

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALISM  
IN ETHIOPIAN TELEVISION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*An Investigation of the Practice of Journalism in Ethiopian Television*

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*The main focus of this study was to investigate the practice of journalism in Ethiopian Television (ETV). The study examined whether ETV practices journalism or public relations. It assessed how journalists find discrepancies between journalism and public relations and the impact of public relations on journalism practice. It was also the main objective of this study to investigate the factors that affect news and source selection. Data was collected using qualitative and quantitative content analysis as well as in-depth interview. A total of 147 news stories ETV broadcast were selected purposely from the first two weeks of three months news stories (December, 2012 up to February, 2013). The findings of the study showed that most of the news was event and development oriented. As a result, very few news stories were critical of the government and most news deals with success stories. The selected news stories revealed that most of the news stories were presented not from the public interest point of view, but from the government interest view. The study further revealed that ETV's journalists were cognizant of the differences between journalism and public relations. However, due to lack of journalistic independence in the media, journalists were coerced to select news and sources which served government interest. Journalists were influenced to report the positive sides of government and conceal the wrong doings of government officials. The findings of the study also indicated that ETV's use of public relations as one of sources of news tainted the practice of journalism because both journalism and public relations are quite different in purpose. Overall, the study concluded that the principles of journalism, like; the obligation to the truth and loyalty to citizens were, not portrayed in ETV. Rather the media served as the major rhetorical tool for the government. ETV's practice reflects the principles and purposes of the government public relations.*

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ETV: Ethiopian Television

PRs: Public Relations

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN: Cable News Network

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Journalism and public relations (PR) take part in different roles in media organizations. The two professions strive for different purposes. Journalism strives to serve the best interest of the public (mass audience). However, PRs strives to serve the interest of the hired organization and its publics (targeted audience). PRs serves the interest of its publics from the angle of serving the interest of the hired organization. Although public relations and journalism are professions that share many similar attributes and functions, they are very different in practice. For example, journalism is different from PRs in the following way.

Journalism is considered to be service to society. Journalism is the reflection of truth, and is considered to be the source of revelation of hidden secrets. It encompasses different analytical and critical spectrums which are incorporated by the journalists in their contributions. The purpose of the sole exercise is neither glamour nor popularity, but rather it is a service, a service which has the sole ambition of revealing truth to the viewers and readers (Danny, 2000:109).

As Danny defines above, journalism is not the work of popularity rather it is a service to society. He states that the work of journalist is to bring the truth to light by looking at things critically. Ironically, John E. Marston, 1963 defines public relations as follows. A public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action (and communication) to earn public understanding and acceptance. As we can infer from the argument above, public

relations is a service to an organization. In order to implement the policies and agendas of the organization, a PRs officer assesses the interest of its publics because without them it is difficult to implement the organization's agendas. Unlike a journalist, a PR officer of a given organization works to establish and maintain reciprocal indulgent between an organization (or individual) and its public. The two definitions above show the clear differences between journalism and public relations, especially the way they engage in serving the public.

The fundamental difference between journalism and PRs is in who their work serves. The foundation of journalism is the desire to serve the general public and act as a balance and check on society and government. A liberal interpretation of good journalism asserts that the loyalty of journalists is to citizens (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). Further to this element of loyalty, journalists should attempt to overcome barriers to understanding, retain 'independence from those they cover', and attempt to see things from all perspectives (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). In contrast, a public relations officer is formally dependent up on half-truths. This means that the work of public relations does not totally depend on false case, but they use some grain of truth. Based on this truth, PR officers try to get recognition by persuading the public in line with the curiosity of their organization (PRs employers). This can play its own role in molding the perception of the public and in understanding the truth. For Falcon, Public Relations could be considered as the professional maintenance of an organization's favorable image. This means journalists and PR officers serve different bodies.

Objectivity is one of the most significant principles of journalism. Journalistic objectivity involves using an impersonal and detached voice to report an issue in a neutral manner. The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance's 'Code of Ethics' states that the primary and principal

ethical principle is honesty. Journalists are required to “Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts” (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance 2012). According to this view, among the journalist’s ethical principles in reporting, honesty is the most crucial one. Journalists are supposed to report and interpret events honestly without taking side. PRs is with their principle, aims to promote their client from an interested, partial perspective. PRs is meant for a targeted audience, while journalism is for mass audience. PRs is all about bringing good image to any company/corporation, where as journalism is all about facts and truths.

Although journalists and public relations practitioners both work with media, these two professional occupations approach their work from different angles; have a diverse set of priorities, as well as dissimilar aspirations. According to Clear & Weidman (1997:1), "The main differences between public relations practitioners and journalists are the manner in which they convey information and their reasons for doing so."

Despite their differences, public relations and journalism are professions that share similar attributes and functions. The two professions depend on one another. While PRs relies on journalists to promote its organization, journalists are also relying on the work of PR officials to produce news. Charron (1994:43) supports this view, "Public relations practitioners and journalists find themselves mutually dependent of one another, a situation which demands cooperation, while their divergent control interests cause distrust and opposition." The main intention of those working in the journalism profession is to provide their readers and audiences with accurate, reliable information they need to function in society. The work products from

public relations professionals are intended to persuade the public and are designed to promote and protect an individual or organization's image and products.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Currently, the closing gap between journalism and public relations is making the two professions similar. In fact, journalism and public relations are dissimilar in many ways. Since PRs work is building the positive image of an organization, it is difficult to be impartial. In such a context, if journalists depend on PR officers for their sources, they are hurting journalism in another way. The globalization of media systems and ownership guarantees that the coercion on journalism is experienced internationally. The continually closing gap between the two professions is fast reducing, with studies showing up to 98 per-cents of news articles containing PRs content (Taylor & Francis Group, 2010). In light of this, it is difficult to trust the truth the media portray.

To understand how the PRs can be detrimental to good journalism, it is critical to appreciate the fundamentally disparate functions of the two professions. A journalist's role in society is to provide information that serves the public's best interest (Dueze, 2005). This requires a commitment to the inflexible principle of reporting the most accurate and balanced version of events as possible. On the other hand, public relations utilize persuasive approach to serve the interest of its organization above all. Salter (2005) reasons that the purposeful roles of public relations and journalism conflict. In short, journalism is in the business of reporting, public relations is in the business of selling. The consequence of this conflict is the inevitable decay of quality journalism.

The degree to which journalists rely on public relations for news stories undermines ethical journalism. It eliminates the professional journalist's knack for discerning a newsworthy story. Consequently, the rise of 'sharing' information between PR practitioners and journalists has seen a decline in the journalistic abilities, qualities and capabilities as an informant to the wider public. As Michelle Grattan (1998: 32) puts it, "The rise of spin has had a negative impact on journalism, distorting news processes and encouraging more passive forms of journalism."

As different scholars said above, it is difficult to distinguish journalism from public relations because of the increasing influence of PRs in news production. John Lloyd argues that:

The normal journalistic approach to PRs – i.e. dogs and lampposts – is grossly self serving from the point of view of journalists. It glosses over, ignores or even denies the fact that much of current journalism both broadcast and press is public relations in the sense that stories, ideas, features and interviews are either suggested, or in the extreme actually written by public relations people. Until that becomes open and debated between PR people and journalists, we will continue to have this artificially wide gulf where journalists pose as fearless seekers of truth and PRs are slimy creatures trying to put one over on us. It is not remotely like that (Guardian 10 April 2006:3).

As can be inferred from this argument, currently journalism is becoming public relations because journalist's sources are PR experts. In accordance, Street states that "journalists are the lapdogs of partial interests, not the watchdogs of the public interest" (2001:146). However, contrary to this view, McNair (2000) argues that editorial staffs are fully capable of evaluating and disregarding material sent to them by the PR industry. From this argument it is possible to infer that journalists are not playing what the profession requires of them. They are becoming the mouth piece of the employers. As a result, most media institutions are becoming PRs organization of government.

Despite the differences that exist between journalism and public relations as discussed so far, in Ethiopia it seems that the practice of journalism and public relations is the same. This being the case, the researcher doubts that there is a clear understanding on the role of journalism in different media organizations found in Ethiopia. Hence, this study wanted to investigate the practice of journalism in Ethiopian Television (ETV).

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the practice of journalism in ETV.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The study has also the following specific objectives:

- To explore how the media institution (ETV) views the differences between journalism and public relations
- To identify the extent to which ETV practice journalism.
- To examine how the practice of PRs affect journalism in ETV.
- To explore the factors that affect journalists in news and source selection.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the media institution (ETV) find out the discrepancies between journalism and public relations?
2. To what extent ETV practices journalism?
3. How PRs affects the practice of journalism?
4. What are the factors that hinder the media practitioners in news and source selection?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The researcher believes that the findings of this study have the following significances:

First, by identifying the differences and similarities between journalism and public relations, the findings of the study would increase the awareness of journalists and other media practitioners on the practice of journalism and public relations.

Second, by uncovering the different practices of journalism and public relations, and the impact that public relations has on the practice of journalism, the study could reduce the dependability of journalists on public relations professionals as their sources. This possibly will have a positive effect on increasing awareness of looking journalism as an independent body.

Third, by revealing the watchdog role of journalism, the outcome of the study would initiate media workers to provide the public with the information that the public needs. This will play a role in increasing the credibility of media and quality journalism. The credibility and quality of journalism can be seen when journalism plays its role of exposing the wrong doing of elected officials and entertaining different ideas free from being one sided.

Fourth, the study would help ETV and other media organizations to consider their news and source selection processes. Besides, since there has not been any actual study made on the issue so far, this study could motivate academic institutions and other stakeholders for further studies on related issues.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the practice of journalism in Ethiopian Television (ETV). It didn't include other media institutions found in the country. ETV broadcast news in variety of languages. However, the study focused only on Amharic news believing that it is the working language of the country.

Even though ETV presents news in its morning, noon, and evening programs of a day, this research focused on the evening news program which was transmitted at 8 PM. The main reason for this is that the evening news program is expected as it comes up with fresh and diversified news items.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

While conducting this research, the following constraints were beyond the researcher control. Firstly, due to time and financial constraints, the researcher couldn't examine the media institutions found in Ethiopia. Secondly, though ETV broadcast news in different languages, the study couldn't use all the languages for content analysis due to the language constraint of the researcher. Thirdly, the shortage of references, especially the news content of ETV was also another limitation. What is more, some respondents were also unenthusiastic to express their views blatantly.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study, research questions and objectives. This Chapter also summarizes the limitations and significance of the study. The second chapter encompasses review of the related literature which deals with scholarly opinions underpinning the study. Since chapter three is the heart of any research, it focuses on the methods, procedures and sampling techniques employed in the study. The findings of the study are discussed under Chapter four to answer the major research questions in relation to the theoretical frame work of the study. The final chapter consists of summary and conclusions.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Review of Related Literature

### Introduction

Journalism is and has been theorized, researched, and studied worldwide by people coming from a wide variety of disciplines. Different scholars at different places have been researching journalism. In this world, it is not difficult to find colleges or universities that are engaged in teaching programs of journalism. At the same time, the field has its own international and national journals. This implies that journalism as a discipline has international principles which make the practice of journalism common across worldwide.

