



Addis Ababa University

College of Humanities and Journalism

Graduate Schools of Journalism and Communications

The Degree of Masters of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic  
Communications

Assessing the Role and Practice of Public Relations on Nation Building:  
The Case of Selected Government Ministries in Ethiopia

By

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September, 2022

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Advisor: GashayeBellew (PhD)

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## Declaration

I, Mohammed HussenShifaw, hereby declare that this research thesis entitled Assessing the Public Relations Practice on Nation Building: The Case of Selected Government Ministries in Ethiopia is my own original work and that all sources have been accurately acknowledged, and that this document has not been previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted to the Addis Ababa University or any other university in order to obtain academic qualifications.

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This is to ratify that this thesis studied by Mohammed Hussien Shifaw, entitled: Assessing the of Public Relations Practice on Nation Building: The Case of Selected Government Ministries in Ethiopia, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communication complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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## ***Abstract***

*The objective of this study was to assess the public relations practice on the Selected Government Ministries in Ethiopia nation building. The study predominantly focuses on answering how public relations practitioners practice public relations to build a nation, what communication tools or channels the public relations practitioners used to build a nation, what challenges public relations practitioners have faced to build a sustainable nation. To get the answer to these questions, the study employed a qualitative method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and also document review tools. An in-depth interview was employed to collect information from the practitioners of MOCS, MOE, MOP, MOT and GCS public relations departments. Document review was also used to get insight into how the PR materials were designed to send a positive message to build the nation. The overall finding of the research revealed that the practice of public relations is not based on professional standards of public relations and effective communication strategies. The public relations practitioners are some what used communications channels that may able to lead to various adverse effects, such as misunderstanding, public dissatisfaction, and inefficient use of valuable resources. This is because the public relations practitioners used insufficient communications tools. In addition to this, the practitioners had used ineffective communications strategies. Therefore, the nation building of Ethiopia and its viability was not seen. Moreover, top managers have misunderstanding on the roles and significance of PR. There were problems related to structural, procedural, organizational/establishment and laws. The political affiliation and interest of ruling party towards PR profession affect the PR profession image were the findings of the research.*

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Nation, Nationalism, National identity, National Unity, Nation Branding and Nation Building

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## **Acronyms**

CIPRA Charter of institute Public Relation Association

EPDRF Ethiopian People Democratic Front

FDRE Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GCS Government Communication Service

IPRA International Public Relation Association

MOCS Ministry of Culture and Sport

MOE Ministry of Education

MOGC Ministry of Government Communication

MOP Ministry of Peace

MOT Ministry of Tourism

WAPRA World Assembly of Public Relation Association

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Currently, government ministries in Ethiopia progressively realize that they want to communicate with their public to build and maintain the nation. To realize this interest, public relations expected to deploy their efforts through awareness creation and mobilization of the public through different communication means. The present situation of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism and ethnical identity had impact on the nation building process and nationalism. Due to this condition, the ethnic politics is curiously complex to engage multiple cluster identities to build a nation.

Nevertheless, it is curiously complex when engaged and evaluates in research, as demonstrated by the multiple ethnic clusters, meanings, conceptualizations, and operationalization that have appeared across studies. Likewise, Smith (2001) defines the nation as a "named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members".

As to Seitel (2001) cited in Zewudu (2019), human work will take up more place to develop and expand human relationships. From the above idea it is possible to understand that the progress and growth of relations depends on the attention given to the social efforts. This implied that the public relations role is essential to maintain the organizations and the public for their common interest and benefits.

According to Ermias (2009), it is challenging to find out when and where the practice of contemporary public relation began in Ethiopia. This means there is no documented evidences that help to show the place where the profession emerges as a field and to lean the experiences it pass through as an opportunity and threat.

However, Solomon (2001) stated that the formation of the Ministry of Pen in 1940's flagged the way for the beginning of public relations in government offices. He further indicated that under the Ministry of Pen, information and propaganda unit was organized. The Ministry of Pen was replaced by Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1950's.

Moreover, researches showed that 1960s was another landmark for the contemporary PR practice in Ethiopia. There were presences of private and public relations practice. Alem public relations consultancy firm was an example which was established by SibhatGebreigziabher and DerejeDeressa(Zewudu, 2019). During the Derg regime, those flourishing private public relations companies were shut down. As Behalu (2017), after the down fall of the Derg regime, the operation of PR practice in government offices emanates to life. This implied that a communication department of government offices has been organized with a mission to abridge communication between their organizations and their publics.

Currently, nations who shared common identity, values, history, culture, goal, etc. and living in a particular territory under one government need to harmonize their solidarity. This enables nations to fulfil their common interest and maintain social development as a nation. To realize this, public relations practitioners play significant roles as a bridge to connect the organizations and the target population. As Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006), public relations is the administration role that establishes and sustains mutually advantageous relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its achievement or failure depends. The issue of nation and nation building are multi-dimensional ideas. Nation building is possible to implement by the rational nations. Nevertheless, it is amazing complex when employed and assess in research as evidence by multiple definitions, conceptualizations and operations that is emerge across the study. Likewise, Smith (2002) defined nation as “a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and common laws and customs”. This implied that members of the nations could able be formtheir own nations through the consensus of citizens collective past experiences, common tradition, similar culture that governs the law of the land in the given place.

Stalin (1913) observed that nationhood goes outside tribal and racial origins. This idea reflects that nation does not mean ethnic sameness to continue as a community but the common economic, social, political and historical glue make the nation exists and co-exists together. Nations stay together when citizens share common identity, culture, history, values and preferences and can communicate with each other. Implementing the sustainable nation building activities which bring holistic social and economic development that benefit the nation become crucial for organization like Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Now Culture

&Sport), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism and Government Communications Service promote a unified nation to live in the hearts and minds of citizens.

In this research, efforts have made to explore the practice of the Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Culture & Sport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism and Government Communications Service in the area of public relations practice. It enables the researcher to assess the Ministries' PR related activities since 2018. In general, this paper thoroughly investigates the whole activities of the Ministries in relation to PR. The motivation behind to conduct the research on this topic is the curiosity of the researcher to depict the reform that reorganized the Ministries following the change of the government. The current government led by Prime Minister Aby Ahmed focuses on territorial unity and integrity of Ethiopia. The Ministries PR practice assessed in relation to the nation building process of Ethiopia based on their establishment missions and visions.

Moreover, Guibernau, (2007) explains that national identity nurtures closeness, empathy and solidarity among fellow nationals. He adds that national identity is important for developing and maintaining compassion and harmony within fellow citizens.

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

Recently, everyday lives of Ethiopians are influenced by increased complexity, rapid change, hateful narratives, ethnic conflicts, the deconstructed social structures and history. Some ethnic problems have been witnessed recently in some areas often contrary to their past. As a result, government institutions in Ethiopia and other civic organizations have more interest on building and promoting of co-existence, tolerance of the nation as Ethiopian. To realize this, they deploy public relations activities to promote tolerance and strengthening co-existence. Therefore, PR becomes essential to provide comprehensive and prompt information about nation building, co-existence and tolerance among citizens. PR plays a key role in strengthening co-existence of people through promoting peace and moral values as well as shaping the overall ethics of the generation. These show that, the responsibilities of nation building rest on the shoulders of individual ministries PR and Ethiopia Government in general. In addition to this, reinforcing trust, arousing attention, influencing public opinion, resolving conflicts and promoting nation's consensus are the common destiny of each government ministry of Ethiopia.

The concept of nation-building cannot be understood without the help of certain key concepts such as the nation, national identity, and nationalism.

As to Bach (2014), following the fall of the Derg regime in May 1991 and the coming of EPDRF, Ethiopian “nationalities” became the central of a new idea of the Ethiopian nation derived from the “the national oppression thesis” demarcated by the TPLF rebellion during the struggle 1970s-1980s. He claims that there was an imposition of certain concepts on Ethiopian statehood such as deconstruction of Ethiopian history, degraded of national symbols and heroes, ethnic federalism that emphasized on sub identity.

From the beginning of the clash, the EPRDF elites visibly accepted a new discourse of Ethiopian-ness using symbols and myths used by the preceding regimes and comparatively undermined since 1991 (Bach, 2014). He adds that this inclination was endorsed after the 2005 general elections in which opposition groups protecting a “real Ethiopian-ness” got some achievements. In support of this idea, Tronvoll (2009) has proved the impact of the 1998-2000 war on “the formation and conceptualization of identities in Ethiopia”, and the reconstruction of enemies’ and allies’ images in its outcomes.

Smith (1999) claims that a nation is constructed upon myth and memory because these basics forge a collective purpose, hence bringing a sense of belonging that all too often stimulates the ‘nation’ to protect its identity. This implied that public relations approach to nation building might focus on cooperative and mutual relationship that offers a communication-centered and participatory approach. The role of public relations in deliberative democracy has long been a focus of debate. Scholarly definitions of public relations emphasize its potentially positive influence, including its function as a means of exchanging ideas, as in ‘the communication and exchange of ideas to facilitate change’ (L’Etang, 2008); or its ability to ‘create (and re- create) the conditions that enact civil society’ (Taylor, 2010); or to create and sustain connections between individuals and groups, as in ‘the management of mutually influential relationships within a web of stakeholder and organizational relationships’ (Coombs & Holladay, 2007).

According to Stephenson (2005), the term nation building is often used simultaneously with state building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflict reconstruction, and peace building. However, each concept is different, though their evolution is intertwined. One of the nation building components is national identity. As Korostelina (2007), social identity

is a robust feeling of connection towards a specific social group; it is socially built and influenced by the processes of social structures. It is the sense of a nation as an interconnected whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture and language. Furthermore, Barrett, Lyons, and del Valle (2004) explain the process of Social Categorization Theory in connection with Social Identity Theory. In this theory, the individual conducts a categorization process a process of comparing one national identity with others to identify oneself with a particular national identity. Sentimental attachment towards a particular nation can be built by emphasizing the nation's uniqueness from others.

As a collective constituent, national identity can emerge as a straight result of the presence of elements from the communal themes in people's everyday lives: national symbols, language, the nation's history, national consciousness and cultural artifacts, etc.

According to Clapham 2002b) and Tronvoll (2009), EPRDF revisited Ethiopian history from 1991 ahead, symbols and heroes were in fact degraded and new ones were made founding myths. For example, the flag was presented as a mere "piece of cloth" and King of Kings Minilik II until then celebrated as a national hero and symbol of resistance against European colonialism, was condemned. The 1998-2000 war which conflicting Ethiopia and Eritrea is most often offered as the crucial cause for Ethiopian-ness reactivated change in EPRDF's nationalist discourse (Jacquin-Berdal & Plaut, 2005). This implied that national symbols play a significant role in nation building, nation's unity and nationalism by creating visual, verbal, or iconic pictures of the nation, values, goals or history.

Moreover, Bach (2013) states that less than a decade later, the battle of Adwa was celebrated again as a national victory and giant pictures of the former leaders returned in Meskel Square, in Addis Ababa, at the occasion. He confirms that the festival celebrating "two thousand years of Ethiopian history" was also the event to give an honor to the Ethiopian Flag, since then the flag considered as one of the strongest national symbols of Ethiopian "unity in diversity" and celebrated every year.

The government ministries of Ethiopia are working closely on the nation building processes which involves different stakeholders like academic institutions, media, ministries, regional states, governmental organizations, NGOs, agencies, commissions and others. Consequently, the

ministries are expected to be a bridge between the government and its public. Therefore this paper intends to assess the ministries public relations practice.

Furthermore, there is much we do not know in regard to the ministries public relations in general. As far as the researcher has concerned, there has been no study and research done on the PR roles and practice of the ministries public in related to nation building. Therefore, research needs to be done to find out the practice of the ministries PRs activity and the researcher believes that this research can give an important insight about the ministries PRs activity.

### **1.3. The objective of the research**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to assess the practice of public relations on nation building in five Government Ministries in Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Research Objectives:**

- 1) To identify the roles and practices of public relations practitioners on nation building in Ethiopia
- 2) To identify the appropriateness of communications tools that the public relations professionals used to promote nation building in Ethiopia
- 3) To assess the challenges that hinder public relations practitioners to promote sustainable nation building in Ethiopia

#### **1.3.3. Research Questions**

- 1) How do public relations practitioners practice their roles of public relations to maintain nation building in Ethiopia?
- 2) What are the communication tools that the public relations practitioners used to promote nation building in Ethiopia?
- 3) What are the challenges that public relations practitioners face to promote sustainable nation building in Ethiopia?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Public relations practice has a great role to facilitate discussions, dialogues and forums for academic intellectuals, think tanks, activists, religious leaders, elites, politicians and publics by setting agenda. It provides basic information to understand the importance of public relations for maintaining mutual relationships among the general public to build trustworthynation. It enables

the ministries public relations practitioners to see their weakness, gaps and adjust themselves to build sustainable nation that render mutual benefits for citizens. In addition to this, it can be used as an input for further researchers who are interested in the subject matter. The researcher contemplates that public relations practitioners can use the findings of this study useful in understanding strategic public relations and nation building in detail.

### **1.5.Scope/Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study is limited to five ministries and these are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture & Sport, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Peace, Government Communication Service public relations practices and the assessment covers from 2018 to 2021. The reason that the researcher limited to study the selected government ministries was based on case study research of the ministries broad involvement on socio-cultural and social development interactions with the citizens.

This study focused on assessing the roles and the practices of public relations on nation building in the selected ministers public relations practice.

### **1.6.Limitation of the Study**

Some department directors and practitioners were not interested to give information because they were afraid of the researcher that he might be from a government body who desired to blame them. This made the data collection difficult and tiresome. To make it possible, the researcher tried to resolve the problem by persuading directors and staffs who are hesitant to give interview through a soft communication and proving himself that the researcher seeks the interview only for the research purpose. Absence of well-organized secondary data and related researches in the ministries were also a challenge and makes the research harder.

### **1.7.Organization of the thesis**

This research paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with introductory concepts. Such as, background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and limitation of the study. The related review literature has treated in the second chapter. The third chapter consists of research designs and methodology, population and sampling technique, types of data collected, methods of data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. The fifth chapter deals with conclusion and recommendation based on data collected and analyzed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

It is clearly explained in chapter one that the objective of this study tries to assess the practice of public relations on nation building: the case of selected government ministries public relations departments in Ethiopia.

This chapter will overlook the definitions and the nature of public relations practice and the nation building process, best practice and assessment of public relations on nation building and theoretical framework of the study. Generally, it also discusses the public relations practices on nation building in related with five government ministries public relations departments.

#### **2.1. Definition of Public relations.**

Several scholars defined Public Relation in various ways. Banik defines public relations as a systematic promotion of shared understanding between a company and its customers. This means organization would facilitate positive relationship with its customers. Public relations practitioner applied the public relation function that establishes and maintains common benefits between a company and the people who determine its success or failure. The Chartered Institute of Public Relations CIPR (2010) defined public relations as it looks after the image and reputations the organizations, influence the public opinion and behavior which enable to get mutual understanding and support for the predetermined organization goals. This shows that public relations could change the desired behavior to keep the organization name by building public trusts.

The above definitions implied that public relations used as a link between the organizations and the public to ensure equal benefits of each parties and interests. The parties have two way communications entertained them to have common understanding in to fulfil their mutual objective. The public relations activity conducted a communication based on plan and target focus to strengthen relationships. The researcher understood that public relations role was not just promoting an organization only. The public relations worked for the publics to deliver appropriate information which enable them win-win approaches to satisfy their demands. Public relations professional applied their skills and knowledge that assist the organization and the

public to have shared awareness on their common goals which bring achievements for the overall success.

