works. For example, when we built school in Ambo, we called for a meeting to discuss and hear the sayings of the stakeholders. Accordingly, the community has given a comment on the technical part of the project. They appreciated the structural plan of the school. They have also contributed to cover 20% of the total cost in kind. Due to this active involvement, members of the community feel senses of ownership on the project. (Interviewee 1)*

Thus, as to the above informant, as far as communication strategy is concerned, the company has its own communication guidelines and principle. Accordingly, as long as company's business permits, transparency is the guiding communication principle to prefer a specific communication strategy and model of the company especially dealing with CSR and sustainability works. Thus, communication strategies of the company are designed in alignment with community's need and business benefits of the company. Thus, in all circumstances, transparency is the guiding principle especially whenever CSR and sustainability works are communicated internally and externally. This finding is very indistinguishable with the research finding of Coombs & Holladay (2011). According to them, Transparency in CSR communication has been identified as an important key to establishing the credibility of companies' CSR communication by providing information about both the successes and failures of their CSR processes in order to build "a track record of disclosing a range of CSR information.

Based on the above guidelines and principle, different communication channels that promote two-way communication are employed by the company. As indicated earlier, public discussion with concerned stakeholders is the most common two-way communication strategy in which the CSR projects of the company are communicated from the community side to the company. Using this model, the company collects opinions, grievances, feedbacks and questions of the different stakeholders at different phases of CSR projects. Thus, the company prefers means of two way communication strategy i.e. from the company to the stakeholders and vice versa. Three informant expresses the experiences of the company as:

*...We always try to make the communication strategies of the company two ways. Commonly, information regarding the CSR works of the company is communicated to different stakeholders using different channels like through mass Medias and public meetings. This is a strategy to communicate the information from the company's side to the stakeholders. On the other hand, public questions that seek clarity and comments forwarded during public meetings and social Medias are also gathered from the concerned stakes, i.e. from the stakeholders' side to the company.*

*In doing so, we try to check and understand the relevance of forwarded questions for further improvements. In other words forwarded comments and questions from the stakeholders are used to evaluate the communication strategies of the company. (Interviewee 1, 2 & 4)*

In addition to public meetings, the company uses different social media platforms that are intended towards two-way communication strategy. In this regard, CSR related information of the company are disseminated using social Medias and in return forwarded information that appeared in the forms of comments and questions are also collected from stakeholders. Using these media platforms, two-way communication strategy is employed audiences and the views of diverse stakeholders like the public, government and other partners are heard.

In doing so, the company calls its concerned external stakeholders for a meeting during two-way communications so as to receive information from bi-directional discussions where comments, opinions and questions are forwarded from the audiences to the company and vice versa. Likewise, whenever the company needs two-way communication with its internal stakeholders conventionally with employees, communication messages are prepared at the center and sent to them in emails, telegrams, letters and messages posted on boards and in return comments, opinions and questions on the same issues are received from the employees. Though, it's difficult to mention a specific and single communication strategy, efforts are made to identify the audiences. In doing so, the communication strategy selected for internal and external stakeholders is different. For internal stakeholders, comments are received from the whole employees using different platform like group telegram.

In fact, the appropriate selection of communication strategies is dependent on different **guiding assumptions, considerations and perceived advantages**. As guiding assumption, the company firmly believed that the preference and selection of two-way communication is important to address the stakeholders' ideas and sayings. Based on this organizational assumption, two way communications are considered as essential to the effectiveness of CSR works so that they must be communicated from out-in direction. In other ways, this model of communication is vital to hear the ideas and witness of stakeholders on the issue. As to an informant, this communication model was evident during the following CSR project of the company.