As indicated, the concept of journalism is not confined to national level. It has international agreed features or principles that every countries of the world while exercising journalism should adhere to. The most important principles of journalism are covered in the following discussions. Various roles of journalism, factors that affect the practice of journalism and the theoretical frame work that underlie the study will also be discussed in the subsequent sections.

### 2.1 Journalism Defined

Various scholars define journalism in different ways. Among the scholars who describe journalism, as quoted in Hargreaves (2003), Joan Greenfield views journalism as;

Journalism is a phenomenon that can be seen in many ways, as a sixth sense, a container, a mirror, a story, a child service, a profession, an institution, a text, people, and a set of practices. These ways of thinking about journalism suggest various routes through which we might approach journalism, the press and the news media. (2003:76)

Based on Greenfield argument, journalism is described as an additional sense of human beings where reporters smell out news. The idea of journalism as a container indicates the idea of reflecting depth information by making complex events and issues simple and understandable. The definition also treats journalism as a mirror through which journalists and media organizations present themselves to the public at large. The idea of journalism as a child implies that the work of journalists or journalism requires care and attention like a baby does. By the idea of journalism as a service, it is possible to deduce that journalism is a profession that engages in serving the interest of the public.

In decades of journalism studies, scholars have been investigating the dominant sense of what is (and should be) journalism. The following are scholars who have taken part in identifying the concepts, values and elements of journalisms' ideology or the typical traits or values of journalism. They are Golding and Elliott (1979), Merritt (1995), and more recently Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), and describe the traits of journalism as:

- **Public service:** journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or 'newshounds, active collectors and disseminators of information);
- **Objectivity:** journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;
- **Autonomy:** journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work;
- **Immediacy:** journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of 'news');
- **Ethics:** journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy.

## 2.2 Principles of Journalism

Like other professions, journalism is also a discipline that is guided by different principles, which can be taken as the distinguishing characteristics to other professions. This particular section deals with some principles that define journalism. Those are the basis for *The Elements of Journalism*, the book by Tom Rosenstein and Bill Kovach (2001).

**Journalism's first obligation is to the truth:** As (Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstein, 2001) says respect for truth and public's right to information is fundamental principles of journalism. This "journalistic truth" is a process that begins with the professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts.

Ethicists Patterson and Wilkins (1994) argue that journalism is now a profession because of two modern responsibilities imposed on journalists-a greater responsibility than other people to tell the truth, and a greater obligation to foster political activity. Each of the traditional professions has laid claim to one of the central tenets of philosophy. Law, ideally, is equated with justice; medicine with the duty to render aid. Journalism too has a lofty ideal: the communication of truth (Patterson and Wilkins, 1994:18). As different professions have various responsibilities, the superior principle of those engaged in journalism is to communicate truth.

**Its first loyalty is to citizens:** While news organizations answer too many constituencies, the journalists in those organizations must maintain allegiance to citizens and the larger public. More to the point, journalists are the people's surrogate or speakers, cover issues which are in the public interest. This means since journalism loyalty is to citizens, news production should consist of the interest and participations of audiences. As Schlesinger (1978) says production routines embody assumptions about audiences ... "the audience" is part of a routine way of life.... When it

comes to thinking about the kind of news most relevant to "the audience," a newsman exercise their news judgment rather than going out and seeking specific information about the composition, wants or tastes of those who are being addressed. According to Schlesinger argument, the routine activities of news production should constitute an audience-oriented routine. Story selection should include the interest of audiences. So, the yardstick of newsworthiness is audience centered news which implies that the service of journalism is to citizens.

**Its essence is a discipline of verification:** Journalists rely on a professional discipline for verifying information. Seeking out multiple witnesses, disclosing as much as possible about sources, or asking various sides for comment, all signal such standards.

**Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover:** Independence is an underlying requirement of journalism, a cornerstone of its reliability.

**It must serve as an independent monitor of power:** Journalism has an unusual capacity to serve as watchdog over those whose power and position most affects citizens. This implies that the press should recognize where powerful institutions are working effectively or not.

Scholars put immense responsibility up on journalists and editors to question and watch over government. Schultz, 1998:6 states that journalists and editors remain the most insistent advocates of the news media as the Fourth Estate: watching, questioning, analyzing and informing, often despite the opposition of their managers who would prefer a more compliant, more entertaining and less critical approach. Quoting Allan, S. (2005), Schudson (1995) avers that in the era of the American muckrakers at the beginning of the twentieth century, the views of journalists and the public on how the public interest was to be served through all investigative

journalism. From this, it is possible to understand that media professionals can serve the interest of the public through investigative journalism. The job of the investigative journalist is to find something wrong and expose being as a positive force to change (Boyd 2001:29).

**It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise:** The news media are the common carriers of public discussion, and this responsibility forms a basis for public special privileges.

## **2.3 Journalism and Its Function**

Today, arguments about the liaison between media and democracy have become a common place. This is due to the reason that democracy cannot work unless citizens have way in to the information they need to work out their right. Different scholars had various arguments on the relationship of journalism with democracy. McQuail summarizes the social responsibility theory as follows:

Its main foundations are: an assumption that the media do serve essential functions in society, especially in relation to democratic politics; a view that the media should accept an obligation to fulfill these functions- mainly in the sphere of information, and the provision of a platform for diverse views, but also in matters of culture; an emphasis on maximum independence of the media, consistent with their obligations to society; an acceptance of the view that there are certain standards of performance in media work that can be stated and should be followed. (1987:111)

As this case shows, the essential functions of media are serving society. Media are the place where diverse views are reflected and entertained. When the media are able to practice, democracy starts to flourish. The argument also implies that information conveyed via media should be from different angles. The media are seen as crucial to the promotion of democratic

values reflecting society in all its complexity and with many (legal) view points as possibly covered ( Allan, 2005:55).

According to Schudson, the six primary functions served by media or can serve in a democracy are:

1. *Information*: the news media can provide fair and full information so citizens can make sound political choices.
2. *Investigation*: the news media can investigate concentrated sources of power, particularly governmental power.
3. *Analysis*: the news media can provide coherent frameworks of interpretation to help citizens comprehend a complex world.
4. *Social Empathy*: journalism can tell people about others in their society and their world so that they can come to appreciate the viewpoints and lives of other people, especially those less advantaged than them.
5. *Public Forum*: journalism can provide a forum for dialogue among citizens and serve as a common carrier of the perspectives of varied groups in society.
6. *Mobilization*: the news media can serve as an advocate for particular political programs and perspectives and mobilize people to act in support of these programs.

(Schudson, 1995:28)

In relation to the above argument of Schudson, (Kovach and Rosenstien; 2001:17) argue, “The primary purpose of journalism” is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing.” Based on this argument, media are expected to provide citizens with the information the public’s need to know. To know this need, media are supposed to create a forum

of discussion with citizens. For democracy to sustain there should be public debates so that the needs of the public can be understood.

Journalism can also function as a watchdog role over the government. The watchdog role of journalism also helps in increasing the quality of democracy. Therefore, the work of journalism, like questioning and investigating should be free from interference of government because the service of journalism is to society. As a result, the role of media organizations in building democracy would become perceptible.

## **2.4 News**

Though it is difficult to find a universal definition for news, scholars do have common agreement for news value being constant through different times and places. As historian Mitchell Stephens (cited in Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001), “Humans have exchanged a similar mix of news ... throughout history and across cultures.”

Gans 2004:80, (cited in Gizachew, 38: 2006), news is “information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists -who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of a profession - summarizing, refining, and altering what becomes available to them from sources in order to become the information suitable for their audiences”. People can satisfy their intrinsic need of knowing of what is happening through news.

Other scholars approach news from the role it plays in enhancing democracy. “News is the most powerful media outlet that can make a significant contribution to building a democratic society by depicting a reasonably true picture of what is going on, creating what should be a close correspondence between the ‘world outside’ and the ‘pictures in our heads’ (Defleur and Dennis,

1981:325). Moreover, Hatchen argues that "A democratic society requires a diversity of views and news sources available – marketplaces of ideas - from which the public can choose what it wishes to read and believe about public affairs" (1998: 37). So, for the reflection of diversity of views in news production, giving special emphasis for sources of news is most important one.

### **2.4.1 News Selection Process**

There are various factors in which journalists or media institutions base themselves to select for news. The selection process requires media practitioners to know the basic principles of journalism. However, the dynamic character of news affects the selection process. As a result, the content and forms of news can be different across settings.

The media do not simply report something newsworthy as it is. News is the final product of various processes. MacDougall (1968) explains this: At any given moment billions of simultaneous events occur throughout the world... all of these occurrences are potentially news. They do not become so until some purveyor of news gives an account of them. The news, in other words, is the account of the event, not something intrinsic in the event itself.

There are rules which guide journalists for the selection of news. One of these rules is the news value. According to Golding and Elliot (1979), news values are used in two ways. They are criteria of selection from material available to the newsroom of those items worthy of inclusion in the final product. Second, they are guidelines for the presentation of items, suggestion what to emphasize, what to omit, and where to give priority in the preparation of the items for presentation to the audience. For these scholars (Golding and Elliot, 1979: 114-23) news values derive from unstated or implicit assumptions or judgments about three things.

**The audience:** Is this important to the audience or will it hold their attention? Is it of known interest, will it be understood, enjoyed, registered, perceived as relevant?

**Accessibility:** in two senses, prominence and ease of capture. Prominence: to what extent is the event known to the news organization, how obvious is it, has it made itself apparent. Ease of capture: how available to journalists is the event, is it physically accessible, manageable technically, in a form amenable to journalism, is it ready prepared for easy coverage, will it require great resources to obtain?

**Fit.** Is the item consonant with the pragmatics of production routines, is it commensurate with technical and organizational possibilities. Is it homologous with the exigencies and constraints in program making and the limitations of the medium? Does it make sense in terms of what is already known about the subject?

Gans (2004:78) broadly categorizes the news selection into four theories. The first is, journalist-centered where the responsibility of selection lies on journalists. Here journalists have burden in selecting and gathering news stories. Here it is possible to deduce that the contents of news can be affected.

Gans's second theory focuses on the role of news organization in the news selection process. This shows the power of news organizations in selecting and shaping news stories. This indirectly implies that journalists are supposed to select and gather news stories from point of views of their organization. The organization is there to determine what news is or not. Here the power lies not on journalists.

The third theory is event-centered or the so-called “Mirror theory”. This is where events play an important role for news selection and gathering. The fourth theory focuses on the factors that play a great role in affecting the news selecting and gathering processes. These factors can be economical, political, technological, and other factors can shape the production of news. More discussion on the factors that shapes news production will be discussed later on.

## **2.5 Sources**

Gans (1979: 80) defines sources as "the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in ...articles, and those who only supply background information or story suggestions." There are a lot of possible sources of information about an issue or event for journalists. Keeble (2001: 41) argues, “At the heart of journalism lies the source; becoming a journalist to a great extent means developing sources. An issue may be long running but new information or opinion from a source will bring it into the news”. Journalists need sources that can provide them with newsworthy information. Each source provides journalists with different information. It is the journalists' job to sift through all the information provided—which is often conflicting—and to come up with news reports that are accurate and complete.