Public relations would perform deliberate and planned actions that to achieve the targeted goals.

## **2.2. Definition of Nation**

Many scholars and practitioners have attempted to define the term nation. Nation is a reputable public with a homeland, shared tradition and history, a common culture, a single economy, and common privileges and responsibilities for all members (Smith, 2001). People with synchronized set of beliefs about their cultural identities and possession of states either through separation, unification or return s called nation (Laitin, 2007). This means the public which have shared culture, history, identity, tradition, economy, etc. within the territory are key components to define a nation. A community which shared such component in a harmonized condition fulfils to determine the term nation. This also serves as a reminder that a nation can exist as a historical group and cultural alliance without having political autonomy or having its own state.

The above definitions showed that nation had peculiar character shared by the people who have myth, history, culture and language that bind them together in a specific territory they occupied. The researcher understood that nation could have common identity based on their history, culture and language that made cohesive as a nation

## **2.3. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

In this study, the researcher need to see the practice of public relations on nation Building in Government Ministries Public Relations Department in related with different theoretical models and concepts exist regarding the roles and function of public relations. In order to describe the numerous roles and functions of the public relations practitioners, it is significant to look at the various world views of public relations models and theoretical roles of public relations on nation building of Ethiopian Government Ministries.

The four theoretical roles of public relations as Gruning cited in Heerden, (2005) are:

### **2.3.1. The communication technician**

Social media messages, web site contents, speeches, blogs, media placement, position papers, news releases, newsletters required to execute strategies with the communication tactics for the communication technician. Usually defining problems and developing solutions were not the responsibility of practitioners. However, practitioners base their tactics on the technician ability of writing.

### **2. 3.2. The communication facilitator**

This is a border spanner who listens to and brokers information between the organization and its key publics. The assignment of this position is to give both the administration and the public with the knowledge they need to make mutually beneficial decision (Cutlip, Center, and Broom, 2006).

### **2.3.3. The expert prescriber**

This is similar to the role a doctor performs with a patient. He or she is an authority on a particular industry, problem, or type of public relations and is given the primary responsibility to handle this function as a consultant or with little input or participation by other senior management.

### **2.3.4. Problem solving facilitator**

This help to collaborate with other managers to define and solve problems. This role requires that the professional is a part of the dominant coalition of the organization and has access to other senior managers. The problem-solving facilitator helps other managers think through organizational problems using a public relations perspective.

The above role of public relations practitioners indicated that practitioners should be on tactics, skills, decision making assistance, consulting and problem solving management. The research deduces that practitioners played multiple roles on the practice of public relation in an organization and the public which they serve to bring mutual benefits.

## **2.4. The Communication Perspective on Public Relations**

In this study, the researcher wants to integrate the practice of public relations on nation building with the communication perspective. To succeed as a high-level specialist, the communication perspective of public relations is a critical component in making excellent decisions that contribute to an organization's mission. Public relations professionals helped in the provision of accurate information to managers, which may be necessary for them to make the best judgments. According to Stokes & Rubei (2010), among the communication techniques, public relations has been classified as an effective way of transmitting information to the target population, with the primary purpose of public relations being to send a message that will have an impact on individuals.

The communication perspective of public relations, according to Kayode (2014):

*It is a unique management task which helps to create and sustain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps organization to keep informed on and responsive to public view; describes and emphasizes the accountability of management to assist the public concern; helps management keep well-informed of and effectively operate change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.*

The above idea illustrated that the communication perspective of public relations considered as special tasks for the formation of relationships through acceptable communication. Mutual understanding would be created with the concern of public attitude through responsibility and accountability. The researcher understood that communication was vital to public relations in order to convey the right messages at the right time, the right person and place.

### **2.4. 1. Role of public relations on nation Building**

At this time, nation is seen as an important element in government ministries mission and vision such as MOCS, MOE, MOP, MOT and GCS attributed alongside and included in organizational performance.

According to Taylor & Kent (2006), Toledano&McKie (2014) and Chaka (2014):

*There has been a growing interest in the application of public relations in the nation-building process over the past 20 years. Research reveals that public relations played a vital and complementary role within nation-building processes.*

Some theoretical studies have also been carried out on the principles of the public relations approach to nation-building.

As Taylor (2000), principles of public relations approach to nation building includes the following:

- 1. Nation building requires two levels of relationships: those between individuals and those between individuals and governments.*
- 2. Individual relationships are fostered through communication. Public relations can offer a strategic approach for relationship building. Communication campaigns, a function of public relations, are one vehicle for relationship building.*
- 3. Relationships must be negotiated between individuals and between individuals and governments. Negotiation involves compromise, trust, and respect for all parties involved. Communication campaigns need to be flexible and adapt to the needs of public.*
- 4. Relationships are negotiated in a social context. This social context will affect the development of the relationships. Communication campaigns that foster relationships must be complemented, not contradicted, by social and political contexts.*
- 5. Campaigns that allow individuals to control their own relationships, foster trust, and provide for closeness will be beneficial for relationship building and, ultimately, for nation building*

From these principles, it is possible to understand that public relations practitioners have vital role to link the stakeholders for the nation building process. Practitioners can also facilitate situations to build trust among the participants on their relationship and communication that benefit all parties.

#### **2.4. 2. Public Relations and Nation Building**

Nation building is a long time process and need involvement of different stakeholders. Public relations could facilitate nation building through providing relevant information and mobilize the public. Various countries design policies to shape a common identity those enable citizens to see themselves as a member of the nation as a whole rather than their ethnic groups and to feel a suitable commonality of benefits, goals, and preferences that avoid isolation from one another (Alesina and Reich, 2015).

The above scholars showed that nation could be shaped through common benefits, goals and preferences they shared in common to form a nation rather than isolated groups. They would contribute additional forces that drove them for better social benefits. Successful nation building required tolerance, co-existence, negotiation, discussion, good will, coordination, common goal, etc. to see the big picture across the nation. Public relations practitioners would play paramount role on promoting nation building by creating different approaches and advocate common values which help to make cohesion among citizens.

According to Karaasla (2018), using public relations for the creation of a modern community to build a secular nation and national identity was the precise determination of the new Republic of Turkey. Political speeches, rituals, celebrations, exhibitions, festivals, and a variety of other methods were unique to Turkish society which used to promote public relations efforts. Each of the Turkey endeavors contributed significantly to the development of contemporary Turkey and its western-minded inhabitants. A nation could be the evolution from old-style to modern state. Public could create identities and that identities are the result of social construction, consisting of a complex mix of behaviors, acts, and labels that constrain and are influenced by our interactions with others.

The above scholars' clarification indicated that nation could be constructed through interaction. The interaction would bring new identity which could be socially connected group and develop

the sense of belongingness among citizens. Public relations practitioners were important in promoting Turkey nation building.

## **2.5. Nation Building, Nationalism, National Identity, National Unity and Nation Branding**

In this study, the researcher incorporates the practice of PR in Government Ministries Public Relations Departments with the concept of national identity, unity, nation branding and nation building. So, these four terms are sometimes used interchangeably nationalism, national identity, and nation. These terms are discuss briefly and define to give highlights and to make understanding easily.

### **2.5.1. The Concept of Nation Building**

The terms nation building, state building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflict reconstruction and peace building are sometimes used interchangeably. The above ideas are similar even though they have impact on each other due to their interwoven nature.

Nation building practice has been defined and adopted differently at different periods and circumstances. Some of the definitions gave by scholars were presented below.

Nation building is the method of establishing a nation with a shared territory, common race, common religion, common language, common history, common culture, and common politics (Stephenson, 2005). The variables that go into constructing a nation are always changing. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that nation-building is the creation of sense of shared purpose, destiny and collective vision.

The above definitions showed that nation building is about building a group of communities who shared commonalities those construct a nation. The nation's tangible and intangible seems like threads that embrace a political entity together and gives it a sense of purpose.

Some theoretical studies have also been carried out on the principles of the public relations approach to nation-building. An example of such studies has been presented below: Principles of Public Relations Approach to Nation Building. Taylor (2000) describes nation building as:

*“Nation building requires two levels of relationships: those between individuals and those between individuals and governments. Individual relationships are fostered through communication. Public relations can offer a strategic approach for relationship building. Communication campaigns, a function of public relations, are one vehicle for relationship building. Relationships must be negotiated between individuals and between individuals and governments. Negotiation involves compromise, trust, and respect for all parties involved. Communication campaigns need to be flexible and adapt to the needs of public. Relationships are negotiated in a social context. This social context will affect the development of the relationships. Communication campaigns that foster relationships must be complemented, not contradicted, by social and political contexts. Campaigns that allow individuals to control their own relationships, foster trust, and provide for closeness will be beneficial for relationship building and, ultimately, for nation building”.*

The above idea implied that relationship enabled individuals and governments to work on nation building through their interactions. The public relations played a systematic role on negotiation to make the relationship between the two parties. That led the parties to gain mutual understanding and flexible approaches on considering social situation campaigns which had impacts on their relationships. The communication allowed the parties to have similar understanding on the process of nation building. The researcher recognized that public relations practitioners had important role for relationships management to facilitate the process of nation building.

### **2.5.2. Nationalism**

Evidences showed that in the late 18th century, the notion of nationalism first established in Europe which arose citizens' national sentiment. Definitions of nationalism were given by scholars. Nationalism is a mechanism for nation building that can be traditional or modern help to achieve predetermined goals related to beliefs, method, self-government, legitimacy or economic reasons (Aronczyk2013). Furthermore, Smith (1991) sees nationalism as scholarly drive aimed at stabilizing a nation's unity and identity. The definitions implied that nationalism seems like the desire of modern and commonness which stride to form some kind of social structure. Nationalism is the set of ideologies which help to establish "mental frames" for

people and society transforming some ideas into universal truth or common sense knowledge (Hall, 1996).

The scholars' idea mentioned above indicated that nationalism was considered as an ideology that helped to establish and sustain togetherness among individuals or groups within a territory to have shared feelings of autonomy.

Furthermore, nationality is fluid in the sense that it can change over time, both legally through naturalization and subjectively based on a person's sense of belonging (Lessard- Phillips et al., 2017; Simon & Tiberj, 2012). This idea implied that nationality could be constructed with the interests of individuals or though inborn. It could be changeable though time to be associated with individuals partisanship. Nationality could be glue that connected publics to share common culture, history, tradition, economy, goals and land that helped to form unity and solidarity on the spirit oneness among the publics who were members of the nation. The researcher depicts that nationality was peculiar for individuals' patriotism that embraced with in the social association.

### **2.5.3. National Identity**

Gellner (2008), national identity is defined as a fluid idea that changes within the modernized society. This implied that society communication enable to create and changes identity because identity could be built through social interactions, movements, closeness and accommodate with the human nature to live as an enlighten society. Pfister & Hertel (2008), on the other hand, reinforce the preceding argument by claiming that national identity is something that is learned and developed via performances. This means that national identity is not innate.

Gill (2005) argues that national identity is something people learn by socializing differentiates that:

*National identity is the “public (and social) identity and a private (and fixed) identity”. Identity is not only depending on how society construct them to be, but also how people perceive themselves, as well as, how they represent or perform their individuality to the public....concludes that “boundaries of national identities are flexible, and as such are subject to negotiation”.*

The establishment of a national identity, according to Scott (1966), is the foundation of the nation building process. National identity, he added, is the conscious identification of a group of individuals who share common national goals. He went on to say that people have a variety of identities, including religious, ethical, and value identities. He forwarded that deploy efforts to foster national identity aim to build a sense of loyalty to the nation that transcends local or ethnic attachments, allowing a nation to reach its full development potential.

The above descriptions implied that national identity could be socially constructed and it was learnt as a perception. National identity was a base for nation building. It was the intellectual selection of individuals who shared common objectives that entails the feeling of trust and closeness among the groups. The researcher understood that national identity could be the basic element and the corner stone of nation building.

#### **2.5.4. National Unity**

National cohesiveness, national integration, nation building and social solidarity were some of the phrases used to describe national unity (Saidu 2015). This implied that the national unity is aligned with the social harmony and incorporation of belongingness among the nation who live in the common political boundary. The people who act together for their shared objectives could build sense of collectiveness. Therefore, nation building could be facilitated with the spirit cooperative approach.

National unity most frequently appears when there is some kind of collective goals to people who share common identifications. Nation unity creates cooperation and solidarity which would facilitate to achieve common goals for the benefit of the nation.

Foltz (1966) suggested that:

*Creating and maintaining national unity is difficult in culturally diverse states where citizens do not already share national visions or have common enemies and goals. Example of events in United States that works to create shared identities and national unity include Thanks giving celebrations, remembrances ceremonies and holy day for war veterans and public events of mourning, such as what occurred as a result of the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September*

*11, 2001. Every nation enacts ceremonies to celebrate religious, cultural and social institutions as a means of building national unity.*

The above statements implied that there are not easy to harmonize culturally different groups. There are counties in the world national unity in multicultural ethnic groups could be possible through communicating publics to cooperate and fulfil their common objectives of nation building. The government had its own roles to ensure the effectiveness and establishment of the nation.

### **2.5.5. Nation branding**

In the past decade, the term nation branding has gained popularity in business, policy and intellectual circles. Under the pressures of globalization, numerous countries have invested in branding efforts in the hopes of producing images that point to a future of new possibilities. This trend is perhaps most visible in our fast-growing sector of international tourism. For example, catchy slogans and colorful logos represent Ethiopia 'Land of Origin.

Different scholars gave their own nation branding definitions. Varga (2013) defined national brand as a marketing tactic that approach external environment to inform a defined image of national identity to create market and economic satisfaction of the country by swelling export, tourism, investment and skilled man power. The above definition implied that creating a mental picture in individual public is the main purpose of nation branding. Branding could be one of the most important marketing strategies of counties that build its image and economy. As Anholt (2007), branding is defined as the method of build or handle the country's reputation by crafting, planning and connecting the name and identity. These implies that image of the country can be used as symbol and logo for the world market. Branding enables nations to get focus from other nations due to distinctive heritage they possess. As a nation, Ethiopia has endowed natural, cultural, historical, religious as well as fauna and flora some of them are endemic to the world those help to build the country visibility. These tangible and intangible resources enhance the nation's tourism need and boost economic advantage. The role of communications was vital for branding. Public relation practitioners have significant responsibility to promote the nation's branding for the world and applying strategic communications along with internal and external stakeholders by using the appropriate communication tools. Branding attracts the national and international consumers or customers to stay for recreation, conferences, investments, trade and

researches. These led to citizens to have national prestige and respect. Branding can be a part of public diplomacy that fosters the nation's long term international relations and image building. The approach of national branding should consider as an outlet to maximize the nation's visibility.

Moreover, national branding has a power to trigger the perception of other nation attention and prompt interests and opportunity to learn more about the nations which have unique wealth used as a brand regardless of large or smallness nations. Singapore has a total area of 728.6 square km with a population of 5.6 million, Thailand has a total area of 513,120 Square km with a population of 69.8 million and Taiwan has a total area of 36,197 square km with a population of 23.6 million. These countries can be taken as an example for their national branding. The aforementioned nations above are known for their own brand. They have built their visibility and reputation as well as they boost their economy by attracting the world to think and visit them. The above example implied that nation branding is a vital element for building the nation visibility and image.