*.... In many ways two-way communication is practical during the different phases of our CSR projects. As part of it, we have discussed with beneficiaries on our CSR project engagements. For example, when we built a school in Ambo, we have discussed with the beneficiaries and considered the forwarded comments, feedbacks and questions during the discussions. We did the*

*same thing when we built a library in the school. We used and incorporated basic discussion points as inputs and monitoring tools of the project. (Interviewee 1)*

The other rationale behind the selection of two-way communication strategy and model is to motivate and empowered stakeholders and other partners towards CSR works. These targeted stakeholders are communicated in manners that trigger initiation and exposition towards the outcomes of the company's CSR projects. To this end, the company shares CSR experiences through discussions and distribution of documents consisting of CSR project reports.

As part of a two way communication model, the company checks the progress of CSR projects as per the information communicated from stakeholders. Thus, information received from stakeholders is used to evaluate and follow up of the project. An informant depicts his idea on this as:

*...We don't leave CSR projects as it is communicated. We follow up the progress and check them whether they are working as commented by the stakes or not. Thus, stakeholders' views on the proposed CSR projects are addressed directly or indirectly. (Interviewee 1 & 3)*

In addition with the above guiding assumptions and rationales, the appropriate selection of communication strategies is dependent on different considerations. Among the others, the phases of the proposed CSR projects highly determine the types of communication strategy and model to be employed. For example, during the preparation and planning stage, the appropriate strategies of communication are bi-directional. At these stages, the information from the local community members is collected in the forms of feedback and opinions. Because, proposed CSR projects could not be commenced without the saying and willingness of the local stakeholders and due to this reason information revealed from the stakeholders at the grassroots level such as the beneficiaries of the project and the local decision makers are too vital and considered accordingly. Similarly, this model is important and used at monitoring and evaluating phases of the CSR projects. An informant explains the essentials of this strategy as:

*...The proposed CSR works won't be successful if information is not collected from the concerned stakeholders at the eerily preparation and planning stages of the project. Unless we hear the saying of the concerned stakeholders it is none sense and due to this reason, we prefer and engage in a two way communication. We had practical examples on CSR projects of economic inclusions of recycling plastics and water pipe construction implemented in different areas. (Interviewee 1 & 4)*

In addition to the above considerations, the objectives communication messages and types of audiences are important to select a specific communication strategy and model. Based on this, what to share or not is decided and based on the decision the appropriate communication strategy will be selected. Due to the above considerations, two-way communication is used to collect CSR related information from the sides of stakeholders to the company. As to an informant, CSR works are communicated in such a way, the following important objectives and questions are potentially addressed and considered;

*...Did we really convey the message as per the intended objective? Did we really place our CSR works and messages in accordance with the stakeholders concerns and interests? Did people really understand what we have communicated? Did the message is really consumed by the targeted audiences? Did the communicated messages result in positive outcomes as they are intended? What are the communication gaps that need to be changed? These are important guiding questions that are seriously considered to improve our communication strategies. (Interviewee 1)*

Moreover, the selection of communication strategy and model (either one-way or two-way) is determined by available communication resources and content of the communication messages. For example, if the stakeholders or partners of the proposed CSR project want deeper information in detail manner, two-way communication that appear in the form of discussion and communication in the form of questions and answers are appropriate strategies. Whereas, if the objective of the communication is to release mere information in which stakeholders reactions are not essential, one-way communication model is preferable. This finding is supported by the findings of Hill & White (2000). As to them, Websites are a two-way communication device that can create and build relationships by permitting interaction and dialogue between the business and its various stakeholders. According to Jung & Hon (2006), communication resources or channels like websites should encompass contact information such as "telephone numbers, electronic mail addresses, and physical addresses," as these will enable business organizations to influence, give, and receive feedback from their various stakeholders.

Finally, the selection of communication model is determined by the socio-demographic profiles of the stakeholders. For instance, to communicate an authorized official seeking for decision, two way communications is better than one way communication. In such circumstances, bi-directional communications that took place in the form of discussion and consultation are important. Thus, number of participants, personal status of stakeholders and social backgrounds of the stakeholders are important consideration to use the communication model. In two way

communication model, discussion ideas, views and interpretation results of different points are essential elements. Thus, the approach of communication has mixed nature depending on the context, the number of audience, modality or medium of communication.