### **2.5.1 Source Considerations**

Source considerations come into play at the very beginning of story selection when little is known about the issue under investigation. To do this, there are a number of factors in which journalists base themselves to select sources in their news production. Gans (2004:128) identifies six major source considerations.

**Past Suitability** - If sources have provided information leading to suitable stories in the past, they are apt to be chosen again, until they eventually become regular sources. However, regulars are liable to supply repetitious information over time; as a result, journalists become “bored” with some of them, dropping them from the news “because we have seen them too often lately”.

**Productivity** – sources are judged by their ability to supply a lot of information without undue expenditure of staff time and effort. According to Gans, although reporters do not shrink from whatever legwork is necessary, they and their superiors must keep logistics in mind; as a result, they try to minimize the number of sources to be consulted. This partially accounts for the predominance of high public officials in the news.

**Reliability** - story selectors want reliable sources whose information requires the least amount of checking. However, if a story or a fact is controversial or not readily believed, reporters are then expected to gather proof from at least two separate and independent sources.

**Trustworthiness** – when reliability can’t be checked quickly enough, story selectors look for trustworthy sources: those who do not limit themselves to self-serving information try to be accurate and, above all, are honest. Reporters keep a continuing check on the honesty of sources, remember when they have been lied to, and inform story selectors accordingly while selling them story ideas.

**Authoritativeness** - All other things being equal, journalists prefer to resort to sources in official positions of authority and responsibility. They are assumed to be more trustworthy if only because they cannot afford to lie openly; they are also more persuasive because their facts and opinions are official. When stories become controversial, journalists can defend themselves before news executives by having relied on authoritative sources.

**Articulateness** – reporters want sources that are able to make their points as concisely, and preferably as dramatically, as possible. So, these are some of the considerations that journalists pay for source selection for their news stories production.

## **2.6 The Role of Journalists in Journalism Profession**

The Australian Journalists' Association, a division of the industrial union of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), is responsible for the ethical code guiding Australian journalists. In its preamble, the code of ethics describes the professional journalist with public responsibilities.

Journalists describe society to itself. They seek truth. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression, many journalists work for private enterprise, not all these have public responsibilities, MEAA members engaged in journalism commit themselves to honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others (MEAA,1997:15).

MEAA describes above the special qualities of journalists which distinguishes them from other professionals. Above all, journalists are part of society who are professionals revealing the hidden information and question anybody to bring into illumination what the large societies is not aware. They are the driving force who put into practice the concept of democracy. What is more, journalists are professionals who provide services to society and have public responsibilities. As accountability engenders public trust, it is essential to the fulfillment of journalism's public responsibilities. Journalists have a special obligation to be accountable because it is they who claim to be one of the main methods of holding to be accountable, on behalf of the public, others wield power'(MEAA,1997:3). This strengthens that it is the

obligation of journalists to be accountable to the public. The services that journalists provide should serve the public. Philosopher Clifford Christians sees individual integrity and dedication to the public good as central to journalism: Justice for the powerless, stands as the centerpiece of a socially responsible press. In this view, the socially responsible journalist must be society's mirror and critic and advocate for its weaker members. The mirror reflects what is before it. The critic reminds society of the standards it has to live up to (Christians, Rotzoll and Fackler 1987).

More to the above point, concerning the role of journalists in the profession, the following part discusses with the principles of media ethics. Although there is a tremendous amount of issues that can fall within the ambit of media ethics, the followings are some of them.

**Responsibility:** Journalists have a duty to inform the citizens for whom they are working. The responsibilities that journalists hold are one of the qualities that differentiate the profession from the other professions. Media serve as a forum enabling different viewpoints to be heard, not a single or few dominant groups monopolize others. Journalists have several professional responsibilities that they are expected to discharge, by representing different viewpoints of the same event, journalists help people reach informed decisions and understand what happened in a holistic manner. Thus, journalists are considered to be unbiased and fair. Schultz (1994:37) argued that the primary values journalists should bring to reporting are impartiality, audience responsiveness and political independence-interpreted through news values of conflict, timeliness, prominence and proximity.

**Objectivity:** Objectivity is one of the characteristics which exemplified 'good journalism'. Journalists should strive to sustain public confidence in journalism being objective. Objectivity is the key and the cornerstone of the ethos of journalism. Scott wrote about the press: 'Its primary

office is the gathering of news'. And since objectivity is one of the characteristics of good journalism, journalists should do their best to be objective. It is by doing so that journalists increase and sustain their credibility.

Tumber contends, 'for journalists, objectivity does not mean that they are impartial observers of events-as it does for the social scientist-but that they seek out the facts and report them as fairly and in a balanced way as possible'(1999:31). Based on this argument, journalists are not mere observers of events, but they engage themselves in the event to take out facts and present reasonably. It is by using an objective, scientific method for verifying information; journalists can report stories that do not reflect their own personal views or corporate views. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001, 'originally it is not the journalist who is imagined to be objective.' This implies that the method a journalist uses in verifying a story matters, not the journalist, because no one is free of bias.

**Independence:** The concept of independence is highly intertwined with credibility of the media. If the activities of journalists or their institution are perceived by the public as the forerunner of the interest of certain groups, the credibility of the media would be ruined in the eyes of the public. Independence is a major journalistic ethical foundation that should be given emphasis. This is due to the fact that credibility is very crucial for building the image of a given media house on behalf of the public. Kruger (2004:13) states, our credibility is massively affected by any perceived or real conflict of interest.

According to Retief (2002:22) independent media remain free of associations and activities; seek out and disseminate competing perspectives without being unduly influenced by those who would use their power or position counter to public interest. Hence, journalists are expected to

keep themselves a reasonable distance away from activities that may compromise their integrity or damage their credibility. Since the public trust on journalists is achieved by being independent of any influence that can hurt the profession.

**Fairness and balance:** Journalists also strive to be fair in their report by avoiding coverage of one-sided stories. They look for contrasting views and report without favoring one side or another. A story may have multiple views; a journalist is believed to observe at events from different perspectives. According to the Missouri Group (1992:14) there are no instant replays in news. There are, however, different viewpoints from which every event or issue can be observed. Each viewpoint may yield a different interpretation of what is occurring and of what it means. As this argument indicates a single event has several view points. When a journalist views at an event from multi angles s\he gets different views. When an event\issue is viewed from different angles, different interpretations of that event can be made. So, the fair inclusion of several viewpoints will help audiences to see the reality from several perspectives. This indirectly helps journalists to unearth the different angles of a story for audiences. This can play its own role in increasing the journalists' credibility. In order to do this, including more than one source in news story is important.

One of the most basic questions about the value of a work of journalism is the nature of its sourcing. How deep are the sourcing, what are the ranges of views offered, and how much can the audience decide for itself what to think about the story? These are the essential elements in trying to assess the quality of reporting (Annual report on American journalism, 2005). As can be inferred from this argument, including diversified sources in a news story increases the value

of journalism and quality of reporting. When reporters view at a story from different angles, they may come across with interesting points.

Credibility is the most important issue in journalism. In order to achieve and keep credibility, journalists are supposed to present issues from multi angles so that the public confidence towards journalists develop. Once journalists lose their credibility, it is tough to re achieve. Public trust is an essential requirement for journalists, as the editor of the SA Sunday Independent, Jovial Rantao, argues:

Credibility is the life blood of our profession as journalists. Credibility is to us what oxygen is to human body. Without it, we are nothing. Without it, not one person will believe a single word that we write. One of the basic tenets of our profession is to ensure that the credibility of the information we gather on a daily basis is unquestionable. (Cited in Kruger, 2004)

So, in order to have credibility from the public, journalists are supposed to present different views in a fair and balanced manner.

## **2.7 Factors Affecting Journalists News and Source Selection**

Media historian, Michael Schudson (1996) notes three approaches on the production of news. First is the political economy perspective, which relates news production to issues of political and economic structure and control. This means news tends to reflect the views of the political elite, or of the large corporations that own major media organizations.

The second approach involves the influence of the social organization of the journalistic processes. “The story of journalism, on a day-to-day basis,” wrote Schudson, “is the story of the interaction of reporters and bureaucrats”. Put another way, “the world is bureaucratically organized for journalists”. This approach also encompasses the role of public relations in shaping

the news agenda by making potential stories easily available to journalists. Some adherents to the organizational perspective also contend that the personal values and social backgrounds of journalists shape the news product, whether in terms of political bias or coverage of underrepresented groups. Whereas the social organizational perspective emphasizes personal relations, the third approach, a cultural view, stresses cultural and symbolic aspects. This is when news stories are framed in terms of cultural stereotypes. It is apparent that the way these perspectives reflected in the production of news can affect the contents of news.

McManus (1994), Koch (1990) and others claim that the move over the past ten years to a 'market-driven journalism' has fundamentally changed the daily role of journalists in making the news. The changes are characterized by a gradual and increasing lack of editorial independence within media organizations. Underwood's 1993 study supported this view:

To fit into the newspaper's design and packaging needs, preplanning is essential...Editors who need to allot space in the news pages well in advance prefer stories that are predictable, come with plenty of lead time, and fit the preconceptions that have already been discussed in editorial meetings. In this system, it's easy to find the reporter reduced to a researcher, a gatherer of information, a functionary in the plan-package-and-market-the-newspaper bureaucracy. (Underwood, 1993:163)

As said above, the pre-established system weakens the editorial independence of journalists to make free news judgments. The culture in the newsroom is one of the factors that affect the work of journalists. The work of any journalist's working life is most likely to be shaped by the images held by the individual and the organizations for which they work.

On an individual level, the role and image of the journalist is affected by the details of their own experience-their training, the size, type and culture of organization(s) worked for, editorial pressures and personal idiosyncrasies. Journalists' view of themselves 'as disseminators, interpreters, investigators or

adversaries' depends on 'the society they live in, the image of the press in general, and the image of the organization in which they work' (Gaunt, 1990:142).

A survey in the year 2000, by the Pew Research Center for the people and the press and Columbia Journalism Review, reinforces this view. The study, which surveyed almost 300 journalists in the United States, found that four out of ten journalists purposely avoid or soften stories to preserve the interests of their news organization (Associated Press, 2000).

Paletz and Entman (1982) found that where the primary objective of a news organization was efficiency in the gathering, describing and transmitting of news, the result was reliance on official sources and homogeneity of reporting. This reliance on professional media sources is a global phenomenon. For example, Warren (1995) reported that eighty percent of stories were generated by publicity releases provided to media outlets.

The newsroom influences, such as deadlines, space and staffing, place heavy constraints on those journalists responsible for news selection. As a result, journalists tend to take the line of least resistance and select those news items that are the easiest to find and edit. Underwood describes the enticements:

By tradition, albeit a shaky one, daily newspapers do much of the work extracting the information on which our information age depends—at least the information that is hard to extract. At the same time, legions of public relations agents and corporate and government image-makers are standing by, eager to be the brokers of information that is easy to gather. (Underwood 1993:147)

The Missouri Group (1992) states, 'daily journalism presents still more complications. Usually, as a reporter you have only a few hours, at most a few days, to try to learn as many facts as possible when you take into account all these realities and limitations, you can see that just to

reach the best obtainable version of the truth is challenge enough for any journalist.’ consequently, the pressure for deadline is one of the problems which journalists are facing in presenting an event from the perspectives of different sources. So, in the way to the truth, what is challenging is the time a reporter has to submit news to newsroom. As a result, journalists are unable to bring the role of journalism in entertaining and reporting different views into practice. This may pave a way for the passive forms of journalism.