Therefore, the public relations practitioners in the government ministries would have coordination, collaboration, identify, planning and execute the national brand which catches the community mind and thought. Then, the practitioners should plan national brand campaign to the aware the international community passionately and frequently in line with the celebration of national festivity. Culturally grounded multi-dimensional national brand provide good impression for visitors and make unforgettable scenario.

#### **2.5.6. Building Relationship**

Mainly, the focuses of public relations are to begin and sustain the relationships of an organization and its public for their mutual benefits. In addition to this Sriramesh (2009), claims that public relations create and maintains "symbiotic relationships". While the term 'relationship management' is questioned by critical scholars such as Fawkes (2015), who says it reflects an organization-centric focus, building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and publics is widely identified as a core function and rationale of public relations today. The above ideas showed that administration of relationship is the essential focus of an institution. Now a days, it is understood that the responsibility and establishment and continuity of relations rests on the shoulders of the public relations. Therefore, the public relations practitioners strive to sustain and

establish mutual relationships between the organizations, stakeholders or communities to have reasonable benefits from each other.

A public relations approach to nation building utilizes a more elaborative model of communication that focuses on how meanings are socially constructed. A public relations approach to nation building pick up where the integrationists leave off, because it offers a focus on communication and relationships. Although integrationist provides a starting point for public relations approach to nation building, a communicative approach to nation building differs because that treats the process of communication rather than the content of messages, as that which shapes the collective consciousness of individuals, groups, communities and the nation.

Although the use of communication in nation building process are numerous, most considerations of communication in nation building process have been limited to discussions of media ownership and control, national development programs, and mass communication technology and hardware (Bates, 1988; Hornik, 1988; Stevenson 1988). Few dispute that considered as communication acts as an important tool in the nation building practices of developing nations. Recent research about development communication and nation building is starting to take a more participatory approach (Gudykunst & Moody 2002). The above ideas indicated that in the nation build building process the communication channels would play vital role by focusing the national interests and using up to date technology. The approach of the communications should follow to include and involve many relevant participants. This shows that participation is central to build a unified nation.

The researcher believed that communities as a nation can be built or recreated by using the committed and motivated public relations practitioners along with the predetermined strategic communication plans and citizens participations. Public relations practitioners could able to view themselves as responsible and accountable citizens for the formation of sustainable nation. This could be done through awareness raising public educations. Practitioners could promote the best social values that connect the community and the organization as a strong nation. Practitioners should bridge the existing relationships between the organizations and the publics. Maintaining and creating relationship should be the priority of the public relations practitioners.

All nation building campaigns include large communication components that are essentially public relations campaigns. Deutsch's integrationist theory provides the framework for a focus

on the relationships that are created and maintained through communication. Public relations as a total for building relationships between previously unrelated social systems, offers a new approach to nation building. Because public relations focuses on how communication efforts are used to establish, maintain or change relationships between organizations and publics, primarily mass publics, public relations is an appropriate, yet underutilized, approach to the study of nation building. For the past 15 years there has been a growing interest in the link between public relations and nation building and the following applied examples show how public relations has been enacted in nation building efforts in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

Africa is one of many regions in the world that would benefit from nation building efforts. The nations of Africa, created by colonialism with little regard of ethnic or cultural boundaries, have experienced political, economic and social upheaval. Pratt (1985, 1986) discussed nation building in articles about public relations practitioners who represent multinational corporations (MNCs) in Africa. Pratt noted that developing nations in Africa, attempt to establish practices that are “consistent with their political ideologies, level of development, establish patterns of symbolic communication, and socio-political controls”. Pratt’s treatments of public relations in the developing world emerged as early and valuable contributions to our understanding of international public relations. Pratt’s articles offered a different perspective on the public relations practice and much of the current work on international public relations and nation building is based on Pratt’s analysis. The above idea indicated that colonialism contributed it negative impact on the nation building process of Africa.

Public relations theory and practice has the unique potential to create, maintain and change relationship between citizens and governments. Public relations campaigns can be used to improve citizens’ lives and to promote democracy in developing world. For instance, literacy campaigns using public relations strategies and tactics can empower uneducated and offer them opportunities to participate in the political process. Information campaigns about family planning can help women take control over their own futures. And campaign for voter registration, voter education, and getting out the vote can provide marginalized individuals and groups with the knowledge and relational skills to articulate their needs in political system. The given public relations’ focus on relationship building, mediated communication and organizational adaptation, nation building framework as a subspecialty in public relations.

## 2.6. How to build Nation?

For ministers like, MOCS, MOE, MOP, MOT and GCS public relations departments, practitioners that want to maintain nation building, there are also some steps and literature resources on how to go about doing this to maintain the nation's unity. Nation building process is influenced by both engagement and communication activities, but engagement activities is more applicable. But there are a lot of fascinated communication platforms to motivate the public by preparing tour event for leaders that help to increase the ministries relationship with its publics. So, both are very important. Below are the five steps discussed by Taylor and Kent (2014) demonstrated that the term engagement under different types of communication contexts:

1. **Social media** and how they facilitate communication and engagement have received most attention. Devin and Lane (2014) critically observe that engagement in this context has often been equated with “likes” , leaving comments or tweeting about a company or a process for organizations to involve publics in various aspects of organizational activities. This idea implied that feedbacks from publics could be collected about the intentions and interests on the organization overall conditions. This enable the organization revise the strategies and the approaches it follows.
2. **Employee engagement** theme explores engagement in the workplace and how organizations engage their employees. Engaged workers are thought to be more motivated, loyal and satisfied with their work (Kang, 2014; Welch, 2011).The above idea indicated that workers could be inspired, trustworthy and happy when they are involved in all the organization matters.
3. **CSR and engagement** theme is equated with doing good deeds and interacting with the community. Transparency, scrutiny & accountability, central to CSR, encourage interactions between organizations & publics based on their engagement. This implied that organizations shared resources to public as responsibility for solving social problems.
4. **Civic engagement and social capital** focuses on how engagement works to build social capital improve communities and promote democracy. Heath (2006) claimed that solving community problems to enable the full functioning society makes the organization a progressive force. This idea indicated that enhancing social values through civic society.

5. **Dialogic engagement** theme draws on dialogic approach to public relations to ensure ethical interaction, which assumes that publics are consulted in matters that influence & enable them willing & able to articulate their views to organization. This idea showed that public discussion helps to understand the public opinion on organization.

Engagement has been recognized as a critical foundation of organizational success in the formation of relationships with their publics, as well as for public relations to contribute to a fully functioning society (deBussy, 2010; Heath, 2006).

## **2.7. Developing Good Nation Building**

Nation building is a long time process. There are many stakeholders who involve in the process. To build good nation, stakeholders' engagement is the primary activity for the nation building process. In support of this idea, Devin and Lane (2014) defined engagement as a psychologically motivated affective state that brings voluntary extra-role behaviors, and is characterized by affective commitment, positive affectivity and empowerment that an individual public experiences in interactions with an organization over time.

Furthermore, public dialogue facilitation is another component for good nation building. Public dialogue programs draw different public views that empower the nation building process. As Taylor and Kent (2014), on the other hand, position engagement within dialogue theory and conceptualize it as a "part of dialogue and through engagement, organizations and publics can make decisions that create social capital. Engagement is both an orientation that influences interactions and the approach that guides the process of interactions among groups.

### **2.7.1. Challenges of Public Relations Practice to Nation Building**

In the practice of any kind of profession in any organization's challenges are inevitable. In this study the researcher wants to assess some of the challenges that face in practicing of public relations profession to build sustainable nation in Ethiopia in related with the finding other researchers. Thus, according to Zewudu (2019), the practice and challenges of public Relations practices in government organization revealed that : Press Secretariat has highly challenged with the political appointment of managers and practitioners, negative image of the public towards government communication, absence of communication strategy/ institutional frame work, limited communication and flow of information with regional states and other stakeholders, and

lack of professionalism are the major challenges Nevertheless, Bruning, D. & Lambe, E. (2008) indicated the educational public relations is to create favorable attitudes in the minds of the people to implement government policies and strategies and addressing societal need of the public and also to build organizational reputation. Thus, the main roles of the government public relations departments are not well understood by their internal public. Yet, the public relation practitioners are trying their best to solve the problems which face both from the internal and external publics by themselves to build sustainable organizational reputation their organizations.

The main challenges stated by the public relations practitioners are: negative attitudes towards the profession, absence of common states and restricted bureaucratic system. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that these challenges are threats to the practice of professional public relations and bring public dissatisfaction on the daily activities which may lead to lack of good governance. This implied that public relation practice-at its best affords genuine opportunities for meaningful service to the society.

## **2.8. Alignment in the domain of strategic communications**

The analysis of modern literature in the strategic communication area discovered that the term alignment is often used, but seldom defined. Only two monographs have elaborated explicitly upon the alignment concept: *The Alignment Factor: Leveraging the Power of Total Stakeholder Support* by Riel (2012) and *Taking Brand Initiative: How Companies Can Align Strategy, Culture, and Identity through Corporate Branding* by Hatch and Schultz (2008). Both works stem from the field of corporate and brand communication; they are based on case study research. Scholars have referred to alignment in different contexts: for instance, as a mutually rewarding relationship between a company and its external and internal stakeholders Riel (2012). In fact, three major notions of alignment can be distinguished from the literature review: (1) organization–stakeholder alignment; (2) communication strategy alignment; and, (3) communication strategy and activities alignment.

### **2.8.1. Organization stakeholders' alignment**

Constituent of literature investigates that alignment between an organization and its internal and external stakeholders could enable the organizations to execute their vision and mission. Alignment with internal stakeholders refers to aligning all employees to the organization and

towards a common goal, identity, or behavior. Alignment with external stakeholders means aligning the organization to the multifaceted and changing expectations, beliefs, and demands articulated by different stakeholder groups. In this context, strategic communication is understood as a tool to create and maintain organization stakeholder alignment and/or to detect misalignment. The ultimate goal of organization–stakeholder alignment is to create a favorable impression and to gain stakeholder support and an unrestricted license to operate (Riel, 2012).

As Riel (2012), communication plays a critical role in gaining internal stakeholder alignment, as it helps executives to jointly align employees to corporate strategy through different techniques of consultation, mirroring, consensus, or power play (Riel, 2012). He further highlights the need to fully integrate communications with counterparts from marketing, accounting, information technology, and human resources to foster internal alignment. Once that alignment is achieved, the company has to align itself to the expectations of external stakeholders to secure an unrestricted license to operate. The author suggests establishing external fit at three levels with issue, public opinion, and reputation—through gathering intelligence based on analyses of competitors, consumer behavior, media, and scanning techniques.

Invernizzi and Romenti (2015) cited in Shambell (2020) have briefly elaborated the organizations alignment with the external environment in their recent analysis of entrepreneurial organization theory. They identified four contributions of strategic communication in their Entrepreneurial Communication Model: the aligning role, the energizing role, the visioning role, and the constituting role of Strategic communication. Communication in this context is hence ascribed a aligning role in supporting the organization to achieve alignment with external expectations through four different activities: boundary spanning; environmental scanning; activity of bridging; and engaging stakeholders. Regarding the first two activities boundary spanning and environmental scanning communication supports monitoring and interpreting the context in which the organization operates and provides critical input for aligning strategies with ongoing external dynamics and expectations in order to guarantee long-term survival and legitimacy. Regarding the latter two activities bridging and engaging stakeholders communication helps building partnerships between the organization and its most important stakeholders, incorporating their points of view in managerial decision making and thus activating co-decisional processes, and thereby stimulating supporting behavior from stakeholders.

### **2.8.2. Communication strategy alignment**

The purpose of communication strategy alignment is to enhance the company's strategic positioning and contribute to increased performance (Argenti, (2016) cited in Shambell (2020). Many seminal definitions of strategic communication have stressed its notion as being purposeful intentional or —objectives-driven (Kiousis&Strömbäck, 2015), with the purpose of fostering the achievement of overall goals and fulfilling the organization's mission. Even though, the notion strategic is inherent in the term strategic communication only a few scholars have explicitly defined the term as communication aligned with the company's overall strategy (Argenti et al., 2005). Alignment in this context emphasizes the need to formulate communication strategies that are linked to corporate strategy and mission in order to contribute to corporate success (Falkheimer et al., 2017; Zerfass, 2008).

Communication and marketing scholars have adapted strategy and planning concepts from management research to address these challenges and proposed frameworks for deriving communication goals and setting up communication plans (Bruhn, Esch, &Langner, 2016) and for connecting communication strategy to corporate strategy through Communication Scorecards. This implied that there is clarity on the necessity for well-aligned, harmonized communicative strategies, goals and plan, it is notable that the linkage and process of aligning communication and organizational strategy has received scant empirical attention in the strategic communication domain, just as has a deeper analysis of the strategy concept.

## **2.9. The Grunig and Hunt Models of Public Relations**

In this study attempting to use Grunig and Hunt models for the practice public relations. These models serve as guidelines to create programs, strategies, and tactics. Models form the basis for a good understanding of the practice of public relations. They also preempt the problems inherent in some public relations programmed by providing basis for resolving them. Again, models are predictive signposts that could tell the consequences and implications of certain public relations decisions. The four models are developed by the mentioned professors above. The models include:

### **2.9.1. The Press Agency / Publicity Model**

In this model, the focus of public relations effort is to shape the thoughts and opinions of key audiences. It is a one-way communication with propaganda (one-sided argument) as its purpose. The model projects an approach that thrive accuracy is not necessary and organizations do not need audiences' response o. Guth and Marsh (2000), a study in 1989 had revealed that this was the most practiced model of public relations with P.T. Barnum as one of the prominent figures in the practice of the model. The model implied that it does not entertained mutual interests..

### **2.9.2. The Public Information Model**

This model equally adopts a one-way approach of dissemination of information. However, unlike the press agency/publicity model, it disseminates accurate information. In the public information model, PR practitioners act as “journalists in residence,” disseminating truthful information to external publics. If the truth about an organization is problematic or potentially damaging, a public information practitioner will seek to “change the behavior of the organization so the truth could be told without fear” (J. E. Grunig and Hunt, 1984). This model implies that the purpose of public information here is the dissemination of accurate information. But practitioners do not ideas of the targeted audience preferences to suit their strategies and tactics. Some press releases and newsletters are created based on this model, when audiences are not necessarily targeted or researched beforehand. Scholars report showed that that this model was the second most practiced, but it ranked last in order of preference among practitioners.

### **2.9.3. The Two–Way Asymmetrical Model**

This model is a more scientific persuasive way of communication with relevant audiences. It uses research to understand vital public attitudes and behaviors to benefit the organization more than the audiences. Therefore it is considered asymmetrical or imbalance. The model also attempts to create mutual understanding between the organization and its publics. Here, the public relations communicator gets feedbacks from the public and then employs appropriate communication theories to persuade the public to accept the organization's point of view. The essence of research here is to reveal how best to persuade the public. According to Guth and Marsh (1989), the study showed that it was the least practiced of the four models but it ranked first in order of preference among practitioners.