Overall, the company never relies on a single communication model to communicate its CSR works. Instead, the strategy and model is determined by the guiding assumptions, considerations and perceived advantages. In other ways, the company has no single and specified model of communication to communicate its CSR works. It depends on the aforementioned selection parameters, guidelines and principles. There is a firm believe that every model of communication has its own good element and hence the selection of a model i.e. either one-way or two-way is determined and applied accordingly. Most of the time, the company mixed the two models of communication to communicate its CSR works.

Therefore, though it is dependent on assumptions, perceived advantages and considerations like nature and objective of communication message, audiences, types of CSR project and phases of CSR projects, CCBA's communication model focused on bi-directional information exchange. As to the responses of the above informants stakeholders are not only passive receivers of the company's information but also they are active participants and sources of information to the company's CSR works. On one way, the company communicates its internal and external stakeholders using different communication platforms like Mass Medias, social Medias and public meetings. On other way, information is transmitted from the stakeholders to the company using similar media platforms that are mostly forwarded in the forms of comments, feedbacks, and opinions, complains and questions. Thus, it can be said that information flow strategy is from both in-out and out-in directions which is the common character of two-way communication model. This finding is in line with the communication strategies and guidelines followed by other companies. For instance, MNC subsidiaries are required to incorporate the expectations of local stakeholders in host countries while designing CSR strategies, including CSR communication, in order to acquire local legitimacy and fulfill the requirements of the parent company and international stakeholders in order to maintain their international license to operate (Kostova and Roth, 2002).

Moreover, this finding is found be to in accordance with Grunig's two-two way symmetrical communication model. According to Grunig's two-two way symmetrical communication model, communication is characterized by a dialogue on equal terms between the organization and the

public as CCBA did in its public discussions with stakeholders. As to this model, the intention is to create mutual understanding on the issue that is communicated (Grunig, 1992). In line with the intention of this model, CCBA's discussion of CSR works with the public is intended to create sense of ownership of beneficiaries towards the project.

According to central tenet of the model, multiple social perspectives should be incorporated into organizational decisions (Grunig, 1992) and CCBA found to give due attention towards the participation of different stakeholders in its CSR projects. Similarly, the choice of the company's communication model is intended to be consistent with the core essences of Grunig's symmetrical two-way communication model, where PR has the ability to adapt to, respond to, and respond to the practices of the dominant alliances to modify them.

This model assumed that rather than imposing a specific CSR initiative on stakeholders, the stakeholder involvement strategy encourages concurrent negotiation with its stakeholders to explore their concerns in relation to the company, while also accepting changes when necessary. By engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, the company ideally ensures that it is aware not only of the concurrent expectations of its stakeholders, but also of its potential influence on those expectations, as well as allowing those expectations to influence and change the company itself. The stakeholder stakeholders support for or opposition to the company's CSR is important. CCBA is communicating its CSR in accordance with these assumptions.

As CCBA assumes, two-way symmetrical communication may become the most important factor in aligning interests and overcoming a challenge between the company and its stakeholders. It eliminates the social divide when there are contrasts by creating a win-win situation (Grunig et al., 2002) and taking into account the communication model carried out by the CCBA in public discussion to achieve these goals. Furthermore, the observation of Hon and Grunig (1999) suggests that the ability to listen is fundamental to building relationships, particularly with companies and their publics. Therefore, PR and its relationship-building powers should be viewed as adept at maintaining security and achieving shared outcomes between a business organization and its public. Rather than simply disseminating information, practitioners of this approach research the values of the stakeholder and attempt to define the issue, mutually, before communicating a corporate policy or a program regarding that issue. Furthermore for Sen et al (2009), CSR communication should be factual and avoid the appearance of 'bragging'.