Altschull (1984) describes how some journalists reconcile the contrast between what they might do and what they most often do by assigning the first with the romantic qualities of a heroic but impossible dream. He says that while it is possible for journalism to induce positive changes in society, political and economic realities severely circumscribe the potential of journalists to do so. From this perspective, it would be however unfair to blame journalists for relying on pre-packaged information. It is clear that most journalists maneuver under economic, institutional and organizational constraints which require them to constantly churn out too many stories for publication.

Most of the time journalists increasingly rely on PRs sources when resources are insufficient and staffs are inadequate. The line between journalism and PRs – between factual reporting and narrative – has become blurred. Insistence on high productivity means that some journalists are asked to produce up to a dozen stories a day (Phillips, 2010). What abridge the gap between journalism and public relations are mostly the pressures on journalists. Journalists are asked to produce lots of stories within short period of time. This can affect the profession of journalism in verifying issues before their publication to the large audience members. As a result, journalists commit either to resign the profession or to stay in the profession and working with slackness.

## 2.8 Defining Public Relations

The UK's main body of PR professionals, the institute of public relations, defines PR as "the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain good will and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics" (Harrison, 1995). This definition encompasses the PR professional's multiple roles as well as the overall goal to work with publics. Also suggests that a public relations is the creation or establishment of mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. It also suggests that a public relations is not a haphazard process. Public relations efforts must ensure that not only does the organization understand its publics; the public's must equally understand the organization.

Another definition is that given Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985), in their book **Effective Public Relations**. According to them, public relations is the "management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics upon whom its success depends." Based on this definition of PRs, public is taken as the center of PRs functions because it is through the public that the objectives of a given organizations can be realized. A company's success or failure depends considerably on its relationship with its various publics. Frank Jefkins, a British author, in his book *Public Relation*, shares this idea "public relations consists of all forms of planned communication both inward and outward between an organization and its publics for the purpose of achieving objectives concerning mutual understanding." 'Inward and outward communication' implies a two-way communication involving both the organization and its various publics. If there is no two – way communication between the organization and its publics, it is impossible for PRs officers to achieve their organizations agenda.

It became increasingly important for organizations to know what their clients want and do not. The good will of the public is the greatest asset any organization can have. A public that is well informed and holds a positive attitude toward the organization is critical to its survival (Wells et al. 1998:560). So, the purpose of the two way communications in PRs is to realize the organization's objectives by identifying the interest of its publics to meet the interest of the hiring organization.

More recent definitions have been more detailed. In a recent survey by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), PR is as 'influencing behavior to achieve objectives through the effective management of relationships and communications' (Department of Trade and Industry and Institute of Public Relations, 2003: 10). This definition is an attempt to combine the idea of managed communications with exercising influence on relationships and achieving mutual understanding, to incorporate as broad a range of activity as possible.

US academics Botan and Hazleton (1989) observed that: '[Public relations] serves as the definitional label for the process of attempting to exert symbolic control over the evaluative dispositions (attitudes, images) and subsequent behaviors of relevant publics or clienteles.' This is one of the few definitions that offer a conceptual approach to the process as opposed to the majority which describe the objectives of public relations practice. It also firmly places public relations in the persuasive, asymmetric model because of its emphasis on controlling communications to meet an organization's objectives.

The following notion of Haywood also substantiates the statement above. Public relations must be a two-way activity: listening to what the public thinks, as well as projecting the organizations messages. It follows those public relations efforts that can only be effective where the aims of the organization are compatible with the aims of the public (Haywood 2002:15-16).

## **2.9 Public Relations Functions**

Public relations involves a diversity of functions. PR practitioners, do different kinds of work, towards the creation of mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. The following view describes what PRs does or it should be.

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.

(Harlow, quoted in Wilcox *et al.* 2003: 7)

The concept of mutuality in this definition makes a public relations officer an intermediary between his/her organization and the publics. This implies that PR officer should be able to align the interests of these two parties for their mutual advantage.

A definition adopted at the first World Congress of National Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico in 1978 also states the role of PRs officer. It states “ Public Relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders as well as planning and implementing a programme of action that will serve the interest of not only the organization but also that of its publics.”

The above definition notifies that PRs serve the interest of both its organization and its publics. This has a correlation with the former definition. It is tough for PR officers to realize their organization's vision without its public. Thus to achieve its objectives the two way communications help the PR practitioners to know the interest of its publics. So, the aim behind serving the interest of the public is first in line with the organizations' interest. PRs officers can not only serve the interest of the public unlike journalists, they do so for serving the interest of their organization because organizations hire PR officer to pull off its agendas.

More than anything, what public relations activities communicate is the values and visions of the organization-for better or worse. These may be socially positive, acceptable values or questionable ones. But whatever the explicit message sent forth, with it goes an implicit message of whether the organization really cares about people, the community, and the future; or instead is self-centered and concerned only with its immediate profits or success-or possibly even anti-social (Ermiyas, 2009)

Nessman avers the role of public relations practitioners as follows: creating and reinforcing trust; arousing attention; creating and preserving communication and relationships; articulating, representing and adjusting interests; influencing public opinion; resolving conflicts; and creating consensus (quoted in Wilcox et al. 2003: 4). According to this definition, the work of public relations is to influence the public opinion or to change the attitude of the public by arousing their attention.

The above PR definitions highlight the fact that PR is about managing communication in order to build good relationships and mutual understanding between an organization and its most important audiences (Gordon 1997). However, it is important to recognize that they do incorporate underlying assumptions that presume its main function is to promote the organization's interests and some writers have objected to this. Botan and Hazelton (1989), for

example, argue that such definitions tend to present a view of PR as a neutral communications channel and only partially reflect actual practice, in which the main job of a PR officer is to manipulate public opinion for the benefit of organizations.

A public relations officer is responsible to create mutual understanding between his/her organization and its several publics. In order to achieve the organization's objectives, the PR officer must take proactive steps. These entities (both the organization and its publics) have interests that must be protected. It also presupposes a streamlining of these benefits for mutual good. So, it requires 'Sustained effort' between the organization and its publics to create mutual understanding and the PR practitioner is responsible to do accordingly.

Generally, scholars raise different ideas about the role of public relations. Though there are different arguments, most of them agree that a public relations is a profession that involves a two way communications to establish mutual understanding between its organizations and public. As discussed so far, PRs to prevail, it should work to serve not only the interest of its organization but also its publics because PRs success and failure depends upon its publics. However, PRs serve the interest of the public with the implied intention of serving its organization interest first. This is why organizations hire PR practitioners.

## **2.10 The Differences between Journalism and Public Relations**

The relationship between PR practitioners and journalists has been a source of investigation, mainly, in relation to the role of independence in journalism and the increasing pressure on journalists to produce news within short period of time thus growing reliance on PR. Literature confirms the intricacy and gracelessness between PRs practitioners and journalists while trying

to explain the divide between the two professions (Brody 1984; Delorme and Fedler 2003 and Sterne 2010)

Wyatt et.al (1996:124) is one of the opinions that although at first the two functions of public relations and journalism share many common interests and values; they now appear to have some conflicting goals leading them to a love-hate relationship. Charron (1994:43) endorses this, “public relations practitioners and journalists find themselves mutually depending of one another, a situation which demands cooperation, while their divergent control interests cause distrust and opposition.”

As a journalist, my inclination is to say the similarity stops here. Journalism does indeed see to describe the world as it is, not as someone might wish it to be. It is to be a witness to the world, and tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The profession of public relations is quite different (Jenkins, 2006:45). This argument shows as journalism and PR are reasonably poles apart because both of them strive for different purposes. Journalists look at things to describe them the way they should be not the way someone wants them to be. As discussed ahead, the role of journalists is to present a certain story from different angles in order to provide audiences with the information they need. However, since the most important characteristics of public relations are to work for the positive image of the organization, they can't unearth any information that may hurt the image of the organization. The organization also hires PR officer not to badly affect its image because the core point of PRs is working for the positive image of the employer. Lee Salter corroborates this argument:

Holistic reality is not good for public relations. A client doesn't employ a public relations agent to tell the truth, regardless of the personal orientation of the agent. Neither does the client pay a public relations firm to represent the interests of their

opponents. One to assist the public in weighing up all of the evidence. So, they can make their own judgment on the situation (Salter, 2005:12).

Based on this argument, it is thorny to use PR officer as a source of journalists because PR practitioners might protect or promote their organization by giving or hiding information. That is why journalists should always maintain a serious look to their statement. As Howard Kurtz said, in this overheated environment, the degree to which basic facts can be messaged, manipulated, and is truly troubling. And that raises the fundamental question; amid the endless noise, whom do you trust? (Quoted in Hargreaves, 2003:186). What journalists are supposed to do is not only covering what happened, but also to show the process of the happened event for their audiences. To do this, journalists should try to see beyond what already happened so that they can uncover the unseen or hidden facts. Lee Salter says:

Rather, journalists should attempt to 'get outside' the appearance of the reality they see, which has long been the objective of many critical artists and journalists, this is not to say that such appearances are not real, or that they are merely relative, rather, they stand as they are but the point is to uncover the hidden structures that underlies the appearances (2005:7)

As mentioned earlier, different scholars criticize the public relations information as one-sided. They argue that this is due to the fact that they are hired to represent and develop the image of their organization. While a reporter supposedly enslaved to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, public relations must be enslaved to the client, the whole client and nothing but the client (Jenkins, 2006:48). The major consumers of public relations are client; the service that a PR officer provides is also to the organization and the client as well. The point is not only that public relations gives information benefiting their organization. They also argue that public relations will manipulate the information to achieve the objectives of its organizations.

Public relations, by its very nature, are intended to benefit those creating the message, whether the source is public or private. In the information market place, public relations manipulate the news by packaging information of the media with specific client's interests in mind. There have been laudable uses of public relations, but on the whole the practice serves to flood the media with biased news. (Dennis and Merrill, 2002: 174-175)

Opposing to the above argument where PR practitioners are hired to serve the best interest of the hiring organization regardless of the source of the information, Danny (2000) avers that the job of journalism is to provide service for the large public by revealing truth that are kept out of sight.

As discussed so far, both journalism and public relations serve different stakeholders. The first and most aim of journalism principle is to serve the public interest. On the other hand, though public relations strives to serve the interest of both the organization and its public, its utmost purpose is to serve the interest of the hired organization.

The same point in another way, a journalist is paid for her/his contribution, and his/her services are regarded as professional and the trained is paid accordingly. The PR practitioners are mainly hired by the particular group, and the objective of the PR practitioner is to write down the policies, approach, strategies of the group the practitioner is paid to. In many of the cases the PR practitioners are not considered to be righteous source, and such practitioners are considered to be unofficial representative of certain groups. A journalist is considered to be the independent source of information, and it is believed that the information provided by the journalist is free of any manipulation, exaggeration, and nepotism.