### **2.9.4. The Two–Way Symmetrical Model**

In this model, public relations practitioners should serve as a liaison between the organization and the key public rather than persuading. The goal here is to achieve mutual understanding albeit in a deeper and more profound way ensure that all involved parties benefit, not just the organization employs them. The term symmetrical is used because the model attempts to create mutually beneficial situation. It is a useful model for conflict resolution within an organization and especially between an organization and its publics. The two-way symmetrical model is deemed the most ethical model, one that professionals should aspire to use in their everyday tactics and strategies (Simpson, 2014). The model is the most preferred in the 1989 study. They reported that it was the most practiced model of public relations but ranked second in order of preference among practitioners. Most communication educators are major supporters of this model.

Now in this study the researcher assess the public relations practice of selected government ministries public relation departments practitioners, which of these public relations models would they adopt for their practice as a public relations practitioner. In fact, it depends on a number of factors such as the size of the organization, the distinctive personality of the organization, its corporate goals and objectives as well as its history and what it has learnt from it. For instance a university of Kansas study showed that the more experience an organization has in dealing with crisis, the greater the likelihood that the public relations' role is closely tied to the organization's management.

## **2.10. The Theoretical framework of the study**

For this study the researcher attempt to integrate the theoretical framework of the study with selected Government Ministries of Ethiopia Public Relations Departments and social theory in public relation especially excellence theory in order to assess the practice public relation on nation building. If an organization needs to be operative, it must perform in ways that resolves the difficulties and satisfies the goals of stakeholders as well as of management. Moreover, J. E. Grunig (1992d) argues that "symmetrical communication takes place through dialogue, negotiations, listening, and conflict management rather than through persuasion, manipulation, and the giving of orders". This means that issues can be discussed through two way communication with win-win relationship based on the parties' consensus. As society becomes more multifaceted and segregated, social trust becomes more central for interactions and

relationships. The aim of promoting nation building by the ministries public relations is to create enabling environment to bring citizens harmony and solidarity through common consensus. In other words, as nation the different ethnic groups will exert their efforts, resources and knowledge together for the common destiny and imagination of the country's overall development without any frustration. The fruit of the development benefits all groups without discrimination. The nation's common values, identity, culture, goal and history will base through understanding and consensus.

### **2.10.1. Social theory in public relations perspectives**

Public relations is often studied from different perspectives. It might be on practitioner, manager, or technician positions. The roles of public relations would build trust between the organizations and its publics or mistrust or destroy the organization name. As a result, organizations would need to build relationships with their publics and to make effective communications to achieve their predetermined objectives. In other words, social theory can help us to make sense of public relations at the societal, organizational, and individual levels to create strong relationships and to maintain the strong nation building.

Mayhew (1997) claimed that understanding of the public believe, interest and the way of executing to control the public scope were the functioning of public relations practitioners as a professional communicators. This public scope would enable citizens organize and discuss on communal difficulties easily that leads to reach rational and critical consensus. These social approaches help the public relations to serve the society for the democratic function form by contributing the flow of information and the development of dimension of the range in size.

The Study of managerial positioning is frequently considered as a social theory in public relations (Ihlen and Ruler, 2007). This idea implies that the role and importance of public relations a prerequisite to be examined as a social occurrence. From the above idea, it is possible to deduce that the public relations practices are the essential part of the decision making process which leads the ultimate benefits of the society. Therefore, public relations as an academic discipline requires an understanding of how the public relations purposes works and how it is influenced by and influences social organizations. The public relations would play important roles on the building of organizations and its public's relationships. This legitimacy of public relations would help to influence and bring the intended changes and results in the society.

Today, organizations show high interests on the field of public relations to maintain their sustainable relationships and communications with their targeted publics in order to endorse their goals and behavior. There is evidence which indicated that organizations increasingly incline to perceive public relations as a high-ranking management task and a broad variety of organizations has underway to operate public relations functions. Multi-national companies prominently applied their practical need of public relations by understanding the importance of relationship building with their target publics. There is also a need to combine social theory and public relations studies to understand the effective change of the society in the real world co-existence. Public relations is evolved as a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia context and not well applied as a profession and practically grounded as a discipline. In addition, the quantity and quality of communications were not developed as the international contexts. Public relations practitioners become important beyond institutional communication practice. It is believed that the base of public relations should incorporate the theory and research sections in order to use the maximum advantages and implement diversified approaches communications.

Public relations became more developed field academically recently in compared to its previous time (Shallot et al., 2003). This implied that the development of public relations progress increased due to the understanding and exercise of the profession as an essential part of the societal overall changes;

For this study the researcher tries to integrate the theoretical scope of the practice of public relations in the selected Government Ministries Public Relations Departments with the work of a group of prominent social theorists and from the public relations scholar's perspectives.

### **2.10.2. Excellence theory in public relations**

For this study, the researcher needs to assimilate the practice of public relations in Government Ministries Public Relations Departments with different public relations theories especially excellence theory. Gruing (2006) discussed that organization decisions or decision to resolve difficulties by organizations should examine their surroundings to find the public who are affected prospective act through socially suitable manners. As Gruing, the excellent theory described that the social responsibility of executive decisions and the quality of interactions with stakeholders

grounded the institutions and community by the significance of public relations. The above idea implied that excellent theory based the interaction of organization and society would be affected by decisions which could be made by manages. It is possible to conclude that organizations should consider their decision whether it benefits the society or not because organizations are expected to execute their responsibilities. Therefore, organizations communicate their publics using two way communications to cultivate long term relationships. In addition, the communication activities can be facilitated by the public relations partitions.

Studies showed that overall theory of public relations top performances in communications administration resulted from excellence theory. Botan and Taylor (2004) claimed that to preserve the institutional name within the public there were fashions that public relations undertake a co-creational outlook, aiming on publics as co-creators of sense and stressing the building of relations with the general publics. The above idea implied that public relations can be the center of making relationships that enable to sustain and maintain the societal interests and benefits. Organization realizes the way that public relations excellence can be implemented it success through excellence theory as Waddington (2012). This idea shows that effective organization uses excellence theory to function the public relations on the building of relationships with the organizations and its publics in order to alleviate or resolve existing problems to bring happy society. Internal constructions and external variables considered as a result determiners for a certain public relations segments. Therefore, organizations should use public relations to communicate their visions and missions by performing social acceptable manners and by recognizing decision affected publics based on the problem aroused to satisfied the objectives of stakeholder. Thus, the practitioners of the selected Government Ministries public relations must be instructed in mind and integrated this theory with their day to day activities to maintain good and well organizational nation building.

### **2.10. 3. Empirical Evidences one**

This part presents empirical literature related to the practice of nation building and public relations activities on nation building in Ethiopia and other countries around the world. Bach (2014) states that the dialogue of Pan-Ethiopian Nationalist visibly started at the time of the 2005 regional and federal elections spark a light for a new dimension. Bach supports the above idea that there were debates among different political parties which are published and aired on

Television and radio cause a turning point of the Ethiopian election history as evidence. The ruling party and opposition parties got equal opportunities to present the state and nation building ideology on their debates. This implies that the citizens could get alternative ideas to determine their decisions on the nation building preferences without the imposition of others interest.

Moreover, Horn Policy Brief (2018) suggested that Ethiopia's stability can be assured through addressing historical objection, restructuring institutions, democratization, economic growth and development, and inclusively. In addition, Horn Policy Brief recommended that by changing ethnic based political parties to national political parties which direct by ideology, values and principles than ethno-nationalistic feelings help to encourage the state and nation building. This shows that nation building needs harmonization and unity among different ethnic groups to form a country as a nation. Ethnic nationalism challenges to shape the multi-nationals people's country because of the individual group interests rather than multi-ethnic benefits. As a nation, citizens could contribute their ideas, resources, knowledge, skills and other things for the social benefits and the country development.

Chaka (2013), on the other hand, endeavored to identify the relationships between public relations and nation building by referring the South Africa Presidential political speech and nation building, campaign tactics and nation building. Cooperation, develop common national identity agenda and social cohesion were the most vital variable influencing to foster collaboration and nation building in the presidential speech. There was a positive correlation between the presidential discourse and nation building. This implies that leaders discourse may contribute to construct or de-construct the aspiration of citizens on the nation building process. It is possible to say that leaders might have the ability to change the opinion of citizens to develop collaboration and to build co-existence among them. Leaders could teach citizens about the concept of nationalism as a compelling and necessary component for state and nation building.

Beslay and Person (2010) observe that the government could stimulate to accept development of state institutions in the creation of successful states and nation building. This implies that the government institutions which provide services for the general public able to facilitate the fruitful and efficient statehood and nation building by investing resources and educating citizens. These practices would benefit the citizens as well as the government as a unified nation. It is possible to deduce that the institutions deploy efforts for the diversified ethnic society to be recognized,

valued, harmonized and tolerated among their counterparts as a synchronized nation under the administration structures of a single government. Based on the above information, the researcher believed that MOE, MOT, MOCS, MOP and GCS are the Ethiopian Government Institutions which could have impact on the citizens' nation building inspiration. These government Institutions might practice the nation building through promoting shared values, identity, customs, history, etc. The institutions could work to ensure national identity and nationalism by using positive relationship narratives approaches that strengthen Ethiopian nation building. The approaches may include visual images, music, best cultural practices exchanges which encourage collective benefits.

Mateshvili (2008) stated that government can facilitate the country's democratization by using the government public relations as strategic planning tools and by integrated public relations approaches in to the communication component of the nation building. The government officials' visit and speech help the nation building process. The occasions could be addressed through officials' physical presence to deliver their speeches that arouse the citizens' unity to build a nation. The public relations professionals could able to communicate the media to give coverage to instigate the general public. This implies that the institutions public relations could bring changes on the perception of citizens on the nation building practices by disseminating the events through publication and broadcasting media.

The researcher believed that the Ethiopian nation building narratives were not inclusive and it was run by certain political groups which did not consider the decision of the society to determine their fate. In addition to this, the absence of autonomous and functional institutions hampered the Ethiopia nation building process. The immature political exercises which based ethnic approach eroded the rich values, co-existence and tolerance of Ethiopian unity and nationalism. Therefore, restoring and maintaining Ethiopia as nation there should autonomous and functional institutions which facilitate multiple discourses to make viable the Ethiopian nation building aspiration and provide equal benefits for its citizens. The Head of State, Head of the Government and other government organs of Ethiopia should made social cohesive discourses that initiate the general public to contribute their cumulative efforts for the overall country's economic, social and cultural development.

#### **2.10.4. Empirical Evidence Two**

The mission and vision of the selected government ministries of Ethiopia were to build the nation as the sustainable socio-economic and political participation. The Ministry of Education mission is complementing and leveraging education sector development interventions with strategic communications and public awareness. On the other hand, the Ministry of Culture and Sport mission states that the mission is to study, preserve, develop and promote the cultural wealth and the national tourism attraction of the nation and to build the image of Ethiopia with a view to adding a sustainable socio-economic and political values with popular and stakeholders participation. Moreover, the Ministry of Peace mission states that the ministry mission is protecting the peace of the citizen, the family and the community strengthening the federal system by promoting national consensus and national unity. The Government Communications Service mission states that by providing and establishing current, evidence based, agile and effective information and communications system enable the Ethiopian Government Agendas better acceptable: delivering strategic leadership to create public consensus on main national issues and building the good image of the country and its veneration. In this modern world, education is one of the most important instruments that help to bring changes to benefit the society. It is also believed that education plays a role in shaping the nation-building mission of a nation and its political, social, economic and historical awareness. Klerides (2018) argues that the development of identity, promotion of nationalistic ideologies, reconciliation, democratizations and long term stability through teaching. This implies that education plays a vital role in the construction of the nations. It is believed that more than sixty percent of the Ethiopian population is young generation. In the recent past, the young Ethiopians play a significant role to bring change on the EPRDF ruling party and state power shift. Similarly, it is possible to mobilize and organize the young generation for Ethiopia's nation building. One of the possible opportunities is using school curriculum from the primary to tertiary level. Therefore, educating this young generation to appreciate individuals, shared values, ideas, beliefs, traditions, religions, social conditions and evaluate the political groups those evolved over time.

Moreover, Bereketeab (2020) argues that education helps to improve a multi-national approach to nation building that recognize the celebration of heterogeneity. This implies that education can facilitate the formation of a multi-ethnic and multifaceted identity. Students can exercises nation building spirits through the designed curriculum. The students combined theoretical and practical academic exercise positioning education as central component of nation building. However, in

Ethiopia the questions of what to teach the subject matter of history education is argumentative. The content of history subject should consider inclusive history, culture, values and experiences of nations and nationalities during the curriculum development. In addition, the objectives of civic and ethical education curriculum, contents of the subject and expected outputs are not evaluated accurately and made corrective actions. Hence, in this study, the researcher intended to provide some insights about the civic and ethics and history curriculum constructions.

History education is essential for the promotion of social cohesion and nation building. Some scholars argue history education is partial to political ideologies and exposed to critical political arguments that feverish history curriculum modification (Metzger & Harris, 2018). This implies that citizens could able to associate their past experiences in order to integration and strengthen unity to create a unified nation.

Astrom et al. (2017) argues that researches clarified that history education is a debatable areas for public, reason for government instability and a place of fight over combined remembrance and cultural knowledge. This implies that national narratives become debatable and cause to public conflicts due to the way of teaching history in schools. The current Ethiopian History curriculum has its own contribution for the unsuccessful nation building. In some scholar point of view, Ethiopian History is not included the nations and nationalities history. They believed that most of the contents focused the ruling party's interest, hero, and activities and inclined to the north by presenting their evidences. The debates have become intense and history war. The Politian also aggravated the situation for the sake of their political benefits. The researcher believed that this situation creates a bottleneck for Ethiopia's nation building. Therefore, revising educational curriculum based on inclusive approach is the key priority for Ministry of Education with the consensus of all historians from different Ethiopian nations and nationalities. As a result, nations become part of the national history and avoid competing history, rival narratives and negative thinking agendas of the past.

During EPDRF regime, citizens are forced to rethink their past, their competing interpretations, rival narratives, and revision histories. Besides, what Green et al. (2010) argued that the past history a serious issues for numerous countries, therefore, as a nation we should able to choose and give recognition to historical knowledge that we promote as a nation or that we forget as a

nation. This implies that to construct a legitimate and successful nation building citizens should avoid conflicting agendas and promote their sustainable benefits as a nation.

The researcher put his position is that public relations practitioners might have impact on the nation building process of Ethiopia. The practical evidences showed that the people of Ethiopia have amazing tolerance and co-existence legacy that interwoven the society as a single nation. Even though, there was imposition of conflict arousal issues, the social bonds of Ethiopians did not break because of complicated political intrigues. Recently citizens showed their great zeal to keep their national interests for example, in Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ethiop-Eritrea conflict, etc. The researcher believed that nation building is the heart and mind of the citizens. To mobilizing, and organizing the citizens, practitioners should facilitate conducive environment is crucial. This can be inevitable by using omnipotent strategic communication, independent and balanced media and inclusive and participatory dialogues with citizens. Therefore, the public relations practitioners in the government ministries should facilitate enabling environment for the general public by developing common agendas in consultation with Government Communications Services.

In conclusion, public relations are key parts for organizational communications to strengthen and achieve the vision and mission by creating mutual understanding of the stakeholders. The organization's success or failure may depend on its communication activities. Regarding to the public relations, there is a need of proactive, strategic, analyze situation, goal oriented, environmental scanner, decision maker and solution generator for an emerging situations'.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **REASERCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1.Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology used to carry out the study. It describes the research approach, research design and justifies its use. It also describes the target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques.