In line with the above communication models, the finding of this study is in line with the central assumption of excellence theory. According to excellence theory, the practice of two-way symmetrical communication can foster better relationships leading to greater organizational effectiveness, stronger ethics, and higher profits. According to this theory, dialogic communication, based on symmetrical two-way communication, is important for identifying and engaging stakeholders in order to function effectively and excellently (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Additionally, symmetrical, two-way communication can be the most important factor in aligning interests and overcoming a challenge between a company and its stakeholders. When there are contrasts, it eliminates the social gap by creating a win-win situation (Grunig et al., 2002).

In nets hull, the communication models of CCBA are selected and implemented as per the central arguments of Grunig's two-two way symmetrical communication model and assumptions of excellence theory.

#### **4.8. Challenges of PR practitioners in communicating CSR**

Despite the different practices of PR in terms of the elements and contents of communication messages, channels of communication, stakeholders, strategies and models, there are many challenging during CSR communication of the company. Low interests of Medias toward CSR projects, low public awareness, communication gaps, lack of institutional freedom and lack of scientific articulation to select appropriate communication model are found to be some of the challenges in the area.

##### **4.8.1. Low Interests of Medias toward CSR Projects**

Different mainstream and social Medias have low interest and exposures to broadcast CSR related works as compared with the interests and exposures they have to like other business related information of companies. They established low interests and associated negative attitudes made difficult to communicate CSR related information. Due to these reasons, they are reluctant to attend the press release of the company during their invitation to give media coverage for CSR works. As to informants, these Medias do not see CSR works are integral element of company's tasks. An informant explains the challenge as:

*...Medias are not interested to give coverage for CSR works of our company. For instance, we invited many Medias to launch our CSR project targeted on plastic recycling in different parts of Ethiopia. However, we could not get any interested media to broadcast the information. The reason*

*might be we pay for marketing promotion cost for Medias but we do not pay for CSR works and we could not force them to do so. (Interviewee 1)*

An informant further adds his points as

*...We built a G+1 school in Ambo and we invited Medias during the inauguration of the project but they did not attend. In such projects, we did not do aggressive campaigns as we did for marketing advertisements of our company. (Interviewee 4)*

Therefore, according to the responses of the above informant, the interests and exposures of different Medias are too low to broadcast CSR works of the company. As noted in the above account of the informant, the company does not pay advertisement costs for Medias and due to this reason they regret to give media coverage for CSR works as they did for other marketing advertisements. Besides, the company do aggressive media campaign for marketing promotion but not for CSR works. Due to the spillover effects of the above reasons, Media's interest towards the media coverage of CSR works of the company is found to be low. This is the major challenge of the company to communicate CSR works to its stakeholders.

#### **4.8.2. Low Public Awareness**

Unlike other information, the stakeholders including Media have low awareness towards CRS works and this in turn challenge the communication coverage of CSR works. This is especially true when whenever some CSR projects are failed and being over hyped. During these circumstances, the beneficiaries develop negative attitude and become careful and skeptic because they saw that some CSR projects are not implemented as first promise. The community's preference and focus is on marketing related information of the company and did not give shit for CSR information of the company. This finding is similar with previous research findings conducted in the area. For instance, according to Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun (2006), stakeholders have a very low awareness of corporate CSR activities and this is extremely problematic for corporations. As to this finding, this low awareness drives many of the benefits that corporations derive from CSR. Similarly, as to Tilley's (2005), PR practitioners are entrusted with a role that ensures an organization's reputation and images are presentable to publics. Lorenzo (2009) also argued that PR as highlighting good CSR and hiding bad CSR to publics, leaving PR Practitioners with a window dressing role.