Though the two professions differ in practice, they also do share something in common. While PRs relies on journalists to promote their products, journalists are also relying on the work of PR

officials to produce and source news. The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance's 'Code of Ethics' states the primary and principal ethical principle, as honesty. Journalists are required to "Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts" (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance 2012). Likewise, the Public Relations Institute of Australia's webpage reveals in the "Individual Code of Ethics", that their first rule is the same, stating: "Members shall deal fairly and honestly with their employers, clients and prospective clients, with their fellow workers including superiors and subordinates, with public officials, the communication media, the general public, and with fellow members of PRIA" (Public Relations Institute of Australia 2010).

## **2.11 The Impact of Public Relations on Journalism**

A public relations involves the cultivation of favorable relations for organizations and products with its key publics through the use of a variety of communications channels and tools. Traditionally, this meant public relations professionals would work with members of the news media to build a favorable image by publicizing the organization or product through stories in print and broadcast media.

The manufacture of news, unlike other forms of production, relies on inputs from individuals and organizations located outside the formal news organization in which production takes place (Franklin 1997, 19-21). Sources are the most important thing in the production of news. Scholars argue as there is no journalism at all without sources. Mwaffisi (1994:161) considers sources as the "Life blood of journalism because without them there would be no news, without news journalism would not exist". The relations between sources and journalists can have significant implications for the nature of news production (Campbell, 2004:79)

While searching for news, journalists may go to different bodies to provide public with the information they need. Despite the differences between journalism and public relations, journalists use public relations practitioners as their news sources due to different reasons. The lack of enough reporters who gather information from different sources, and financial limitations as well as the existence of deadline make it difficult for journalists to work without help of public relations. Barbara Aysen et al. argue in their book reporting in a multi-media world, Public relations officers can be a fast and efficient source of information that might have required hours on the phone tracking down the right contact. But PR exists to serve a corporate or organizational cause, not to public interest (Aysen et.al 2003:36). As can be inferred from this argument, the two professions go all-out to serve different bodies.

It is with all these distrusting, journalists are forced to use public relations information. As Harold Burson, head of Burson-Marsteller, one of the largest public relations firm in the world quoted in Mencher (1996:385) said, “We are advocates; we are being paid to tell our client’s side of the story. We are in the business of changing and molding attitudes and we aren’t successful unless we move the needle, get people to do something.”

Different scholars had a say on the relationship between public relations and journalists. Among them, White and Hobsbawn (2007, 284-285) identify a “love-hate relationship” which acknowledge the potential conflict inherent in these relations, which is typically trumped by a requirement for “mutual reciprocity” and cooperative ways of working if both journalists and PR sources are to achieve their professional objectives (Blumer and Gurevitch, 1995). Some observers believe that such mutual reciprocity means that any “distinct professional identities” or

“boundaries” between journalists and PR professionals are blurring, if not “vanishing” (Deuze 2007: 141)

In view of the fact that journalists ultimate objective is to search for truth and to serve the large publics where as PRs goal is serving the interest of the employer. So, the two professions strive for different purposes. When most of the time journalists depend on PRs officers as their source, at the same time they are damaging the profession.

According to different scholars the big problem that journalism is facing today is in playing its role. The role of media to entertain different viewpoints in order to maintain fairness and balance would remain under question when journalists use PR officers as their sources. The main reason is that the information that they offer to the media might be biased or one sided. In some cases, the critics said they give another appearance to the reality to serve their organization. As a result, the role of media in welcoming diversified views would become one sided role. Below Jefkins argument justifies this:

“Of all the sources, public relations by the very nature of their profession provide information that its organization need to impart. The public relations practitioner’s job is to carry out the agreed PR programs, the aim being to gain maximum knowledge and understanding of the clients’ or employee organization, products or services (Jefkins, 1992:88)

Therefore, it is the duty of journalists to crosscheck the information they receive from public relations. There should be verification of any information that comes from public relations before their publications.

As a reporter, you must recognize that news releases are both a help and hindrance to a newspaper. They help because without them, newspapers would need many more reporters. They are a hindrance because they sometimes contain incomplete or even incorrect information. Most of the time, in one-way or

another, they are self-serving and, unlike objective journalism, start with a point of view (The Missouri Group, 1992:182)

Fengler and Russ-Mohl (2008) cite a study on how German public relations agents value telling the truth. The study reveals a dubious commitment to honesty: about half the experts thought lying could be acceptable in their profession. The ethical divide between journalism and public relations is apparent. Dueze (2005) asserts that ethical journalism is bound by objectivity and autonomy unlike PRs.

The increasing influence of public relations on the press has a negative impact on the dissemination of impartial and accurate information (Salter 2005). So, as said and discussed earlier by different scholars, the use of public relations practitioners as source of information has detrimental effects on the profession of journalism in various facets.

## **2.12 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.12.1 Political Economy of Mass Media**

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky Book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988), argue that the media in America serves to promote the agenda of the elite class in American society. In other words, the media only provide one-sided news coverage. They provide a radical critique of the American Mass Media .The Mass Media is owned largely by wealthy individuals, banks, and corporate interests. The media depends upon the state for information and assistance in its day-to-day operations. Thus, free-market forces cause the media to adopt a bias in favor of corporate interests, government interests, and the status quo in general.

Though the focus of Herman and Chomsky's study focuses on the US media- foreign policy relationships, we can apply their theory elsewhere. Their theory is applicable both in domestic issues and other states too (Street, 2001; Herring & Robinson, 2003).

*Manufacturing Consent* organized its ideas into a theory suggesting the media functioned in relation to five filters that determined its content. Herman and Chomsky (1988:1-35) argue that the 'raw material of news' passes through a series of five interrelated filter constraints, 'leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print'. These filter elements continuously interact with and reinforce one another and have multilevel effects on media performance. The five filter elements are:

..... (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass-media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and experts funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) 'flak' as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) 'anti-communism' as a national religion and control mechanism. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:2)

The third filter notes that dominant elites routinely facilitate the news-gathering process: providing press releases, advance copies of speeches, periodicals, photo opportunities and ready for news analysis (ibid:19). Thus, government sources are attractive to the media. Such sources are favored and are routinely endorsed and legitimized by the media because they are recognizable and viewed as prima facie credible. Information provided to the media by state sources doesn't require fact checking and is typically portrayed as accurate. Herman and Chomsky stress that the nature of the symbiotic relationship between media and sources directly influences media performance.

Because of their services, continuous contact on the beat, and mutual dependency, the powerful can use personal relationships, threats and rewards to further influence and coerce the media. The media may feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order not to offend their sources and disturb a close relationship. It is very difficult to call authorities on whom one depends for daily news liars, even if they tell whoppers. Critical sources may be avoided not only because of their lesser availability and higher cost of establishing credibility, but also because the primary sources may be offended and may even threaten the media using them. (ibid: 22)

The authors contend that preferred meanings are structured into news discourse as a result of the dominance of official sources that are identified as ‘experts’. In this way, news discourse ‘may be skewed in the direction desired by the government and “market” (ibid: 23). Concomitantly, the preferred meanings that are structured into news discourse are typically ‘those that are functional for elites’ (ibid: 23). The authors argue that media shape public opinion by controlling how ideas are presented.

Herman and Chomsky state that there is a ‘systematic and highly political dichotomization in news coverage’ that is ‘based on serviceability to important domestic power interests.’ They maintain that the propaganda function of the mass media is observable in choices of story selection, in the quantity and quality of coverage, and in modes of handling favored and inconvenient materials (placement, tone, context, fullness of treatment) differ in ways that serve political ends (ibid,:35).

## **2.13 The Practice of Journalism in Ethiopia**

Various scholars argue as the practice of journalism has a problem in Africa in general. These problems may arise through different ways. There might be government censorship or / and lack of qualified journalists in the continent. African journalism lacks both the power of self-

determination and the power to shape the universal concepts that are ‘deaf-and-dumb to the peculiarities of journalism in and on Africa’ (Nyamnjoh, 2005:3). Besides, according to Kasoma (1997:299) the rate of truth telling in Africa’s newspapers, particularly those behaving as political oppositions, is extremely low. The newspapers are full of exaggeration; basing their reports on flimsy hear-say; making headlines cry ‘wolf’; quoting sources out of context; not giving people against whom allegations are made a fair hearing.

As researches conducted so far show, most journalists in Africa in general practice self-censorship. This can be done for various reasons. Media analysts and studies show that the problem is particularly rife in Africa, where democratic and open governments are still in stages of infancy and the key watchdog role of media as accountable to the public is undeveloped. As Solomon (2005:11) notes, “Due to the deep-rooted problem of self-censorship, the journalists in government media in Africa seems unable to be accountable to the public.” Since journalists and other media practitioners are aware of the pre-established working environment of the media institution, they commit self-censorship. It is during this time journalists forget to serve the interest of the public.

It is possible to infer similar problems on the practice of journalism in Ethiopia as researched by the following researchers (Aadland and Fackler, 1999; Birhanu, 2009; Gudeta, 2008; Hallelujah and Skjerdal, 2009). According to them, Ethiopian journalism lacks competent, creative, courageous, critical and investigative journalists. Regarding the practice of the profession in Ethiopia, there are irresponsible journalists who do not contribute to the welfare of the society (Gudeta, 2008). Journalists of the state owned media magnify the speeches of government officials neglecting their responsibility of providing balanced information to the public.

According to Nebyu (2008), journalists do this mainly for political reasons: fear of bosses, editors and government officials. This hampers the practice of journalism in the country. As a result the role of media and the professional performance of Ethiopian journalists were criticized. In viewing Ethiopian journalism, other scholars comment that beyond the lack of professionalism, there are lots of problems that journalists face in exercising the profession.

Being a journalist in a transitional society like Ethiopia is not easy. Resources are few, there's not much of a living in it, and you face hostility from the authorities. At the same time, the ethical choices are particularly tough, and the consequences of doing a good, or a bad, job can be far-reaching. (Kruger, 2005: <http://www.ethiomeia.com> retrieved on December/12/2012).

As studies showed about Ethiopian media institutions, journalists in the state media are in conflict with different professional practices, especially the 'watchdog' and 'investigative' role of journalism. Due to different reasons, Ethiopian journalists exercise a 'hybrid' journalism form. This means that journalists cannot fully exercise critical journalism only, but also development journalism as well.

One scholar said the following about Ethiopian Radio and Television Association (ERTA): The board of the ERTA is selected by the government. Most of the top managers are members of the ruling party and all staff members are government employees. As a consequence editorial independence of the state broadcaster is limited. News bulletins are essentially bulletins about government activities. The coverage does not reflect diverse views, but is usually one-sided, lacks depth and falls short of journalistic ethics (Merike Le Pelly: 2010).

Saying this, as the researcher tried to refer to some scholars regarding the issue of journalism erstwhile, journalism's first obligation is to the truth and its loyalty is to citizens. Based on the

unique characteristics of journalism and public relations mentioned and discussed thus far, this study investigates the practice of journalism in ETV.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

As indicated in the first chapter, the main aim of this research is to investigate the practice of journalism in ETV. The main focus of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology, data gathering techniques, sampling method and data analysis technique employed for the study.