#### **3.2. Qualitative Research Approach**

The research used qualitative research approach to gather necessary information by assessing the practice of public relations in selected Government Ministries of Ethiopia public relations departments. Kothari (2004) stated that the qualitative research method is concerned with a personal assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior of the respondents. And also research in such a circumstance is a job of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis.

Moreover, in discussing the qualitative research approach, Crotty (1998) identified several assumptions; meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants by visiting this context and gathering information personally. The process of qualitative research was largely inductive, with the inquiring meaning from the data collected in the study. Generally, in the qualitative research approach, individuals are cross-examined at some length to decide how they have personally experienced oppression (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the researcher used qualitative research method for the study.

### **3.3. Research Design**

In this study, the researcher used a case study research design due to the nature of the study problem which targets to assess the practice of public relations on nation building in the case of selected Government Ministries of Ethiopia. Case studies in which the researcher explores in depth a program, and the event, and activity, a process, or one or more individuals, the case is presently bounded by time and activity, and researcher collects comprehensive information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period (Stake, 1995). This study used the case study research design because it is most appropriate and able to collect data, analysis, description, and interpretation of the circumstances at the time of the study. For more detailed definitions of a case study, Sagadin (1991) states that a case study is used when we assess and define, for example, each person individually, institutions, or a problem (or several problems), process, event in a particular institution in detail. For that reason, the researcher assesses the practice of public relations on the nation building in the case of Ethiopia.

### **3.4. The population of the Study**

This study took the public relations practitioners in the selected government ministries as the population of the study. By utilizing purposive sampling, the researcher interviewed public relations practitioners of the selected government ministries whose job were directly tied to the profession. Furthermore, the ministries websites and face book pages visited thoroughly to assess the posted information by the ministries public relations/ communication departments and took as complementary data for the study.

#### **3.4.1. Sampling Techniques**

For this research, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to select interviewees for an in-depth interview to gather sufficient data and to increase the quality and the credibility of this research. Most notably, Zhi (2014) suggests that the idea behind is to look at a subject from all available angles, thereby achieving a greater understanding. It involves selecting respondents across a wide-ranging relating to the topic of study.

This type of sampling was useful when a random sample was not taken and it's employed where the number of targeted populations assessing the case study was relatively too small.

Generally, using a purposive sampling technique allowed the researcher to use certain criteria for judgment to choose the appropriate sample of the total population. The main informant were the director of public relations department, the social media expert of the public relations department, the senior public relations experts and senior communications practitioners. They were selected based on the positional responsibility, their experience level to assess public relations practice on nation building.

### **3.5. Source of Data**

#### **3.5.1. Primary Sources of Data**

For this study, interview was the primary sources of data to gathered information from the selected government ministries public relations. Experts' responses through in-depth interviews were taken as a primary source of data.

#### **3.5.2. Secondary Sources of Data**

Secondary sources of data were obtained relevant and related data from published and unpublished documents, articles, journals, books, reports, and magazines, websites, face book, etc. from the selected ministries.

### **3.6. Data Gathering Tools**

The researcher used in-depth interviews and document reviews as major tools to gather data. The researcher collected information within the in-depth interview: Face to face interview and telephone interview techniques were employed by the researcher those who were working in selected government ministries public relations departments. Semi-structured interview type of interview was in use superbly suited for several valuable tasks, particularly when more than a few of the open-ended questions require follow-up queries. In addition to an in-depth interview, document reviews with a cross-sectional studies time zone (only the year 2017 to 2021) employed to gather the information from the materials such as: news articles, and press conferences, press releases, etc. those posted on the website and social media pages of the selected government ministries public relation departments.

#### **3.6.1. In-depth Interview**

In qualitative research, an interview help researchers to understand the respondents' perspectives on a scene, to retrieve experiences from the past, to gain professionals information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that was normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand an intimate relationship to analyze certain kinds of discourse (Lindlof, 1995). According to Holstein & Gubrium (2003), data from in-depth interviews allows the researcher to dwell deep into his interviewees' experiences. In addition, Bryman (2012) supports this idea in that "Qualitative methods give space for an in-depth and detailed study of selected issues". The reason for choosing to use an in-depth interview is to make sure that the researcher reveals perceptions at an individual level on a particular issue.

According to Newcomb (1991), the main strength of interviewing as a method is its capacity to range over multiple viewpoints on a given topic. He supplementary gives detail that conducting many interviews helps to increase the information and broaden a point of view. Moreover, in-depth interviews are an excellent way of obtaining in-depth knowledge on sensitive matters and complexities related to individual beliefs, perceptions, and practices that can be explored (Duplooy, 1995). There were 11 (Eleven) participants in the interview from the selected ministries. The interview provided face to face interaction with the directors and senior experts. It was semi-structured questions. The interview guide for in-depth interviews consisted of open-ended questions and provides clarification on the practice of public relations on nation building of Ethiopia.

### **3.6.2. Document review**

In this study, the researcher used document review as a tool to gather the data from the document that is from selected government ministries public relations departments. Document reviews was very essential to achieve research objective concerning assessing the practice of public relations and communication tools as well as strategies of the selected government ministries public relations departments. The researcher reviewed a wide range of written materials, videos; audios and news article that was produced and posted on the website, face book and the mainstream media including television and radio in this year cross-sectional. These can be particularly useful in trying to understand the philosophy of the selected government ministries. They can include policy documents, mission statements, annual reports, and minutes of meetings, codes of conduct, websites, and other promotion materials, etc. (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009).

Therefore, the documents were assessed from the selected government ministries public relations departments such as news articles, policy documents, strategies, videos and press conferences, press releases. In addition, to cultivate the data in this research document review is significant to achieve the research objective and was employed in this study.

### **3.7. Data Collection Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, the study used in-depth interviews and document analysis method to collect data. When, I had received a support letter from the School of Journalism and communications to collect data for this research the data collection was done. In processing this data collection, I had applied various approaches, For instance, for the in-depth interviews; first I transcribed the audio-recorded. After data transcription, the researcher started to highlight influential quotes that are relevant to the research questions and research objectives which lead to themes formulation that are related to the research questions. Interviewees who are participating in the interviews were given codes based on the number of participants, for example (D1, D2, SE1, SE2 & JE1). For document reviews, I reviewed with a cross-sectional studies time zone (only one the year 2017 or 2021) and employed to gather the information from the materials such as: (news articles and press conference those posted on the website and social media pages of selected government ministries public relations Departments. Document reviewed particularly useful in trying to understand the philosophy of an organization. They included policy documents, mission statements, annual reports, and minutes of meetings, codes of conduct, websites, and other promotion materials, etc. (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009).

### **3.8. Data analysis procedure**

In this study, the data presented and analyzed based on themes in a way that the themes were reflected on the research questions. Qualitative data from the open-ended interview part was analyzed using thematic analysis methods. Analyzing qualitative data typically involves immersing oneself in the data to become familiar with it, then looking for patterns and themes, searching for various relationships between data that help the researcher to understand what they have, then visually displaying the information and writing it up, (Kawulich, 2015).

According to Boyatzis (1998), suggested that the thematic analysis, which is based on the frequent theme of data, can be used to make sense of qualitative data. It is used to analyze qualitative information and to systematically gain knowledge about a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organization, or a culture. This study was administered qualitative data in terms of content and where applicable and a quotation form analyze the director or senior public relations expert in-depth interview to assess the roles and practice of public relations on nation building the case of selected government ministries.

### **3.9. Credibility / Trustworthiness of the research**

In this research, the credibility and trustworthiness of the research had no less important in qualitative research. They had different connotations for qualitative data. Qualitative researchers must pay attention to several different concerns that might call the credibility of their research into question. According to Creswell(1998), in qualitative research four factors help to construct the rationality and credibility /trustworthiness of the study: Such as, multiple methods of data collection, audit trial, member checks, research team, and debriefing, therefore the researcher will use this parameter to assure the appropriateness of the validity and reliability claim.

### **3.10. An ethical issue of this research**

The entire participant of this study was adequately informed about the objective of the study and the anticipated benefits and risk of the study during the data collection time. The respondents had the right to respond or refuse their interviews. Oral information consents were obtained from the study participants. All the information given by the interviewees were used for research purposes only and confidentiality and privacy were maintained by omitting the name of the respondents during data collection procedure and after data collection information from the study put without participant's name and principal investigator put questionnaires were locked.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presented the data analysis of the research. The respondents' responses to the research questions were presented in three themes. Data obtained from the PR department directors and senior experts towards the PRs practice of the selected government ministries were analyzed. To gather the required data for the study, in-depth interviews and document reviews were employed as major tools. The data collected from the respondents through in-depth interview and the document reviewed from the ministries analyzed as follows:

#### **4.1. The Roles and Practices of public relations on nation building in Selected Government Ministries of Ethiopia**

The mission of the government ministries observed as a secondary source of data in their website showed that the primary aims were to promote sustainable social, economic and political development of the nation. The practitioners were facilitating, collecting and disseminating shared values, history, cultures, and goals. They were promoting national identity and foster indigenous knowledge for the nation's solidarity and unity besides national development. In addition to these, the ministries functioned to promote national consensus on shared economic, social and development aspects. As part of PR service to the community, promoting nation's unity and patriotism in collaboration with stakeholders through public forums, national dialogues, panel discussion etc. and share with media. PR also encouraged indigenous knowledges to resolve conflicts, create sustainable peace and holistic development all over the country. The PR practitioners practice different kinds of tasks, and they are a multitude indeed. Creating mutual understanding between organizations and its publics was central focus of the PR.

One of the public relations professionals in the Ministry of Culture and Sport (MOCS), senior experts two (SE2) described that the current roles and practice of public relations based on the organization mission. The selected government ministries missions were as follows: MOE was mission complementing and leveraging education sector development interventions with strategic communications and public awareness. MOCS mission was to study preserve, develop and promote the cultural wealth and the nation tourism attractions of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia and to build the positive images of Ethiopia. MOP mission was protecting and maintaining the peace of citizen, the family and the community strengthening the federal system by promoting national consensus and national unity. GCS mission was providing current and correct information by establishing agile and effective communication system to enable the Ethiopian government agendas acceptable; and delivering strategic leadership to create consensus on the main national issues by the public and to build the good images of the country and its veneration. She stated that the mission was develop and promoting the cultural wealth and the national tourist attractions of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia, stimulating the positive images of Ethiopia and adding sustainable socio-economic and political values with public participation. Furthermore, as her depiction, the professionals tried to empower competent and efficient citizens, bring generation continuity and transform the existing important social and cultural issues to the nation building processes. She narrated that:

*Particularly, I am practicing public relations to promote the grand cultural values which are eye catching for the tourists like “Fiche Chambalala”, “Erecha”, “Timket”, Meskel”, etc. We are not only celebrating the culture or the religion ceremony but also we are celebrating these to create cultural continuity, togetherness, generation endurance and sustainable interaction among Ethiopians.*

In addition to the above statement she narrated, she added the following explanations as follows:

*We are working on the development and preservation of the cultural values to make them constant through the dissemination of accurate information to address the targeted publics as well as the general public. These are the opportunities that one can exchange and inherit good values from others. Whereas, regarding the country’s nation building, I do not believe that nation is built. There are sensitive*

*issues which are untouchable and sensitive like ethnicity identity, religion, gender, etc. There is no enabling environment and exposure at the current situation to practice nation building in Ethiopia.*

The above explanation implied that culture had its own impact on nation building. Culture helped to connect citizens to share cultural values to live in co-existence, tolerance and sustain the generation continuity. The country's nation building process needed special focus due to ethnicity, religion, language, etc. complexity. The researcher understood that cultural values had importance to build the nation through interactions and share cultural values to enhance closeness and shared development of the society. Whereas, some sensitive issues such as ethnicity, religion and gender that hampered to build the nation should be manage strategically and with wisdom. Lack of experience and practice created unfavorable situations for the practice of nation building activities. This indicated that the ministry should endeavor the nation building practice by resolving the factors those entangled its achievement. In supporting this idea, since the dawn of modern society, Anderson (1991) has claimed that nations are not naturally formed, but rather socially and culturally constructed cultures. He believes that it is an 'imagined' public since citizens of the country do not individually identify or have intimate relationships with one another, but "in the minds of each, lives the idea of their proximity." Despite not knowing each other, people imagine themselves as belonging to a nation because they have a common national identity. This made clear that the public relations practitioners might have contribution to win public attitude for the nation building process. PR practitioners were responsible to make sure that the ministries were understood and accepted by its public. Several researchers supposed that, in the existing world the practice of public relations contributed on nation building to promote mutual understanding, national consensus, and stimulus public opinion and conduct.

Director Two (D2), who works in the Ministry of Education (MOE), explained the public relations practice of the ministry as follows:

*As a ministry, we have the lion share on the nation building process. Most of the youth and children attend the formal education starting from elementary school to university. The ministry endeavor its effort to enable student love their country, ethical, patriot, we have prepared education and training that suits with science and technology which enable students to integrate their culture and values with*

*the other world. We work and promote students to come to one common goal based on the prepared education and training system.*

The Director Two(D2) added that:

*The ministry designs contents of the curriculum along with scholar from different sectors. MOE works with health, agriculture, tourism, culture and sport, peace, etc. sectors on practical adult education. Our ministry provides educational information for education societies on students' educational developments, teachers' competency, educational quality, etc. that enable students to be enrich knowledgeable researcher and worldwide competent. The ministry provides the same type of education. Modern education could not bring moral values by itself. It is necessary to use indigenous knowledge. In addition to these, we engage and participate all stakeholders to exhaust cumulative efforts.*

The above responses of the director showed that the function of education is to produce enlightened citizens who develop common national identity, feeling, willingness to live together and strong sense of nationhood. This implies that education enables the advancement process of constructing social spirit among citizens to create coherent, cohesive, integrated and sustainable nation. At the national level, Ministry of Education is considering education as an instrument to utilize and maximize national benefits and interests of citizens. The roles and practices of the public relations practitioners were developing strategic communications and create public awareness on the ministry mission and vision. The practitioners would facilitate the benefit of nation building through dialogues in diversified ethnic groups school students and university students in collaboration with universities, regional educational bureaus, zonal educational departments and woreda education offices. The PR practitioners collect best practices and share with others education sectors at all level for scale up and implementation. Education would facilitate national unity, national identity, socio-economic development and nation building in general.

As senior expert one (SE1), they were practicing public relations in their ministry to build the nation and also to promote the common values of the general public. As he stated:

*In my opinion, it is very important to promote the public to learn, know, see, develop and visiting trends and scenarios by mobilizing the target public from one place to the other places through domestic tourism to share their common goals and to build the nation. In addition to these, messages, which create cohesion among the citizens, are crafted and disseminated on the program. Therefore, the purpose of practicing public relations within the ministry is vital to achieve the vision and missions of our Ministry of Culture and Sport. The current government has also given attention for nation building to bring togetherness, common idea and economy. From this perspective, public relations skill is vibrant to integrate into the ministry strategy and to build the nation.*

The above expert's idea implied that there was government attention in line with their ministries vision and mission to build nation. Public mobilization and interaction in different scenarios brought the nation building consensus and attached them for shared idea and economy. Developed messages were the device to connect the nation. The skills of public relations determined the effectiveness of the nation building through the applied strategy. The researcher inferred that the alignment of the ministry strategy with the government nation building interest would be the public relations practitioners' priority area in the ministry.