### 4.8.3. Communication Gaps

Communication gap is the major challenge to communicate CSR works of the company to its stakeholders. In fact, communication gap is common at national level and across different sectors. However, the gap is too huge when it comes to CSR works. CCBA also face the challenge of communication gaps in many ways. From the beginning, like other works and missions of the company, communication is not seen as a key task of the company. Due to this reason, each and every works of the company did not communicated to different stakeholders in an organized manner. The problem is too challenging when it comes to CSR works of the company. Two informants explain the challenge as:

*...At macro level, We Ethiopians have communication gaps. As part of this extension, the gaps are also manifested at sectorial and individual level. As Coca Cola Beverages Africa, we have this challenge. We did not communicate CSR works appropriately to the community and internationally. As East African Coca Cola Ethiopia, we didn't communicate each and every CSR works of the company. Due to this, people didn't know what we have done and our CSR contributions are not communicated well. (Interviewee 3 & 4)*

These days, the company identified the gap and is striving to improve the problem. In doing so, efforts are made to communicate CSR works using different communication channels including digital and social Medias like Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, and instagram. The communication department is in charge of this responsibility. An informant discloses her points on the issue as:

*... We have identified our communication gaps. We have tried to communicate our CSR works digitally. We release our CSR information using social Medias. Now, we are on Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter, and instagram. We use paid media and mainstream media to show our progresses. For instance, we have invited Medias whenever we inaugurated our CSR project of building school for the community. During COVID-19, we provide prevention materials valued 6.5 million birr for the communities Addis Ababa city administration, Diredawa and Mekelle. We have given media coverage for all this interventions using different media outlets. (Interviewee 5)*

In line with the above, selection and access of Medias with wider coverage is a challenge in the area. Due to the participation of very limited Medias and restrictive communication channels, CSR works of the company are not accessible to the stakeholders. Imbalance and distorted communication messages are another challenges in the area. For instance, most of the time government owned mainstream Medias reflect the interest of the government and broadcast information without balancing the content of the information. Moreover, release of delayed

information is also found to be a type of communication gap. An informant reflects his ideas on these issues as:

*...One of the communication gaps in our CSR works is imbalance. Especially government owned Medias broadcast imbalance information. Most of the time, we invite medias through letters to give media coverage for our CSR but they released delayed and mismatch information from our content and interest. (Interviewee 1)*

Therefore, as to the responses of the above informants, communication gaps in CSR are manifested in many ways. In this regard, company's low concern to communication works, limited media coverage of CSR information and disseminations of imbalance CSR messages are some of the gaps. This finding is similar with other findings conducted so far. For illustration, as to Lewis (2003), communicating CSR works of the company is found to be a neglected issue. Based on the finding of this study, many companies are fulfilling their social responsibilities, but they fail in communicating it adequately to their public.

#### **4.8.4. Lack of Institutional Freedom**

In some cases, the practices of CSR communication are challenged by the lack of institutional freedom. Though, elements and contents of communication messages in CSR projects reflect the interests and dominant institutional logics of the company at headquarter, government bodies at different levels have tendencies to influence the communication practices of companies. Sometimes, in contradiction with the company's interest, CSR works of the utilized and abused for government political consumption. Besides, this communication practices are against CCBA company guiding principle CSR should be communicated in a manner that promote local knowledge and give sense of ownership to the local community. Thus, lack of institutional freedom during communication of CSR works of a company is found to be a challenge in the area.

In addition with the above information collected from informants, the data collected from documents of the company showed that these practices of communication in which information are disseminated without the interests of the company contradict the communication principles and a process issued at its Headquartering. Accordingly, the company has a communication principle that every aspect of CSR practice of the company in Ethiopia needs verification from the headquarter, Atlanta and from the group office based in south Africa unless otherwise the company cannot implement any CSR and sustainability projects and programs without the

permission and confirmation from the coca cola company. An informant adds his point on this issue as:

*...When CSR practices of sustainability works, the implementation of each project has to go through different processes and it needs verification from the Atlanta and South Africa branch especially when working humanitarian tasks with the government and follows approval procedures. (Interviewee 1)*