In order to answer the research questions and accomplish the objectives of the research, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (mixed methods design) have been employed. As noted by Zoltan Dornyei, (2007) mixed research method helps to reduce the inherent weaknesses of individual methods, qualitative and quantitative, by compensating them with the strength of the other. These two methods are not antagonistic but are useful when they are used in combination (Newbold 1998:228). While qualitative approaches of content analysis and in-depth interviews have been used to answer the major research questions of the study where as quantitative content analysis has been used to find out the main sources and main speakers in the news production.

#### **3.1 Method of Data Collection**

##### **3.1.1 Content Analysis (Mixed Method)**

Initially content analysis dealt with ‘the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication’ (Berelson, 1952:18) but, over time, it has expanded to include interpretations of latent content. Many authors, from a variety of research traditions, have addressed content analysis (for example, Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980). The first

descriptions date from the 1950s and are predominately quantitative. Currently, two principal uses of content analysis are evident. One is a quantitative approach and the second one is qualitative approach.

Neuman (1997), in a widely used text on social research methodology, comments on the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy in content analysis: “In content analysis, a researcher uses objective and systematic counting and recording procedures to produce a quantitative description of the symbolic content in a text” but he adds “there are qualitative or interpretative versions of content analysis”. Neuman notes: “Qualitative content analysis is not highly respected by most positivist researchers. Nonetheless, feminist researchers and others adopting more critical and interpretative approaches favor it” (1997: 273)

Qualitative content analysis refers to a research technique that is used to study the content of data qualitatively as opposed to quantitatively. Qualitatively here means that the analysis rules are followed in a step by step manner in order to achieve the right output. Content analysis is a purely descriptive method. It describes what is there, but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern ('what' but not 'why'). The early approach to content analysis was criticized because of its focus on basic quantitative elements. Therefore, qualitative content analysis has been used to analyze the text thoroughly.

Qualitative content analysis in media studies relies heavily on researcher ‘readings’ and interpretation of media texts. This intensive and time-consuming focus is one of the reasons that much qualitative content analysis has involved small samples of media content and been criticized by some researchers as unscientific and unreliable.

Qualitative content analysis can, to some extent, be incorporated within or conducted simultaneously with quantitative content analysis. At first, though the focus of the study is on qualitative content analysis, the study gives the general overview of the text under study by using the quantitative method. This facilitates for the whole understanding of the study. It can be concluded from Hansen et al. (1998), Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and others cited, that a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis offers the best of both worlds and, further, that a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis methodologies is necessary to fully understand the meanings and possible impacts of media content/texts.

The present study employs qualitative content analysis believing that it allows the researcher to systematically analyze the latent content of the media content (the prime time news, 8:00PM, in this case) through the selection of units of analysis. According to Flick (2002:75), this “enables a distinction to be made between the objective facts of the situation and the interviewee’s subjective definitions of the situation with a view of comparing them.” This implies that content analysis would help the researcher to double-check the data obtained through qualitative content analysis and in-depth interview.

So, quantitative content analysis can conform to the scientific method and produce reliable findings. Qualitative content analysis is difficult and maybe impossible to do with scientific reliability. But qualitative analysis of texts is necessary to understand their deeper meanings and likely interpretations by audiences which is the ultimate goal of analyzing media content.

Generally, qualitative content analysis is important method to conduct a primary research and come up with facts to use as evidence. It can be useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention (Weber, 1990 cited in

Stelmer, 2001). Therefore, qualitative content analysis is a vital method in studying the focus of the media institution. This means that the method is important in assisting the present study find out the extent ETV is practicing journalism.

### **The following section discusses the advantages and limitations of qualitative content analysis**

The advantage of qualitative research is the richness of the collected data. In-depth analysis of selected content using qualitative research methods is required to fully understand the potential meanings (manifest and latent) and likely effects of texts. This can be taken as one of the major reasons why the researcher would like to employ this method as one of the data gathering tools.

The qualitative content analysis method assists the researcher to understand the latent meaning of the text under investigation. Analysis of what the text says deals with the content aspect and describes the visible, obvious components, referred to as the manifest content (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Kondracki et al., 2002). In contrast, analysis of what the text talks about deals with the relationship aspect and involves an interpretation of the underlying meaning of the text, referred to as the latent content (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Kondracki et al., 2002). Both manifest and latent contents deal with interpretation, but the interpretations vary in depth and level of abstraction. So, the in-depth interpretation of the text under study can be achieved by focusing on the qualitative approach than the quantitative approach one.

**Limitations: Less easy to generalize:** as said earlier, in order to understand the issue under study in depth, the study focuses on small number of texts. This creates the problem of generalizability. A qualitative project is typically regarded as a contextualized study, and thus generalizability and the usage of reliability and validity in qualitative research are diverse and

controversial. The interpretation of texts is dependent on the skills of the researcher. This creates a good opportunity for the study being biased. According to Hsieh & Shannon, (2005:1278) qualitative content analysis can be defined as a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. In other words, though it is a subjective based interpretation, systematic coding process allows the researcher to interpret subjective data in a scientific manner.

### **3.1.2 In-depth Interview**

In-depth interviews are those interviews that are designed to discover underlying motives and desires of the participants of the study. Such interviews are held to explore needs, desires and feelings of respondents. It is an important tool that assists in the elaboration of data concerning respondents’ opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings. (Wimmer - and Dominic, 2006: 135).

Using in-depth interviews as one of the methods of data gathering has its own advantages and limitations. The following are some of them.

#### **Advantages:**

- Data are collected in natural setting,
- Provides a detailed information about a topic or issue from few but key respondents,
- Provides more accurate responses on sensitive issues,
- Facilitates access for immediate follow-up data collection for clarification and omissions,
- Provides flexibility for interviewer during interview process,
- Facilitates analysis, validity checks, and triangulation.

(Kumar, 1999; Hughes, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006)

**Limitations:**

- Time-intensive evaluation activity because of the time it takes to conduct interviews, transcribe them, code them and analyze the results,
- Depends especially on the honesty of those providing the data as respondents don't always tell the truth,
- Prone to interviewer bias unless researchers be able to be honest and systematic to control it,
- Difficult to make generalizations partly due to the small sample size of informants,
- Difficult to replicate.

(Kumar, 1999; Berger, 2000; Hughes, 2002; Boyce & Neale, 2006; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006)

As a qualitative approach to data gathering, the researcher employs personal in-depth interviews with journalists and other media practitioners. There are a number of reasons why this tool has been employed for the study. Firstly, it helps the researcher to get the in-depth perspectives of key media practitioners about the practice of journalism in their media. Secondly, to double-check the data gathered through qualitative content analysis. This means to confirm whether their practice goes or not with what they say. Finally, the in-depth interview with key media practitioners is an important instrument to answer some of the research questions mentioned in the study.

Semi-structured type of interview has been used for the study. This helps the informants to speak freely about the practice of journalism in their media.

### **3.2 Sampling Method**

A sample can be defined as a set of units or participants selected from a population, which is compiled to save time and to acquire accurate and unprejudiced estimations of the population status in terms of the research topic (Dane 1990:288; Schofield 2006: 26).

Deacon (1999) identifies two kinds of sampling techniques: probability or random sampling (e.g., simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling) and non-probability or non-random sampling (e.g., purposive sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, accidental sampling). While in random sampling, each member of the population has a known nonzero chance of being selected for the sample, in non-random sampling, the units are selected through other means, for example, by the researcher's own judgments on what he/she believes with respect to whether the selected samples are "representative" of the total population. The advantage of random sampling is that it allows researchers to gauge the frequency of sampling error, while the non-random sampling does not (Gunter, 2002; Gray, 2004). Taking this into consideration, the study employed one of the non-probability samplings called purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used because it "involves administering the instrument to entities that are readily available" (Colton and Covert 2007: 322), it relies on human judgment (Bradley 2007:175). The researcher selects key informants based on their experiences. The main purpose was to get detailed data from key informants of the media practitioners.

As indicated, the main focus of this study has been to find out the extent to which ETV is practicing journalism. Since it is difficult to investigate every media, the study has been forced to choose appropriate sample. For the media content sample, the study focuses on ETV's prime time news at 8:00 PM. The main reason the researcher focuses on news is because news is the big issue that separates journalism from public relations and it's the life of journalism; '...without news journalism would not exist' (Mwaffisi:1994). The researcher prefers prime time news believing most of the news presented in a day is repeated at this time and also the majority of news arrives to newsrooms in the afternoon. Also, this is the time most people come back to their home and watch the news.

The researcher believes that a sample of one or two month's prime time news of whatever issues can serve the purpose of the study. Accordingly, the study examined the first two weeks of each of the three months: December, 2012, January and February, 2013. This also has its own reasons. Firstly, the researcher believes that ETV's news broadcast of any times can serve the purpose of the study. Secondly, in order to create variety, it is important to see news that was broadcast at different times.

Since the selected media institution broadcast in variety of languages, the study focuses on Amharic program. As Amharic is the working language of the country. ETV has been chosen for the study as it is the biggest media in the country.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The data collection methods of the research were content analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) and in-depth interview. In order to analyze the contents of ETV prime time news coding sheet was developed.

#### **Variables and Categories**

As stated earlier, the research has employed both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The coding sheet of the quantitative data was classified into two analytical categories: the news sources and main speakers within the news.

##### **1. Main Speakers within the News**

This has helped the researcher to identify the person quoted as the main information source in a story or to know whose voice was predominantly heard in the news.

###### **A. Government officials ( at federal)**

This refers to any government officials at federal level

###### **B. Government officials ( at regional)**

This refers to the government official at the regional level. These include the nine regions in the country that are recognized by the EDRE constitution.

###### **C. Political parties**

This includes the ruling party as well as other organized political parties.

#### D. Community members

This refers to the public or ordinary citizens who do not represent any organizations, but quoted as main sources of the news.

#### E. Scholars

This represents academicians or scholars who took part in the news by reflecting their views on several issues.

#### F. Others

This refers to people who are portrayed in the news; but not belongs to one of the above categories.

## 2. Sources of the News

This dealt with individual's organizations that were directly quoted as sources of information. These include:

- ETV staff reporters
- Ethiopian News Agency (ENA)
- Regional Government Communication Offices (RGCO)
- News Media Organization.
- Public Relations Practitioners (PRP)

### **Inter-Coder Reliability**

Since the reliability of data is an important aspect of research, the researcher gave the responsibility of coding for two coders who had better understanding of the issue. The researcher, then, checked the inter coder reliability by using Holsti's formula where:

Reliability  $-2M / (N1+N2)$

M-represents the number of coding decisions with which the two coders agreed up on, while N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and the second coder respectively (Wimmer and Dominick,1997). By doing this, the researcher proved that the two coders agreed in their coding decisions.

In addition to qualitative content analysis, the researcher used an in-depth interview, in relation to the qualitative method of data collection. For this purpose, six key informants were interviewed from 12 April to 16, 2013. In order to select these key informants, the researcher used purposive sampling. Accordingly individuals who had experiences in news gathering and editing were selected. The working experiences of these informants ranges from 5 to 23 years in news reporting and editing. To get the necessary data for the study, three reporters, two editors and one editor in chief were interviewed. Among these, two of them have been females and the others have been males. The participants have been selected based on their experiences and gender. All respondents were interviewed in Amharic so as to create conducive environment for them. The results were later translated into English.