Director one (D1) suggested that they were practicing public relations to build a nation through the participation of different stakeholders. They focused to promote common issues or values under the FDRE Ministry of Culture and Sport. The director explained that:

*Especially as a public relations department, we organize stages like Victory Anniversaries, annual competitions, capacity building trainings, awareness raising meetings, national art rewards program, etc. for the publics. We are focusing on promoting the nation building of the country. There are nation building interests. But now, the idea off nation building is in confusion. The political elite's interest is vague. We are in the nightmare world to choose the effective way to form the nation. We are drawn in religion, locality sentiment and political ideology which we possess. So, we have not built the nation.*

From the director expression, it is possible to deduce that national anniversaries and celebrations were vital to promote the county's nation building. There was a national focus on the issue of

nation building. However, the idea of nation building was not clearly settled ideas because of different interests. The research recognized that efforts needed to be deployed to reach on national consensus among citizens for nation building.

On the other hand, senior expert 3 (SE3) stated that FDRE Ministry of Peace tried to promote indigenous knowledge to use it in the nation building process throughout the country. He added that the Social Resource Development Directorate in the Ministry organized public forums, national dialogue stages, etc. for the general public to bring national consensus. The directorate used to support and magnify the social values that conveys national consensus to sustain the nation. The expert explained that:

*The directorate promotes cultural reconciliation systems, mediation wisdoms' and tactics, traditional conflicts resolution methods, etc. and brought and adapted them into the national policy for the sustainable peace and development of Ethiopia. The ministry conducts national dialogues at different levels to foster common understanding for the nation building process as a nation. Concerning the nation building of Ethiopia, it is obvious and everyone understands the situation where we live. There is a say "we survive as a result of the society's social capital". The presence of social values, trust and indigenous knowledges help us a society to have inseparable cohesiveness which enables us to exist as a nation. But the political maneuver is still in fragment. My hope and trust rests up on the public. I do not believe that nation building is installed yet.*

The above expert idea indicated that using indigenous knowledge the nation building process could be effective. Social values and public trust created bonds among citizens ignoring the political situations. However, the current Ethiopia's nation building situation was in difficulty because there was no built nation. The researcher understood that indigenous knowledge had contribution for the nation building process. Korostelina (2007), in a world where certainty and stability are not guaranteed, social identity provides individuals with a wisdom of protection through a sense of belonging to a national identity and the formation of boundaries with other identities.

These showed that the ministries approach of nation building is surely the role of public relations practitioners to .connect the public on their common and shared values as a bridge. Nation is

built on doing this regularly over some time in which a track record of oneness through developing trust and mutual understanding among different groups. The role of public relations would help the ministry to make sure its practice concurrent to the target. Strong nations would be built by interacting publics consistently over some time in which a track record of delivering on sustainable and engendering trust is essential to everyone. According to Pride (2005), public relation is a broad range of communication efforts used to establish and maintain a positive relationship between an organization and its stakeholders. He went on to say that an organization communicates with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, the ministries public relations would be engaged to promote and communicate the public to build a nation as a middle person.

On the other hand, the senior expert 9 (SE9), who worked as a social media expert in FDRE Ministry of Tourism Public Relations Department, explained that they had active social media platform to address the organization's publics, create awareness on attraction sites and tourist destinations. The expert has ongoing communication programs for the targeted publics. He said that:

*As an expert, I am practicing on the social media platform that the ministry uses as a communications tool and my daily activities focuses on writing relevant information, editing the information, prepare contents posting on the face book and upload videos, photos, etc. to promote the sector. Regarding the nation building of Ethiopia, currently we are in difficulty. The tourism sector is greatly affected. We strive to build the image of the country. However, as I know, due to the current conflict in the Northern and the intermittent clashes in some parts of the South and South west of the country we do not perform our tourism operation. Tourism is sensitive by its nature. (Interview was conducted on 27April 2022)*

This implied that social media plate forms used on promoting the sector by diffusing important messages which contributed to awareness creation for the country image building and nation building. The tourism sector was sensitive and affected very much due to the present conflicts in some parts of Ethiopia. The researcher inferred his understanding from the respondent's idea was that instability affects the image of the country as well as the nation budding. To reverse

this, social media would be powerful to address the target population through sending positive massaging that able to change negative attitudes. Likewise, the challenge of public relations specialists, according to Newsom (2004), is persuading the best people who contribute to organizations to improve their best performance. The difficulty of achieving the goal and the success of the organization may be intertwined. Furthermore, according to Black (2003), influencing the internal public might assist people think that the business is doing the right thing for them or is doing everything possible to satisfy them.

Senior expert 8 (SE8) indicated that public relations had special focus on national dialogues which bring national consensus to build the nation and act to serve the interest of its publics. He also suggested that it was their assignment to promote, enhance and maintain the country's integrity and nation building process as a FDRE Government Communication Service. He stated that:

*As public relations practitioners, we have considered the country's current situations. In the past, we have passed through many imbalance narrations which created disputes among citizens. Nevertheless, as GCS, we are doing extensive activities on unity and shaping the attitude of the public. We are going to identify the common values which enable us to bring the public for the national consensus and the nation building process. As Ethiopians, even if we are diversified, we have common values, common identity, common goals, common history common culture, etc. So, we should craft messages and disseminate repeatedly to bring the concept of oneness by using communication and public relations tools. I believe that we have many contributions and play important role on nation building as government communication service public relations practitioners. We are starting the nation building process.*

The above showed that facilitating national dialogue by public relations had got due attention to enhance national consensus on the nation building process. GCS had strong desire on the promotion, development and maintaining of the citizens unity as a nation. Correcting disproportional narrative by categorizing shared values, idea of unity, shared goals, shared history and culture were supported by crafted messages in progress for the nation building process. The nation's commonalties were identified to practice intervention tools. It is possible to

deduce that public relation had vital role on the national dialogue that facilitate the nation building process. Anderson (1991) stated that nations have been socially and culturally organized units since the dawn of civilized society. According to him, the explanation is that people in the country do not need to know each other individually or have personal relationships; rather, each of them forms a mental image based on their shared experiences.

It is possible to infer that the planned and sustainable effort should be exhort to establish and maintain good will and common understanding between the ministries and its publics. Furthermore, the researcher assessed the ministries social media and website the public relations experts practicing as a communication technical but it did not play roles as a mechanism for problems solver as much as possible. The expert's day to day activity was writing news articles, posting news information on social media and website. They were not active on decision-making activities, influencing the top management and pursuing the general public to share the organization mission and objectives to generate mutual recognition between the organization and its public to build the nation.

This study conducts the analysis part in related with the Two-Way Symmetrical Model, this was preferred because the model gave an opportunity to serve both organs and ensure their mutual benefits and interests. In this model, public relations practitioners would apply individual efforts consensus to create each side to know the other's opinion and facilitate good environment.

The main tasks of practitioners in the ministries were to facilitate situation between the organization and its public to have common consensus on nation building. They used as a connection amid the organization and its publics to get shared understanding rather than an adversarial relationship. During the communications, the practitioners were expected to play as communication technical, facilitator, problem solver and consultant to provide solutions for problems. In support of this idea Haque (2004) stated that PR practitioners in both the public and private sectors appear to primarily fulfill the role of communication technicians, focused on message generation and distribution. This showed that the public relations practitioners would capacitate themselves to write and craft powerful imagery messages and using appropriate languages efficiently

As the researcher inquired information from the PRs senior expert 7 (SE7), he explained that:

*As Ministry of Tourism, we have cultural, historical and natural tourist destinations and attraction sites. We have common identity, shared culture, shared values, etc. These constituents will help us to build Ethiopia's image and activate the nation's reputation and nation branding. The public relations practitioners did not invited to help the top managers as a problem solver. And public relations professional did not combine their role as, an expert prescriber, a communication facilitator, and a problem-solving facilitator. I feel sorry, due to the present situation we live in. In my point of view, the nation building process is hijacked by extremist politicians' including the social media. He adds that we are not applying effective communication strategies and operational communication tools those help to create national consensus and build a sustainable nation in Ethiopia.*

The above idea indicated that there were common attributes that help to build the nation as Ethiopian. The tourist destinations which encompasses cultural, historical and natural were the reflection of the shared identity, national image and reputation of the nation. These could be promoted to enhance the nation building process. Public relations practitioners should play the role of promoting the aforementioned values. But, the practitioners were not involved in the decision making process. The public relations contribution was discouraged by higher level management. The nation building concept and social media were taken by politicians. There were deficiency in using strategies and tools to maintain the nation.

Grunig, J. (2001) suggests that public relations cannot be practiced as a profession rather than an occupation and a management functions rather a set of techniques unless practitioners have a body of knowledge based on scholarly research available to them.

However, Faxon Company (2018) in their document defined public relations as a management function which tabulates public attitudes defines policies, procedures and interests of an organization followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. Furthermore, Geremew (2017) expresses that PRs emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public's concern by helping management to effectively operate changes, to serve as an early warning method to anticipate trends and to use research and ethical communication skills as its principal tools. To support of this idea, Grunig, J. (2001) suggests

that public relations cannot be practiced as a profession rather than an occupation and a management functions rather a set of techniques unless practitioners have a body of knowledge based on scholarly research available to them. Similarly, Dozer and Broom (1995), the communication technician function was unique from the three roles of expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem-solving facilitator, which were all strongly connected. Constant tourism advertising, according to Palmer (1999) and Light (2001), symbolizes the nation's vision and national identity. Symbols and signs in tourism brochures, according to Palmer, help to develop and express a sense of national identity.

Eventually, in this context the researcher need to analyze the first question that, assessing the public relations practice on nation building in FDRE MOCS, MOE, MOP, MOT and GSE based on the interviewees' ideas. So, the interviewees such as D1, D2, SE1, SE2, SE4, SE5, SE 6, SE7 & SE8 clarifications, lots of public relations practitioners were not performed the nation building practice because of different factors which prohibited them to promote the concept for the general public appropriately in the ministries. Few organizations made little efforts that waere not as such organized manner. In this way, the public relations practice might be affected the nation building process of Ethiopia negatively. Even though, reflecting the surviving country is vital in the kingdom, according to Ting (2008), since mental construction helps nation-building. Similarly, Calhoun maintains that country formation is based on members' understanding of the broad framework of national identity, as well as recognition of other members' contributions to nation formation through recognition of nation-ness and the provision of independence and rights to other members. The ministries public relations practitioners were expected to aware the public and helped to reach national consensus on the process and significance of the national unity for individuals' determinations by using their knowledge based decision. The situation might not give citizens to see themselves as a member of the community and associate themselves with the large group.

Nation building was one of the dependent variables of the public relations effectiveness together with the involvement of the ministries internal and external public to build a nation.

To sum up, the first question respondents' results show that how the public relations practice by the ministries public relations departments on nation building in Ethiopia. The public relations departments were not perform the nation building process based on the professional standards of

public relations and effective communication strategies. The PR practitioners did not practice it more just by involving all the knowledge competence, skills, value and the good manners of public relation to disseminate nation building factual information to the public as much as possible. This means the practitioners were not practicing the PR profession effectively to change the attitude of the general public and to create sense of belongingness. PR experts were expected to stimulate the public to feel nation-ness. But practitioners were not performed such activities as intended. Furthermore, they were not involved in the decision-making process with top management, defining problems, and developing solutions in their public relations department. In this context, the practice of PR can affect the nation building process negatively. The ministries missions and visions are vivid to build sustainable nation. The public relations practitioners expected to play great role in creating mutual understanding between the ministries and the public it serves as well as the general public at large. PR practitioners did not ensure the active cooperation and participation of the public in the nation building process. Practitioners did not have promotional strategies, plans and performance measurement that enables them to create trust and mutual understanding among the members of the nation to be built.

Moreover, practitioners did not also inform the public about the nation building issues; did not improve the effectiveness of the national unity through appropriate public information techniques; did not provide feedback to ministries so that programs and policies could not be modified, amended or continued. To make these down to earth, government public relation organization must have the knowledge and ability to fabricate the scaffold among government and open for shared advantages (Banik, 2006). Proactive PR allows organizations to plan and execute public relations activities on their own timeline. Public relations is more effective if it is planned, intentional, and controlled. Proactive public relations require that organizations are continually monitoring various environments, assessing relationships, and identifying and tracking issues that may affect the organization. Public relations practitioners should be a bridge. Relationships require two-way communication. PR practitioners should have an action plans: Goals/Objectives, themes/key messages, strategies/tactics, calendar, budget and evaluation.

#### **4.2. The communication tools used by PR practitioners to build a nation**

At this time, many public relations scholars recognize that, communication is the heart of any relationship between an organization and its publics: personal, professional, or a temporary

business among individuals (Shambel, 2020). People interact every second deliberately or subconsciously. The public relations practitioner used a wide variety of communications tools to deliver basic information to their general public, to build robust relationships and to create common understanding between the organizations and its public. These communications tools include mainstream media such as electronic media (Television, Radio), print media (Newspaper, newsletter, brochure, etc.), social media platforms (Facebook, website, twitter, Instagram, telegram). State-controlled broadcast media (radio and television), on the other hand, are essential tools for nation-building projects, according to Benier (1999).

All the ministries used different types of communication tools like electronics, printed and social media platforms to disseminate information and address their targeted publics. Nevertheless, their practice might vary across the ministries.

D1, D2, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7 and SE8 were interviewed from 20 April 2022 to 27 April 2022 by asking the semi-structured interview questions using voice recorder and responded the communication tools they had used to disseminate information for the public.

SE2 explained that:

*As I knew that, the main communication tools we have used in MOCS public relations department includes: electronics media, print media and social media. The question is “how much are these media active?”, “are they consistent and continuous?” For example, from the social media we have used face book and telegram only. We have also used television from the electronics media. But “how many Ethiopians’ have access to get the information through these aforementioned channels?” There are limitations on using technology or we are not technology friendly. Printed media can be produce based on the availability of financial resources. The old website of MOCS it is already stacked due to capacity problem for the last two years. To be sure, the communication tools that we have used are not much satisfactory to disseminate the information and to persuade our general public that leads to build the nation.*

The above idea indicated that there were familiar communications tools like mainstream media and social media. Even if the media were available, activate those matters. There were

shortcomings on using all available media due to technological friendless. So capacity building might be needed to make the experts familiar for the technology. The goal of the public relations on using those communications tools was to deliver the right messages for the right public to maintain and sustain positive attitudes of the public towards nation building. In support of this idea, Broom and Tucker (2008) states that public relations is a management process aimed at achieving, maintaining, and rewarding favorable behaviors within social groups on which an organization's mission is dependent. However, the researcher had visited the face book page he found that the uploaded messages were the organization news. Educational messages that could develop the awareness on nation building and related information were not found. Scholars agreed that, when public relation is used strategically, it adds the most value to an organization. Moreover, Studying the audience's meaning-making can help to explain the broader understanding of hidden ideologies and discourses around national identity, as Anderson (1991) describes mass media as a nation-building tool where identity is generated through media representation. People inside the same nation 'think' they share the same set of characteristics, according to his argument on imagined national community, because they consume comparable language and print media.