Therefore, according to the responses of the above informants and data collected from document review, lack of institutional freedom during communication of CSR is a major challenge for the company. More specifically, though, the communication messages of the company are verified at its Headquarter, the government tried to verify and reflect its political interest whenever CSR information is broadcasted in Medias. This finding is in contrary with the findings of previous researches conducted in the area. For instance, unlike this finding, according to Kostova( 2008), MNC subsidiaries have 'institutional freedom,' which allows them to develop CSR communication programs and strategies that align with their parent companies, international stakeholders, and transnational institutions, as well as the discretion to pursue the benefits (either business, social, or both) that they believe are best for them. On the other hand, for Morsing & Schultz (2006), because of their third-party credibility, independent communication sources such as the media or experts are regarded as more trustworthy than government-controlled communication. Likewise, as to (Morsing et al., 2008), communicating CSR through third-party experts or an endorsed CSR communication process is one way to reduce public skepticism. On the other hand, this finding is in contradiction with the principal assumption of legitimacy theory. According to this theory, public relations work is to ensure alignment of business and societal expectations as a component of business goal attainment not to attain the interest of the government or other actors.

#### **4.8.5. Lack of scientific articulation to select appropriate Communication Strategy**

According to informants, CCBA has limitations to identify and employ appropriate communication channels and models for its CSR works. The communication channels and models are selected and used in arbitrary way. However, considering scientific articulation to select appropriate communication channel along with the appropriate strategy and model is important for effective communication practices. To do so, conducting assessment on the effectiveness of the selected specific communication channel, strategy and model is important to

fill the gap. Despite this fact, so far the company's communication team did not undertake such type of survey targeted on internal and external stakeholders. As to the informants, this is the weakness and challenge of the company. An informant explains this as:

*...We have never done survey about stakeholders and mass audience opinions towards the contents and strategies of our communication. This is really our gap. However, as communication channel, strategy and model, efforts are made to check the appropriateness of the selected communication tools and strategy. We try to follow scientific procedures whenever we do news, design and collect the information but we are not as such effective. We have guiding policy and standard to organize and disseminate communication messages. As indicated in the policy, we have standards to follow and do not follow. However, despite these efforts and attempts, our communication practices are poor in terms of scientific articulation of selected channels and models (Interviewee 4)*

Therefore, according to the responses of the above informant, the selection and employment of communication channels, strategies and models are not scientific and wise. Instead, these communication practices are considered in the arbitrary way. This finding is supported previous research findings conducted in similar thematic scopes. As demonstration, a study conducted by Benn, Todd & Pendleton (2010) argued that PR practices in CSR are evolved from theorizing the traditional publicity role to articulating clear reasons for a management role. However, many corporations still viewed their PR practitioners "only as a source of positive publicity.

This finding is also in contradiction with the central assumptions of Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication model. Unlike the current finding, this model, assumes that informing and surveying are important to select appropriate communication strategy. As to this model, frequent and systematic dialogue with their stakeholders in order to prefer communication strategy for CSR works.

#### **4.8.6. Lack of Clear Demarcation between CSR and Marketing Communication**

Though, the nature of communication is different between CSR and marketing communication, companies mix the two issues to communicate their primary stakeholders. As a guiding principle of CSR communication, the contents and elements of PR messages should avoid promotion and advertisement. However, it is difficult to find clear demarcation between them in practice. Professionals of the area called it CSR promotional communication dilemma. According to Maignan & Ferrell (2004), the challenge is to effectively communicate the CSR initiative

without causing a backlash, which is called the CSR promotional communication dilemma. According to this study, stakeholders want CSR information, yet corporate messaging can create a backlash when stakeholders see it as overly self-promotional and this is found to be double bind creates a difficult communicative challenge for PR and CSR managers. In such types CSR communication, stakeholders are mistrustful of corporations that are perceived to devote too much time and effort to CSR communication and Corporations may reap no reputational benefits from their CSR initiatives if their employees are unaware of them.

Bhattacharya & Sen (2004) also highlighted that companies try to increase CSR awareness communication tactics such as advertising and promotional efforts however, consumers, on the other hand, want CSR facts but dislike hard sells. As to them, too much "effort" in CSR promotion can lead to negative attributions about CSR initiatives and harm an organization's relationship with stakeholders.