### **3.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

As indicated, the research employed mixed research method. Content analysis (qualitative and quantitative) and in-depth interviews were used to gather the data. Data gathered through the quantitative content analysis were presented using descriptive statistics, percentages and frequencies. Data gathered through qualitative content analysis and interviews were thematically analyzed and interpreted. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were made.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

As mentioned earlier, the main objective of the study was to investigate the practice of journalism in ETV. This chapter is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the data obtained using content analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) and in-depth interviews. Accordingly, the data were discussed and analyzed based on the theoretical framework of the study mentioned under chapter two. The study attempted to address the following issues in this chapter. Firstly, on the basis of news content analysis of ETV, the study tried to uncover the extent to which ETV practiced journalism. Secondly, whether the media practitioners were cognizant of the differences between journalism and public relations was a point of discovery through in-depth interview. Thirdly, using in-depth interview, the researcher also tried to uncover factors affecting the media practitioners in news and source selection; because news and sources are the two big players in journalism; they have an impact on its practice. The following media scholars also corroborate this idea. Mwaffisi (1994:161) avows ...without news, journalism would not exist. And Keeble (2001: 41) avers, "At the heart of journalism lies the source. Finally, the impact of PRs on the practice of journalism practice was analyzed.

Findings from content analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) and in-depth interviews were presented and discussed concomitantly in this chapter per the objectives of the study. The researcher disguised the name of the key informants and coded them in order to keep undisclosed the informants of the study.

## **4.2 Sources of the News and Speakers within the News**

Because one of the major objectives of this study was to find out the extent to which ETV is practicing journalism, it is fitting to look into the sources that dominate the news production and the major speakers in each of its news stories. As discussed in chapter two, Gans (1979:80) defines sources as the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in articles and those who only supply background information or story suggestions. Mwaffisi (1994: 161) also described sources as the lifeblood of the news, which is the heart of constructing news. In the news making process, sources are the main factors that are taken into consideration at the early stage of news gathering. They are regarded as the output of the news.

Based on the content analysis of six weeks of ETV prime time news stories, the following major sources and speakers within the news were discussed.

*Table: Sources of the news and speakers within the news*

Speakers within the news	Sources of the news							Percent
	ETV staff reporters	ENA	RGCO	PRs practitioners	News media organizations	Others	Total	
Government officials at federal	63	6	0	5	0	1	75	51
Government officials at regional	13	2	21	2	2	1	41	27.9
Political parties	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	2.72
Community members	8	2	2	0	1	0	13	8.84
Scholars	5	0	2	0	0	0	7	4.76
Others	3	2	0	2	0	0	7	4.76
Total	95	12	26	9	3	2	147	
Percent	64.62	8.16	17.7	6.12	2	1.36		100

The above table can be described in terms of three classifications: Firstly, the sources of the news; secondly, the speakers within the news and thirdly the emphasis that each source of news adopted for each of its speakers. Accordingly, each of them will be discussed below.

The table depicts that ETV uses different sources of news. Firstly, news which is prepared by ETV staff reporters and the others are from ENA, regional government communication offices,

PRs practitioners, different news media organizations and other sources. Out of 147 news items which were broadcast in ETV, 95 (64.62%) of the news was produced by ETV staff reporters. The regional government communication offices covered about 26 (17.7%) and ENA and PRs practitioners were used 12 times (8.16%) and 9 times (6.12%) respectively. Therefore, it is possible to infer the vast majority of the news in ETV is covered by the staff reporters. In addition, it can be deduced that the other sources of ETV's news were government sources.

Secondly, as can be inferred from the above table, government officials at federal level were the main speakers within the news. They appeared in the news 75 times (51%) out of 147 news stories. The regional government officials accounted for about 41 (27.9%) of stories. The community members became speakers within the news about 13 times (8.84%). Scholars and varied political parties covered 7 (4.76%) and 4 (2.72%) of the total news stories respectively. This implies that government officials at both the federal and regional levels were given the highest coverage in ETV. On the contrary, different community members only received 13 (8.84%).

Thirdly, the findings of the above table also show that from the majority of news stories that were produced by ETV staff reporters, which is out of 147 news stories, 63 of the pieces derived from the words of government officials found at federal levels. About 13 news stories were from government officials found at regional level. The others like community members and scholars were given scanty coverage by ETV staff reporters. ENA gave coverage for federal government officials about 6 news stories out of 12 news stories from the whole the total number of news which is 147 news stories. The regional government communication office gave the highest coverage, which accounts for about 21 news stories for government officials found at regional level out of the news stories originated from the regional government communication office

which accounts 26 news stories from the total news stories, 147 news stories. And they gave little coverage for the others. The public relations practitioners also gave the highest proportion of coverage for federal government officials which amounts to about five of the nine news stories originating from PRs practitioners.

So, what one can deduce from the above table is that the majority of the speakers in the news production by ETV staff reporters were government officials, especially those found at federal level. Besides, it is possible to infer that the majority of news that came from different regions was beamed directly from government communication offices. This means ETV doesn't pay enough mind to sending reporters to the regional offices because of the access of information it has through them. What is more, the table shows that the news organizations that supplied news to ETV gave more coverage for government sources by emphasizing the views of officials of the government both at federal and regional levels. This shows as the government has different communication offices which supply information to ETV in different places. In relation with this point one informant said the following:

**Informant: 4:** When ETV aims to organize news, at the same time source of the news is planned together. There is an agreement established by ETV to utilize officers from different organizations, ENA, regional government communication offices and PRs.

When this context is seen with the discussion made in chapter two about the primary functions of news, what Schudson (1995:28) says is that journalism serves as a common carrier of the perspectives of varied groups in society. According to Schudson, various perspectives can be entertained through media. It is the role of media in allowing people to voice their opinions. So far, it is also indicated that media are seen as crucial to the promotion of democratic values reflecting society in all its complexity and with many view points as possible, as discussed in the

text (Allan, 2005: 55). The argument shows the role of media in democracy by inviting various perspectives. When we compare this with the experience of ETV, the findings show something different. It is possible to argue ETV is a medium in which the voice of the government officials is being heard and the voices of the others are being given less mind. This leaves in jeopardy the democratic process Ethiopian has begun to adopt because for democracy to exist, different viewpoints should be incorporated. In this regard, when we see community members and various political parties, they appeared as information providers in 13 and 4 news stories respectively. It is evident from this that diversified views were void in ETV's coverage.

As Holmes (1920) stated, media are a place where different ideas are entertained. The findings of the study appear in conflict with this point because the practice of ETV indicates that stories were presented from one angle in which officials propagate their agenda by dominating the media.

### **4.3 News Selection Process in ETV**

The media do not simply report on something newsworthy. As discussed in chapter two, news is the final product of various processes. Several scholars proposed different criteria for news selection, Golding and Elliot (1979) proposed on three things for news value: the audience, accessibility and fit as discussed in chapter two. Here the researcher looks at news selection based on audience interest in ETV. Accordingly, the researcher asked the informants their criteria of news selection. The following is said by informant I:

ETV selects news based on the mission of the ruling party. There is choice of news to be transmitted through ETV considering its content having to evaluate the impact posed against any official beginning from lower level up to higher official on federal level. We have given up much valuable and high intensity news for the above reason; silence is all we do for not covering the news broad cast, we

neglected to give attention several times for such kinds of news. In ETV selection of news is done in command when officials from different departments like from finance department in the media come to the newsroom and order us to shape or to select news according to their interest.

From the above passage it is possible to infer that the selection of news in ETV is based not on audience interest. Rather, news is selected if it aligns with the interest of the government. Journalists are selecting news not according to the principles of journalism, but on the basis of their boss. Journalists are working to please their overseers not the public at large. The extracted text also indicates as there is a pressure on journalists on news selection. Journalists are not free to select their own news something that may benefit people. It is also possible to understand from the passage that news is valueless if it negatively raises the name of government officials at different levels. This means the media is working to build the good image of the government by hiding the negative coverage, even if it is true information that the public has the right to know. This runs in direct opposition with Kovach and Rosenstein, 2001 “Principles of Journalism” which say journalism’s first obligation is to the truth and public’s right to information.

On the same question, (ETV’s criteria of news selection) informant 6 and informant 5 share common ideas. Their responses have been presented below respectively.

Above all, our primary objective is to achieve successful implementation of the strategic plan of our country, which intern is the basic for the choice of news. Though ETV is responsible for the house of people’s representative, it works to implement the strategy and policies of government. Currently, our focus is playing decisive role in implementing the five years Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) through selected news that relates and supports the plan.

The major criterion is the focus on the advantage that the news has to deliver to our country, I mean, based on the value of the news in alleviating poverty and promoting democracy. In order to achieve the goal, our purpose is providing information that plays a role in this regard. So, most of the news is chosen if it has any relevance in dealing with the success of our country. Similarly, when we take news from the international news agency like BBC, we take into consideration the

benefit of the news towards our country. No matter the source of the news, we can reject news that ruins the image of our country. For example: Britanians' news agency, BBC doesn't work against demolishing the reputation of British and the same works for ETV. We try to attract investors from different parts of the world to come and invest in Ethiopia, success stories help to build a better image in creating good reputation for the country. Whether we like it or not news plays the major share in creating awareness for attracting investors from all over the world by building the image of our country. What defined Ethiopia as a poor country still today is the poverty that had happened in Ethiopia (the 1977 E.C)

The responses of the two informants above serve as evidence for ETV's criteria for news selection. ETV focused on the value of the news in contributing its role in the process of the development the country began. The findings show that ETV selection of news is based on the role the government is playing in development. Moreover, sources of the news are used only if they shed light on the positive developments of the country. This means the activities of the government, in the development aspect are prioritized by ETV. Generally, the angle of news selection in ETV is from government interest point of view, not from the public's interest.

#### **4.4 Source Considerations in ETV**

In chapter two, it was indicated as there are a number of factors journalists take into account when selecting sources in their news production. Gans (2004) identifies six major source considerations: past suitability, productivity, reliability, trustworthiness, authoritativeness and articulateness. Based on this, as the study in the above table indicated ETV journalists' sources and speakers of the news were found to be government sources and officials of government at different levels. One of the most basic questions about the value of a work of journalism is the nature of its sourcing. How deep is the sourcing, what are the ranges of views offered, and to what extent can the audience decide for itself what to think about the story? These are the essential elements in trying to assess the quality of reporting (Annual report on American

journalism, 2005). One of the ways in which the quality of reporting can be seen is when a story is taken from various sources. The value of a work of journalism is seen when different views are entertained by different sources. From the news stories conducted by ETV staff reporters, a majority of them are derived from the speech of government officials at different levels. Official sources, such as government officials are often preferred by journalists, not only because they are more easily accessible for interviews but also because journalists and their editors believe that official sources have important things to say (Paletz and Entman, 1981). Therefore, interviewing an official source makes journalists' jobs efficient by concentrating on individuals with important things to say and by eliminating the need to double and triple check facts (Hackett, 1985). Journalists gave a little emphasis to the other sources. Information was presented from the angle of the government officials. Informant 2 said the following in reference to claims that certain sources are given special priority in ETV's stories: 'This is because we are serving government and giving special priority for government sources. When a certain event is organized, our known reporting culture is to cover the statement made by a certain government official using people as background information provider. So, for us a big news value is the statement given by government official'. As this extract shows, the journalists of ETV are giving special attention to the speech of government officials. Information reliant on the public or different community members is regarded as supplementary

Regarding the criteria of ETV's news source selection, the following informants had the following to say:

**Informant 3:** As much as we can, we see all available sources, but we select and use them thoroughly with great attention. We make use of those sources that go with government plan and reject the ones which opposes the strategy of the ruling party.