Furthermore, SE1 described that:

*In MOCS, we have used the communication tools to nation building, country's image building, share good deeds, customs, living styles, social interaction, clothing, cultivation, amazing attraction sites, culture, arts, awareness creation, etc. Mostly, we have used Ethiopia Television to broadcast a series TV program entitled as "Tourism for Development" latter it is called "From Dalol to Dashin" once a week. In addition, we had monthly panel discussion entitled as "Tuba Wog" by scholars who are in the academic disciplines. Literary "Tuba" means symbolized as a coiled of yarn have unlimited main information resources and "Wog" means talk. "Tuba Wog" is multi-dimensional information that thoroughly overlooks the overall aspects of cultural activities and indigenous knowledges. We have disseminated print and CD information for free. But the ministry website is not functional for the past two years because of capacity.*

The above idea showed that the public relations used mainstream media to promote the nation building process and societal interaction by delivering factual information which enhance positive attitude and awareness to public on nation. The program reflects the society norm, culture, life style, different activities, etc. in different parts of the country. There were also discussions on cultural related issues including indigenous knowledge by scholars in the field of study that might aware the different cultural wealth for different social groups. These would help to know the diversity of publics which lead to unity by respecting each other. The researcher recognized that public awareness and understanding of nation building was important for the nation building process of diversity with unity.

D1 forwarded his idea as follow:

*Besides the conventional media, we have disseminated MOCS' information through influential, public figures and religious leaders to consider the issues as their own. For example, Ethiopian Faith Congress to create awareness and teach their faith members through their faith lines on the prevention of migrant cultural acts and un ethical norms. Furthermore, we have distributed the information freely by soft copy and hard copy to address the targeted publics. Moreover, we have a responsibility to announce the mission and vision of the ministry for the internal and external public in order to fulfil the ministry's achievement.*

The above idea indicated that there were other mechanisms which helped to defuse information. The direct involvement of faith influential leaders and soft copy dissemination were the subsidiary elements for the communications tools. The public relations had the responsibility to inform the mission and vision of their organization for the public. This idea would be supported by Lupton (1992), discourse is a collection of ideas or a systematic method of thinking that may be found in both written and spoken communication, as well as in larger social institutions. Moreover, Discourses are thought to generate knowledge on certain themes and establish the regime of truth, or dominant truth (Macdonlad, 2003).

According to SE7, communication tools were crucial for the ministry to address its publics. He said that:

*As MOT, we should use all the communication tools as much as possible; whereas, we are not lucky to promote the untapped diverse cultural, ritual, natural, historical, archaeological, social heritage and endowed fauna and flora we have. As a comparison, Ethiopia is full of resources than Egypt, Kenya, Algeria and South Africa, we generate insignificant amount of revenue for the economy from the tourism sector. Previously, we had aired promotional programs on television and radio. However, it was interrupted at the middle of the series program. We are not active on printed media like posters. A long time ago, Ethiopia tourism sector was known with printed pictures and poster like smiling Ethiopia, Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony, Hummer people, BeniaAmmer people, endemic animals, Spiritual and historical places, etc. But now we do not have any single pictures and posters at hand. We use website and face book actively and the mainstream media to disseminate news only rather than programs that help to bold nations. Generally, we did not have effective communications tools and even a concert communications plan to apply the science of public relations in our PR department effectively.*

The above discussion showed that using all types of communications would increase the reachability of the disseminated information as much as possible. The limitation was in using the resources as intended to address the targeted groups to change the external public attitude that the nation's diversified cultural, historical and natural endowed resources. The communications tools would help to attract both domestic and international publics. This would enhance the country's image what is called nation branding. It would foster nationalism and national unity. For example religious and historical events would create closeness and unity regardless of language and ethnicity differences. Ethiopia's tourism potentials would generate income that assisted the country's gross domestic products. These in turn would enhance the economy that stable social welfare and deliver basic services for the nation. These could be the nation building arm of the country. But communications tools were not utilized appropriately. The researcher made a visit of the ministry website and face book page. On the organization website, there was some attraction sites information those would give highlights for visitors. Regarding the face book page, most of the messages uploaded were event messages used as news dissemination. However, Ethiopia has tangible and intangible heritages which were registered as world heritages by United Nations Education Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). They

could be used as a sign of unity and cooperation not only for Ethiopians but also the nations of the world. Nation building messages were not crafted and uploaded both on the website and face book page. These might be useful to foster unity with diversity sentiment within the community. In addition to these, the electronic and printed media were not used to disseminate programmed and crafted messages for the general public. The researcher understood that there were gaps on using the communications tools by the ministry.

According to SE8, the government communication service was newly established organization. He explained that they tried to address messages by using communication tools as follow:

*As GCS, we have used mainstream media (electronics and print) and social media (face book). Face book is the most active medium to disseminate GCS information for the public. We have organized public dialogues on the theme entitled as “the role of communication on nation nationality and unity”. We have not developed website because GCS is established recently.*

The above response of the expert implied that electronics, print and social media had vital role for the dissemination of organization messages to the targeted public. Face book was the most accessed social media by GCS. There was public dialogue initiation to foster the nation’s unity. There was also limitation to develop website even though it was established recently. The researcher visited the face book page and he found that most of the uploaded messages were the organization news. The researcher could not find nation building related uploaded messages on the face book page of GCS. Nevertheless, Schwalbe (2010) suggested that in order to effectively communicate with the general public of an organization, public relations practitioners such as the director public relations office and the team leader, the managing editor, and communication practitioners should set appropriate communication tools and techniques that are relevant to convey a piece of the right information to the right public.. Choosing which communications tools and approaches to utilize is a difficult task that is influenced by a number of factors. Cost, tool availability, skill set, and form of communication are some of these considerations (Mnkandla, 2008). As a result, communication tool management becomes a vital skill set for successful coordination of any tools and all stakeholders. A project's failure may be due to ineffective communication tool management (Schwalbe, 2010; Mephyans-Robinson, 2010).

Moreover SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7 and SE9 indicated that, predominantly, they were used an electronics, printed and social media including website, face book and community radio for information dissemination as public relations practitioners. Even though most of the ministries public relations used the communication tools, they deployed to disseminate news rather than producing series programs on nation building.

Public relations practitioners need to have an effective communication strategy and effective communication tools to build sustainable nation in Ethiopia. According to Ton V. (2018), the Strategic Communication Frame Model is a concept for developing alert PR strategies in the context of changing environments and legitimacy, and it aids in increasing the impact of content and procedure. It also helps to create clear, essential, and alternative choices, based on the vision and mission of the organization. As well it will show for what an organization, including its PR, will be accountable, and it gives a clear framework for strategies and actions in the field of Communication/PR. (Ton V., 2018). Strategic communication is viewed in this context as a tool for establishing and maintaining organizational stakeholder alignment, as well as detecting misalignment. The ultimate goal of a stakeholder alliance for an organization is to establish a favorable relationship and gain stakeholder support as well as an unrestricted license to operate (Riel, 2012).

Thus, to analysis the second question, the communication tools used by government ministries public relations practitioners and their application to build nation evaluated based on the response of the interviewees. The public relations practitioners used different types of communication tools like television, radio, print media, face book, website, panel discussion, and sometimes press conference. Nevertheless, public relations practitioners had not used communications tools consistently. Community based dialogues, forums, and consistent nation building programs on mainstream media, organizing event, print media, and website information were hardly applicable in the PR practice.

Moreover, as a researcher, the documents posted on the ministries websites and face book pages were analyzed. The practitioners used the website page to convey news information only. But they didn't use the website as an effective communications tool to pursue to build a bridge between the ministries and their general public especially the external public to maintain and build the nation. Thus, based on the documents analyzed from the tools PR practitioners were

not used potentially. Except GCS and MOP, the rest of the ministries didn't have a concert communications strategy to practice public relations, integrate with effective communication tools, persuade the public and build the nation. So, practitioners had limitation or weakness on public relations practice effectiveness. According to James E. Grunge (2001) suggested that most public relations practitioners have limitations to masters of several techniques like media coverage, prepare press releases, write speeches, write and design brochures, produce video news releases, lobby representatives in Congress, stage a special event, or prepare an annual report. On the other hand, Mahoney, (2013) suggested that senior practitioners should be responsible for planning the details of what, how, and why their organizations communicate with strategic publics.

Generally, the public relations practice in using communications tools was very weak. The practitioners were unable to use effectively communication tools to address and aware the general public about nation building. The professionals faced hard to contribute to national consensus on nation building, national unity, national branding, national identity and nationalism those could make social cohesion. The tools might fill information gap, building public trust, avoid public misunderstanding and correct previous imbalance narration, reduce conflicts and differences. Moreover, applying appropriate communication tools by identifying the most appropriate targeted public to encourage the existing social capital for social cohesion. Unless public relations practitioners promoted the nation building process, the ministries mission hard to be practiced. Therefore, the ministries public relations practitioners should not strive to use efficient and effective communication tools and appropriate communication strategies to see the desired nation building process viable.

#### **4.3. The Challenges that PR Practitioners Face on the Promotion of Nation Building**

Currently, the issue of public relations practices in Ethiopia has been debated within the field of public relations. The possible reason for this might be due to the lack of understanding the role of public relations and its professional standard. At the same time, some people did not know what public relation encompasses, what it aims to achieve, and how it works.

Concerning the public relations practice in the ministries' PR department, the practitioners raised lots of challenges that could be hampered to practice public relations proactively.

According to Director 2 (D2), they strived to apply public relations in MOE in conventional ways to implement the ministry objectives that encourage nation building in Ethiopia. He stated that:

*One of the challenges that I have observed was the attitude of the leadership in different level. As a PR practitioner, we should convey the ministry important information for internal and external public to achieve the MOE mission and Vision. One of these is creating enabling environment to sustainably building an education system and training that ensure quality and equitable education for all citizens. Especially, we promote competent workforce for the country's economic development. Whereas, the education sector leaders attitudes at all levels is the concrete challenge. Leaders developed local sentiments rather than national education goals. The leaders who are positioned at all level should not understand that we have common objectives those helps us to achieve our common goals on the education sector at national level. Culture and inconvenient infrastructure are also some of the challenges we faced in our PR practice.*

The above idea of the practitioner implied that absence of good working atmosphere and attitude of executives in different status considered as major challenges for the public relations practice as well as nation building. Leadership local inclined to local interests affected the public relations to achieve the national goal and objectives of the sector. In addition, culture and infrastructure were the other challenges for the practitioners. The researcher recognized that the public relations practitioners would play the role of problem solver, communication facilitator and communication technician. However, the practitioners were not played the roles which were mentioned above. The most useful form of public relations actions, according to Rosenberg (2013), involves anticipating difficulties, planning to prevent them, or at the very least attempting to solve them while they are still minor.

In the same way, SE7 assured that the top management of MOT gave less attention for public relations department in compared to other departments found in MOT. He elaborated that

*The first PR challenge is public relations practitioners have not get respect and appropriate place. The profession is neglected or degraded by top managers. The department has not its own office. Every time its office is reshuffled from place to*

*another place and assigned to share the office with other departments. The PR department is the least budgeted department. The managements do not know and understand the public relation benefits, values, etc. efficiently and thoroughly. The second problem is the attitude of the public. The society consider the public relation practice as leading stages, announcer, reporter, promoter, decor person, protocol person, meeting sensitizer, cocktail person, bottled water server, etc.*

The above response indicated that the practitioners did get recognition and honor from executive managements. There was no favorable work environment. Budget was one of the sensitive issues for the practitioner. The role and significance of the public relations was not valued. There was also misperception of the public relations profession by public. In support of this idea, Most of the organizations do not consider public relations to be an important aspect of their operations (Henslowe, 1999). The researcher understood that the practitioners were not engaged on the management position. This led the public relations activities to be ineffective and inefficient. According to Rosenberg (2013), public relations is responsible for overseeing organizational internal communications policies and actions, as well as overseeing organizational exterior policies and actions and coordinating internal and external communications. These imply that the practice of public relations does not meet the core practice of public relations. Based on the experts view, the practice of public relations does not maintain mutual understanding with the management due to the misunderstanding of the management to consider the profession as important as other professions in the ministry. Therefore, the public relations practitioners have difficulty to aware the public on the nation building process and to create common consensus and trust.

According to SE4, there were lots of challenges in MOP on the practice of PR. He emphasized that the challenges aroused from management perspective. He supposed that:

*The challenge is the closure of MOGC. Along with its short comings, the previous FDRE MOGC had done enormous visible activities which benefit the country. Due to the government changes in 2018, .the ministry was collapsed. This situation shrinks and affects the communication activities and perceptions in every government organization.*

SE4 added the challenges as indicated bellow:

*Another challenge is the attitude of the top management in related to public relations and communication activities. This means public relations is determined its practice by the good will of the top managers rather than logical reasoning. There are some leaders who still think PR as valueless and functionless. This idea is also reflected on institutional level as well. For example, recently there was new organizational structure establishment. There is the ongoing employees' placement with new salary scales and grades. All other departments have reached up to grade 17 level; whereas, the PR department remains grade 12 level in the structure even if we are fulfilling the same years of experiences and education levels. However, MOP is a huge institution; it is decided to have only two PR practitioners. Four of our colleagues were not find placements. This shows that the awareness of the PR activity go back rather than growth. The aged old attitude towards PR still not solved. We do not have professional development or refreshment training. There is scarcity of budget to function as its own. As we know, PR plays a great role to shape the attitude of the publics.*

The above idea indicated that the first challenge was the shutdown of MOGC which affected the public relations image by associating with it. The other problem was the attitude of high level management. The practitioners were not given responsibility to perform activities by their own timeline and plan as a functional unit. The new structural adjustment was not satisfied the practitioner in comparison to the other professionals because of the different scale between the same education levels and experiences. Budget deficit was also the other constraints for the practitioner. The researcher understood that the practice of public relations was hampered and the expected output could not be availed.

According to SE6 explanation, there were challenges to accomplish PR practice as a senior PR in MOE. He expressed the challenges as follow:

*During information collection, the informants provided inaccurate information and wrongly suspect the PR practitioners through political lenses, is the first challenge. The second challenge is leaders do not want the public relations practitioners to deliver current, accurate and acceptable information that help to resolve problems and misunderstandings. For example, the 2021/2022 academic year grade 12*

*students' results. The third challenge is the presence of wrong perceptions to PR profession in every institution, are the main challenges.*

The above expert point of view showed that the practitioner considered as government intelligence when they were collected public relations information. Due to that the information they had collected were useless. The other problem was managers' lack of willingness to disseminate up to date information for the public to build trust. The last but the most challenging problem was the misperception of the public relations profession by institutions. The researcher understood that public relations practice was not recurred and facilitated the nation building process in the organization through public awareness.

According to Bowen et al. (2006), the public relations function is not attaining its unique management role when it is relegated to a communication technical job. This shows that public relations specialists work hard to acquire access by delivering critical information and advising management on how to make important decisions using actual facts.

Moreover, Henslowe (1999), most organizations recognize the relevance of public relations practitioners only when things go wrong or when there is a crisis. As a result, public relations professionals defuse the issue by apologizing to the general audience. They accept responsibility for ensuring that everything is in order and that the problem is under control. Public relations functions overlap and are intertwined with those of other disciplines.

Furthermore, public relations professionals have a weakness to find themselves in the position to influence management and to describe the importance of research as a crucial part of a departmental or research on the necessity of budget to implement the department activities according to their plan. Because conducting research is an essential part of practicing public relations effectively. Practitioners are neglected to participate in the problem-solver role, to provide a verdict on the basic decision process the concerned issues of the ministries and to create strong relationships in a reflective manner. For that reason, the researcher did not find research material prepared by the PR practitioners.