Overall, according to previous research finding conducted in similar scopes of the current study, the following questions should be answered to solve the challenge of CSR promotional communication dilemma. 1. Should companies only emphasize altruistic, intrinsic motives in their CSR communication, ignoring business-related motives? 2. Should they be forthright and admit the commercial motivations underlying their CSR initiatives?

Notably, this finding refutes the fundamental quarrels of legitimacy theory. This theory claims the insignificant alignment of PR in the streams of CSR works and marketing operations of companies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Summary of the Findings

The study tried to investigate the existing PR practices in CSR Communication of CCBA. Under the umbrella of this general objective, the roles of PR in CSR programs, elements and contents of PR messages, primary stakeholders in CSR programs, communication channels in CSR programs, communication strategies as compared with Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication model and associated challenges are investigated in this study. To this end, primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, document Review and press releases from CCBA group websites and Facebook pages. In doing so, diverse voices of the informants were heard to collect these primary data. In addition to the primary data, available secondary data were collected.

The study found that CCBA in Ethiopia has its own organizational structure to mandate the communication works of the company including PR activities in CSR programs of the company. Accordingly, CSR activities and programs are categorized within sustainability programs under the department of legal affairs, public affairs and communication and sustainability called PACS unit. However, the communication department is merged with other unrelated departments like legal departments. The unit has PR manager, CSR manager, communication specialists, Sustainability expert and director of CSR having specific roles and mandates each. Despite the different task divisions of PR personnel, their ultimate objective of each role is to make the PR practices effective. Based on this, they design, plan and publicize communication messages using different communication channels and models.

The study also found that CCBA has many initiatives and pillars of CSR in the areas where it operates its business. Economic inclusion, environmental protection, prevention of social pandemics, taking part to solve social problems and supporting the community during natural hazards are some of the areas in which the company is contributed and plan to contribute more. Though, they are not satisfactory, the company is communicated these CSR contributions using different communication messages, channels and strategies to its primary stakeholders. In most

cases, these works are publicized to the stakeholders and society through mainstream Medias, Social Medias, and sometimes via public meetings.

The company has identified internal and external primary stakeholders to its CSR programs. Company's employees, managers and different departments that have participation on different CSR works are the primary stakeholders. In most cases, these internal stakeholders are communicated using letters, announcements posted on internal boards, phone calls, emails, group telegrams; inter personal communication and group meetings. Contents of the messages are intended as informing notifications, calls, commands, urges, decisions and warnings. Likewise, beneficiaries of CSR projects, government, NGOs, Medias and other partners are key external stakeholders of the company. Most of the time, these stakeholders are communicated through meetings and press release. This finding is found to align with the central essences of stakeholders' theory.

The study also understand that the contents, elements and objectives of CSR works communication messages in CCBA is somehow peculiar from marketing communication. In this regard, the company has a guiding principle that communication messages that have promotion and advertisement nature are not appropriate ways to CSR projects. To this end, the contents or elements of communication messages during CSR works are designed in a scrutinized manner and broadcasted after evaluation by the communication team. Moreover, efforts are made to make the communication messages factual, clear and simple before they are publicized. This finding best fits with legitimacy theory of CSR.

This study find out that CCBA uses a combination different communication channels for its CSR works. Accordingly, different electronic communications, mass media, press release, public meeting and inter-personal relations of different types are the common communication channels of the company.

Most importantly, the study claimed that Overall, the company never relies on a single communication strategy to communicate its CSR works. Instead, the strategy is determined by the guiding assumptions, considerations and perceived advantages. Though, it is dependent on assumptions, perceived advantages and considerations like nature and objective of communication message, audiences, and types of CSR project and phases of CSR projects, CCBA's communication model focused on bi-directional information exchange. Thus, stakeholders are not found to be only passive receivers of the company's information but also

they are active participants and sources of information to the company's CSR works. On one way, the company communicates its internal and external stakeholders using different communication platforms like Mass Medias, social Medias and public meetings. On other way, information is transmitted from the stakeholders to the company using similar media platforms that are mostly forwarded in the forms of comments, feedbacks, and opinions, complains and questions. Thus, it can be said that information flow strategy is from both in-out and out-in directions which is the common character of two-way communication model. Therefore, based on different parameters, the company's communication strategy is in line with Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication model and hence fits with excellence theory.