On the other hand, SE2 explained that the government used the communication activity and the profession for its political interests. She argued that:

*The first challenge was PR practitioners were pressurized to be a member of political party by the ruling parties. EPDRF recruits PR/communication practitioners based on their political membership, specially, team leaders and directors positions for the ministry. During EPDRF, there was a philosophy “any person can do PR/communication activity if he or she has an interest”. Therefore, people who are graduated from physics, mathematics, agriculture, engineering, or any other discipline can join the respected profession without any PR academic background.*

*The second challenge is PR department heads keep up the interest of top managements especially the minister’s interests. Ministers are changed after a year, two year or five years. The PR department directors are also replaced by another person to fulfill the new minister’s’ interest rather than assuming the PR director is the spokesperson of the ministry.*

*The third challenge was no having national crafted common messages at federal level. Previously, MOGC crafted common and consistent public messages for the week and the month. After GCS’s establishment, we have no common and consistent messages that we have share. Every ministry can craft different contradictor messages. As MOSC, We have hardly loosed connection with GCS. As a department, we have the least budget and poor facilities in the ministry. We do not have suitable office and enough human resources that accommodate with the ministries mission and vision. The fourth one was the communication/PR practice is seen in relation with EPDRF. The PR practice is frozen.*

Explanations of SE2 in the above responses indicated that the previous government practice which was done to recruit communication professionals and influence other public relations practitioners to be a member of the political party were the first challenge. This led to place any practitioners from other fields of study without the knowledge and skills of public relations. Professionalism was at risk. The other problem, the public relations department heads were working to satisfy the personal interests of individual minister rather that fulfilling the organization mission. The third challenges for the practitioner was lack of common crafted messages from GCS as a federal public relations practitioners that was previously done by

MOGC. The last challenge was the public relation practice associated with EPDRF. The researcher understood that the practitioners were entangled with different mess-ups. Therefore the practice of public relations on the nation building process was not applicable. However, the practitioners might have the opportunity to show professionalism within the public relations practices that could change the positive minds of other.

According to SE8 understanding, there were challenges in GCS which hamper the PR practice effectiveness and efficiency. He explained the challenges in the following way:

*One of the challenges we do not have common targeted thoughts to build national consensus on the nation building process and transfer messages downward hierarchy as intended. The second basic problem is related to law, structural, procedural and organizing even though the country is on the ongoing changes. The third challenge is unable to create enabling environment to the nation building process for the general public.*

The above SE8 discussion indicated that the challenges were observed which contributed to decrease the efficiency and effectiveness of the public relations practice. The first challenge was lack of shared ideas and consensus and handover messages for down ward public relations structures those helped to construct nation. The other problem was legal, institutional, technical and structural establishment that facilitate the changes at hand. The last challenge was lack of suitable nation building circumstance. The researcher remarked that these obstacles prohibited the practice of public relations on nation building.

According to SE3, in MOP, there were challenges which hinder the national consensus deeds to implement in practice. He described as:

*Social media, activists and individuals have their own positive as well as negative impacts to change the general public attitudes. The first challenge is social media and activists negative involvement in the ideas of nation building. They might mislead the public by interpreting the information for the sake of their own interests. The other obstacle that we face to work on national consensus is the internal conflict found here and there and the war in the Northern part of the country. The third challenge is the difficulty to find neutral and strong media that balance the*

*information for the public consumption. The fourth obstacle is the wide spread of “hate speeches” and low level of media literacy/ low public awareness on using the media in the country. The most bottle neck problems of the ministry PR those hinder the nation building process and national consensus activities.*

The above senior expert indicated that there were factors those obstructed the implementation of national consensus practice for the nation building process. The first challenge was the presence of social media and activists those had the power of manipulating the information for their interests. The other pertinent challenge was the internal conflicts in some parts of the country hampered the national consensus activities. The other challenge was lack of neutral and robust mainstream media. The last challenge was the wide spread of hate speech. The researcher understood that the practice of public relations on nation building was not succeeded due to different factors.

Finally, the third question, the challenges of public relations practitioners faced in nation building analyzed based on the respondents’ interview responses as follow:

The first challenge is the attitude of political leaders in the ministry and the public towards PR profession due to EPDRF used the profession as political instrument. The top managers and the public misunderstood the roles and significance of public relations practices for the ministries as well as for the general public benefits. Professionally, public relation is considered as the management function which able to create and maintain leading mutual and beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends. In addition, Vasquez and Taylor (2000) stated: that many different definitions of public relations have been offered, but it is generally accepted that public relations is strategic communication between an organization and its publics.

The second basic challenges were lack of nationally crafted and developed messages on nation building thoughts due to loosely communication, coordination and collaboration of public relations practitioners at the federal level with Government Communication Services.

The third challenge is lack of enabling environment to initiate national thoughts and mobilize the public for the nation building process of Ethiopia through neutral media and strong media.

Most importantly, according to Shambel (2020) the main challenges stated by the public relations practitioners are: lack of professionalism, shortage of budget, profession overlap with other professions and restrictive bureaucratic system were the main findings. Therefore, at this point, it is possible to conclude that the challenges are threats to the practice of professional public relations and public dissatisfaction on the daily activities which may lead to a lack of good governance. Agee (1985) says public relations practice-at its best affords genuine opportunities for meaningful service to the society.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Today, Public relation is a complex profession that is practiced by different governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world. Some public relations professionals are employed by government, non-government and others work for private and public relations firms that have many organizations as clients. Public relations people work for government agencies, business, professional and trade associations, nonprofit charities, schools and universities, hospitals, hotels, and many more. They work for large and small organizations.

Government ministries realize that they need to communicate with their general public to advance and to maintain positive relationships to build a nation. The practice of public relations focused on nation building and national consensus to reach mutual understanding, support unity, national identity and nationalism. A nation can be a direct reflection of PR practitioners' performances. That is why Public relations people have almost to win public acceptance. It is the responsibility of Public relations to make sure that the organization understood and accepted as well as loved by its publics (Newsom, 2004). Calhoun suggests that nations exist "only when their members understand themselves through the discursive framework of national identity, and they are commonly forged in the struggle carried out by some members of the nation-in-the-making to get others to recognize its genuine nation-ness and grant it autonomy. Additionally,

Edensor (2002) conforms to this notion of national identity as a performance. He argues that 'performance' is a useful metaphor because it allows us to look at the ways in which identities are enacted and reproduced, informing and (re)constructing a sense of collectivity.

Predominantly, the objective of the research was to assess the public relations practice on nation building process: The case of selected government ministries public relations departments. The research questions were formulated like how do public relations practitioners' practical public relations to maintaining nation building? What are the communications channels that the public relations practitioners used to promote nation building in Ethiopia? What are the challenges that public relations practitioners during promoting sustainable nation building a sustainable in Ethiopia? The qualitative method approach was employed. Data were collected by two types of tools, document reviews (such as news articles, press release and press conference that posted on website and social media page of the government ministries) with the contextual content analysis technique. An in-depth interview (semi-structured interview) was conducted with nine public relations practitioners in the government ministries public relations departments.

### **5.1. The findings of this study**

The findings of the research revealed that even though PR practitioners hardly tried the practicing of public relations on promoting nation building in the government ministries to create mutual understanding of the general public, the public relations practices were not achieved effective communication strategies. Moreover, the communication tools would help public relations practitioners as strategic channels to deliver messages, factual information and key communications to persuade the publics about the multi-dimensional benefit of nation building. The Public relations practitioners faced different challenges when they were practicing and implementing their professional competencies. Practitioner would deploy all their knowledge, experience, skills, capability and value. The performance of public relations to disseminate nation building factual information to the general public was not satisfactory. This means, they did not practice the profession effectively to create mutual understanding between the ministries and its public to construct sustainable nation by the government ministries of Ethiopia.

- Based on above contexts it is possible to conclude that the practice of PR affected the nation building process definitely. Numerous studies have been done in an attempt to explain the role of public relations on nation building. Nation could be a mental

construction and socially engineered by citizens. Cognizant, devoted and committed citizens were the results of cultivated and changed generation (Mhlauli, 2012). This means that the awareness and understanding level of the citizens could have positive relationship with nation building. Nation can be built with the contribution of individuals and groups which shares social interactions. In order to promote build cohesive nation, citizens need to amalgamate the loosely attached social interactions which might have glue for multi-ethnic, religion, language and culture with in the specific territory.

➤ As the result of this study, the public relations practitioners were using communication tools such as website, face book, radio, television, printed material, etc. rarely to educate the citizens of Ethiopia. Even though citizens have many information gaps, misleading narratives, ethnic political conflicts, public displeasures; the use of communication channels to change these circumstances into positive co-existence and tolerance visibly inefficient. It is believed that communications used to foster public dialogues and tolerance among ethnic groups. The researcher understood that communications play a decisive role to citizens in the creation and development of culture, tolerance, co-existence, morality, dedication and scarification for their mutual benefits as a nation. The wise use of communications tools help citizens to build the collective nation. Therefore, public relations practitioners would use the communication tools appropriately and inefficiently in mobilizing, organizing and cultivating unity and national consciousness of the large publics. Whereas, the practitioners were hardly used these important tools due to budget inadequacy. This implies that the practitioners were not used the communications tools as vital resources to implement the nation building strategies. Media creates a solid and shared image of the nation (Fermadez, 2017).

➤ Public relations practitioners were faced challenges when they had executed their responsibility. Social media and activism involvement had significant influences on the promotion of nation building. The practitioners need an independent, neutral and strong media to disseminate balanced factual information for the general public. Practitioners need to facilitate to get enabling environment to citizens for their individual and group nation building contributions and decisions. Public relations practitioners in the ministry work level want to have close communications, coordination, collaborations and

connections with the Government communications Services (GCS) to craft and develop uniform messages at national level on the idea implementation of nation building. Organizational sustainability, leadership attitudes, management goodwill, misconceptions, political affiliations, leadership interests, inconvenient infrastructures, cultures, job satisfactions and career development were some of the pushing and pulling factors for the public relations practitioners.

The findings revealed that there are a lot of challenges that block the practice of public relations practitioners in the government ministries PR departments such as:

The first challenge was lack of nationally crafted and developed messages for the nation building of Ethiopia. The coordination, collaboration and communication among the selected ministries were loosely connected and unable to create common thought to aware and mobilize citizens to play their roles for the nation building process.

The second basic challenges were social media and activists involve on the spread of heat speeches that affect the nation building process, citizens' tolerance and social co-existence. Ethnic based activists and irresponsible social media bloggers exaggerate minor issues and fabricate false information that might lead ethnic conflict.

The third challenges were the interference of political interest and political affiliations. Independent public relations practitioners were not allowed to do their professional responsibility and have suitable environment like other profession.

. The above finding revealed that the public relations practitioners un able to carry out their duties, responsibilities, loss public credibility and trust. Cockerall et al. (1984) confirms that what government "chooses to tell us through its PR device is one thing; the information in use by members in the country's real government is another" In addition, Negrine (1996) notes that the increasing use of prudently crafted communication strategies by governments to confirm that the information they pursue to impart to their citizens has an appropriate "spin" on it. Schlesinger (1990) notes that there are central questions about the nature of information management in a society by a variety of groups in conditions of uneven power and therefore imbalanced access to systems of information production and distribution and these questions are particularly acute in

regard to government because „the apparatuses of the state enjoy privileged access to the media”.

Concerning the above ideas in the finding, public relations has been a functional discipline, until recently dominated by management perspective and normative theories, particularly excellence theory (Hatherell& Bartlett, (2006); Ihlen& van Ruler, (2009); Pasadeos, Berger, & Renfro, (2010)). This encouraged the understanding of public relations as“a management oriented communication practice that can be strategically planned, tactically executed and empirically evaluated.” (Bentele&Wehmeier, (2009)). The management perspective of public relations is also supported by Onwunali (2006) who stated that public relations is an instrument of management and its consideration should be taken into account when formulating policy. He also suggested that public relations should be placed at top management level of an organization. The communication perspective of public relations is also emphasized by Rosenberg (2013). He stressed that public relations have to be interpreters and functions as communication links between an institution and all of its

Most importantly, according to Shambel (2020), proposed that the main challenges stated by the practitioners are: Lack of PR professionalism, budget shortage and restricted bureaucratic system. Therefore, at this point, it is possible to conclude that this huge of challenges are threats to the practice of professional public relations and public dissatisfaction on the daily activities which may lead to a lack of good governance..

## **5.2. Conclusion**

This study aimed to assess the public relations practice on nation building: The case selected government ministries in Ethiopia public relations departments. This study makes an effort to assess the public relations practitioners practice to nation building, to identify the communications channels that the public relations professionals used to nation and to distinguish the challenges public relations practitioners face to build the sustainable nation in Ethiopia.

Regarding the selected government ministries public relation departments, PR practitioners did not sufficiently practice public relations to promote nation building in Ethiopia. There was little start up public relations practice in two ministries even though they did not base on professional standards of public relations and effective communication strategies. They did not practice it

more just by incurring all the knowledge, competence, skill, strategy, tactics, behavior of public relation to disseminate concrete information that help the public for sustainable nation building of Ethiopia as much as possible. Moreover, the practitioners were not using effective and efficient communications tools and communications strategies to diffuse accurate information for the general public. Thus, unless the public relations practitioners used effective communications tools, effective and efficient communications strategies the nation building process cannot be viable. In addition, some of the challenges that appear on PR practice were that: top managers have misunderstanding on the roles and significance of PR; absence of enabling environment for the nation building process in Ethiopia; problems related to structural, procedural, organizational/ formation and the country laws; political affiliation and interest of ruling party towards PR profession to gain political profit affect the PR profession image and effectiveness. Seitel (2011) pointed out that the management function of public relations is in a position to: (1) evaluate internal and external opinions, attitudes and needs on an ongoing basis; (2) to advise management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action. In addition, Grunig (2002) states that PR practitioners play four roles of PR as communication technician, communication facilitator, expert prescriber and problem solving facilitator. Therefore, practitioners expected to perform proactive PR in their respective ministries. Contrary to these, the public relation practices in government ministries have got misunderstanding and wrong perception from top managements. This implies that PR professionals should strive to create common understanding between top managers and PR practitioners.

Generally, the absence of enabling environment and wrong perception for PR profession affect the overall activities the practitioners as well as the PR department. These hamper PR practitioners from promoting and maintaining the sustainable nation building process of Ethiopia. Political affiliations by ruling parties also shadow the profession image. Each challenge represents an opportunity for professionals and academics to explore public relations as a management function.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are given based on the findings of this study for practical application by government Ministries public relation practitioners.

- To build well organized and sustainable nation, the ministries public relations practitioners need to have cooperation, communication and coordination for uniform messages crafting, development and dissemination at national level. PR practitioners able to facilitate enabling environment for citizens to have understanding on nation building. The practitioners could produce common thoughts for citizens to reach on the nation building consensus.
- To avoid the negative impact of social media, spread of hate speeches and influence of activists, practitioners should strengthen their relationships with the mainstream media to deliver factual and up to date information for citizens on the issues of nation building, national unity and nationalism.
- To develop an independent PR profession the political affiliation and interest of ruling party towards PR need to be corrected and separate the profession from the political environment like other professions.

Finally, the researcher recommended to other researchers to conduct their study on the contribution of media for nation building process of Ethiopia.

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