Finally, this study found that the company is facing different challenges to communicate its CSR works. Low interests of Medias toward CSR projects, low public awareness, communication gaps, lack of institutional freedom and lack of scientific articulation to select appropriate communication model are found to be some of the challenges in the area. Despite the different practices of PR in terms of the elements and contents of communication messages, channels of communication, stakeholders and strategies, these challenges are undervaluing the CSR initiatives of company.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

According to the finding of the study, the following points are recommended for concerned practitioners and potential academicians.

### **5.2.1. Recommendations for Practitioners**

Gaps and limitations are observed on media coverage of CSR works. Thus, like marketing promotion of the company, sufficient attention should be given to the extensive media coverage of the company's CSR works.

Technical training in CSR communication should be offered specifically for PR employees whose task is to increase their creativity and Fragmented or misplaced CSR PR tools need to come together to make the company's CSR communication practices better than ever. The selection of media channels and communication message contents should be carefully considered during CSR works.

Appropriate media outlet should be selected to broadcast CSR information in a wider coverage. Also Careful attention should be given to differentiate CSR information release and marketing

advertisement. The company should assure institutional freedom so as to give media coverage for CSR works based on the company's interest and in a way that raise public awareness.

Structural flaws of the company's communication unit shall be revised. For example, activities and programs are categorized within sustainability programs under the department of legal affairs, public affairs and communication and sustainability called PACS unit. However, so as to have clear structure, the PR and communication department shall split from the legal affairs and sustainability departments and restructured as independent unit.

Frequent assessments on stakeholders' reaction, trust and satisfaction about the appropriateness of selected and broadcasted CSR communication message contents, channels and strategies shall be conducted. In doing so, the Practices of CSR communication should be improved in accordance with primary its stakeholders' interest.

### **5.2.2. Recommendations for Further Researches**

Further research should be conducted on the following specific communication practices in CSR

- The practices and challenges of communication channel preference in Company's CSR programs
- The effectiveness of PR communication in company's CSR programs
- the Nexus between CSR communication and Marketing promotion
- The Nature of PR Communication messages in MNC

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## **ANNEX**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Data Collection Tools**

##### **I. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH-INTERVIEW FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORATE**

1. What organizational role do PR professionals play in implementing CSR programs in your company?
2. What are the inclusive and exclusive roles of the PR Practitioners in CSR communication?
3. Who are the key stakeholders whom the Company communicated with about its CSR efforts as a PR strategy?
4. What is the difference between internal and external CSR communications for your organization? Are there different messages and channels for internal and external stakeholders?
5. How would you describe the CSR communication between the stakeholders and the organization? (One way or two ways (Interactive?))
6. What type of CSR messages are often communicated by the PR Practitioners to the CSR stakeholders in your organization?
7. What PR tools and channels are used by the company to communicate its CSR programs to stakeholders?
8. What communication elements and dimensions are considered by the PR Practitioner to effectively communicate CSR activities in your organization?
9. What is the objective in designing and communicating CSR messages to the company's clients, employees and stakeholders?

10. How do you consider the cultural context of CSR stakeholders in the company which operates in different location while communicating CSR related messages?
11. What tactics are used by the PR Practitioner to reduce CSR communication promotional dilemma from stakeholders?
12. What type of CSR communication strategy is applied to inform stakeholders and improves interactive communication approach?
13. What type of PR communication model does your organization apply in CSR communication practice?
14. What do you think that the central to PR practice is in maintaining an excellent CSR communication with its various publics?