**Informant 4:** Our premium focus is not on the source. We look if the news is concerned with our country's development, and the role the news plays in keeping the national interest. This is the angle from which we approach the source. With regard to international sources like Reuters, CCTV and others, we do not directly copy and use them; thoroughly investigation will be made for the impact after we broadcast to the large public.

**Informant 1:** ETV uses every available source. The criteria is not the source, but what the content of news is the focus. If the news negatively affects the attitude that the public has towards government, it won't be accepted. If the news focuses on building the reputation of the government, without considering the source of the news, it will be accepted and transmitted.

The excerpts show that ETV is not playing the watchdog role of journalism, but rather is acting as an exhibition for positive portrayal of the government. Other viewpoints are simply rejected. This means news is presented in ETV the way it serves the government. This diminishes the big principle of journalism: 'journalism's loyalty is to citizens and it must serve as an independent monitor of power'. In contrast with these principles of journalism, ETV's primary practice, its loyalty is to government because those who received coverage on the channel are the government officials at different positions, rather than the citizens. It is the government who is monitoring the media, not the media is monitoring the government.

From the three key informants above it is also possible to understand that ETV's criteria for news source selection is based on the content of the news rather than where the news came from. Whatever the source is if the news focuses on the positive development or constructive actions of the government, it has the chance to be covered. If not, whatever the source, coverage cannot be given. This indicates that ETV is playing its role in presenting daily the good side of the government where as it is rejecting the other sides of the story. It is possible to relate the above arguments with what Moloney (200:65) said in chapter two. He argues that a public relations is about power and manipulation against democracy because it is so often used to support

government and commercial interests at the expense of other interests. Generally, in ETV, institutionally affiliated sources typically dominate news discourses. As a result, news comes to reflect government interests. Herman and Chomsky (1988:23) stress the symbiotic relationship between journalists and agents of power. Preferred meanings that are structured into news discourses are overwhelmingly 'those that are functional for elites'. As a result in ETV, sources playing to the interests of the government are favored and dominated while other sources were ignored.

#### **4.5 Qualitative Content Analysis of Selected News Stories**

Qualitative content analysis deals with analysis and interpretations of the themes of the categorized titles, tones, and with the analysis of news coverage. The identification of themes was conducted as Rice and Ezzy (1999:258) says through 'careful reading and re-reading of the data'. It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis. Different researchers might implement content analysis differently. Based on the framework of qualitative analytical procedures developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), Romanowski (2009) outlined the common strategies of qualitative content analysis as follows: (a) The researcher carefully examine the textual data and takes notes; (b) The researcher performs data reduction by selecting, focusing, and condensing the data in the way that could best answer the research questions; (c) The researcher organizes, arranges and displays the condensed data. Based on the display, the researcher identifies themes, patterns, connections, and omissions that could help answer the research questions. Further, quotations might be listed for supporting the themes and inter-connections among the themes. If necessary, categories could be added, deleted, and revised to maximize mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness; and (d) The

researcher revisits the data many times in order to verify, test, or confirm the themes and patterns identified.

Accordingly, dominant themes were developed from the sampled news stories of the prime time news (December, January, February i.e. the news stories taken from the first two weeks from each months). Thus, based on the gathered data, the researcher puts the news content under two big umbrellas: Social issues news and political news. The categories of social issues news include health, transportation, water and sanitation, education, agriculture, and industrial coverage. Whereas, corruption, democracy and good governance, speeches of different officials and organizations and Ethiopia's external relations news stories were categorized and analyzed under the political news umbrella. So, the central ideas of the news in relation with the categories were discussed. The tone of news signifies news which criticizes or supports government or neutral to anybody. The news coverage signifies how the media prioritize and cover specific issues or events as opposed to others. By and large, this approach is crucial in answering the major research question of the study- 'To what extent ETV is practicing journalism?'. The analysis was done using the extracts taken from the sampled news stories and interviews concomitantly.

## **4.5.1 Themes of News Content**

### **4.5.1.1 Social Issues News**

Most ETV news of this category focuses on success stories. They deal with what the ruling party has done in every sector in the country. As informant 4 of the study said 'ETV focuses on Development Journalism (DJ). However, the concept of DJ is misperceived by government.' According to Hermant Shaw (1990:1035) development news should examine critically, evaluate

and interpret the relevance of development plans, projects, problems and issues. It should indicate the disparities between plans and actual accomplishments. Based on this, the practice of DJ in ETV is in contrary with the argument of Shaw outlined above. Most of the news stories of different projects of social services deal with the final results not on the process of the projects. Some of the news was presented in the following ways.

A project of clean drinking water which benefits more than 100,000 refugees was inaugurated in Dolo Ado Refugee Camp, located in Somali region. It is also reported that the relief delivered by the Ethiopian government to the Somali refugees displaced by the internal troubled caused by insurgents of Alshabab, and it is also creates strong bond between the two countries' people. (February 03, 2013)

Clean drinking water centers developed in more than birr 26 million have started delivery of service in East Wolega Zone as of last year. Hence, more than 200,000 people turned out to be beneficiary of clean drinking water. Like the explanation of the zone's water and minerals office, in the current budget year, various activities also carried out to enhance the coverage of clean drinking water in the zone, in birr 30 million. (February 12, 2013)

The excerpts above reflect coverage of two government-sponsored projects and their inaugural ceremonies. They detail how the projects solved the problem of clean drinking water in certain regions. And yet the report didn't give even the smallest glimpse of the problems project leaders encountered as the work was under way. Background information about the projects; the ups and downs that took place while the projects were in progress was not reported. However, the main intention of the news is to show as the government gave emphasis on society's problem. Journalists of the media cover only the positive aspects of the development activity that is taking place and leave aside the critical stories related to the projects. Scholars like Salter (2005) argues that what journalists are supposed to do are not only cover what happened, but also to show the progression of the event in question for their audiences. In line with this, the researcher asked the key informants whether or not they cover a critical story.

**Informant 1** stated: we don't cover it for the reason that the government believes as it is working for the public; construction of new roads, clean drinking water projects and others are really the service that the government is providing for its public. Conversely, we do not have the clout to inspect those things whether they are accomplished within the given time with appropriate utilization of the budget or maintaining their standards. What is more, we cannot cover the public complaints regarding the projects because we know that it is not permitted to give coverage for such critical issues.

Here, it is possible to understand that journalists are simply covering the constructive actions of the government and even they pass over critical things even if they come across due to lack of journalistic independence. They are acting as the mouth piece for the government. When journalists cover critical development news, legal and economic security of the journalists should be ensured. Otherwise the risk of a government-loyal development journalist emerges (Edeani 1993:131)-ultimately, this journalism can contribute to the stabilization of unjust power structures and become a servant of governments. This causes to occur what Herman Chomsky says 'media serve political ends' by mobilizing bias, patterning news choices, marginalizing dissent, by allowing 'the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public (1988:2).

On similar note, in ETV it is routinely mentioned that as the country is on rapid development stage from sub-Saharan African countries, but not many details are given about the process of the development. Here is one of the news stories that deal with this issue:

The ministry of finance and economy has announced that the execution of the two years growth and transformation plan was 10% in average. The minister also explained that the activities to be executed in the coming three years shall be a two digit growth. The economic growth has shown significant change as of 2003. Hence, in the past nine consecutive years, the country has attained economic growth of 11%, like the deputy minister Dr. Abraham Tekest's explanation. Since the implementation of the 5 years GTP commenced, the execution of the growth plan for the past years has been 10% in average. The growth, the industrial sector 13.6% and the service rendering sector 11.1% as per the explanation of the deputy

minister, the growth domestic product of Ethiopia has reached 7%, which is birr 37 billion. The amount of investment also has shown a rise of 34.6% in 2004 in comparison with 27.9 in 2003. Income per capita of citizens also has shown a rise of 513 US dollar in 2004 in comparison with 338 US dollar in 2003. (February 04, 2013)

The above selected news stories would imply that the country is on sustainable growth; as the growth is achieved in different sectors i.e. in agriculture, industry and service rendering sectors. It simply implies the government continuous effort in all sectors. From the text it is impossible to refer views other than the central idea of the text which worship the government role for the growth of different sectors. The text didn't incorporate views from different bodies only the government official view is reflected in the text. MaCnamara (1999:6) explains that PRs had its birth in the Press Agency Model, which focused on publicity (good or bad) from a very one-sided point of view. Scholars like Hatchen (1998:37) attaches Paramount importance to the diversity of views that are reflected through news. Conversely, most of the news stories of ETV present-ideas from one point of view where government officials dominate the media and news presented in the direction desired by the government. Similarly, the preferred meanings that are structured into news discourse are typically 'those that are functional for elites (Herman and Chomsky; 1988:23). So, most ETV development news was presented from one side in so far as it builds a good name for the government.

The followings are news stories reflecting the issues outlined above.

Farmers of Elubabor turned out to be beneficiary from the spices and coffee they grow on their farm land. The farmers also explained that the support delivered by agriculture professionals has made them successful. (December 09, 2012)

The central statistic agency has announced that the inflation in the country has declined to 12.9% in comparison with the Hidar month 15.8%. According to the explanation of the agency, which is based on the country's 129 market centers, and to be announced on monthly basis, the inflation has witnessed a declination

with 30% within one month only. It is believed that the figure indicates the government's effort to bring the inflation down to one digit. (January 10, 2013)

If one examines critically the two extracted news stories above, their central idea rests upon the crucial efforts of government in increasing the produce of farmers in agriculture and in decreasing the inflation rate in the country respectively. They appeared on the media because they build a support of the public for government. Such kind of coverage is given in almost in all sampled news stories.

It is also possible to take and see the theme of a sample of news that deals with health related issues. The news runs as follows:

In the past 10 years, Ethiopia has managed to decrease the infant death in the country in 47%. The health service installed at every level has played a vital role for the attained result. The death of infants who passed away before the age of 5 years has also declined in 47%. As per the official announcement of the UN, in the year 2000GC, 166 infants out of 1000 live born babies were exposed to death. Nevertheless, currently the number has declined to 77. The expansion and installation of health care institutions in every area has contributed a vital role. The result attained by the country regarding the declination of the number of infant death, the representative of UNICEF-Ethiopia Dr. Piter's explanation, it is a very swift progress when considered internationally. (February 06, 2013)

As the above news story shows, the coverage of the news is all about the decline of infant mortality in the country. It portrays the government attention to reducing the rate of infant mortality rate in Ethiopia, as the numbers dropped dramatically. The report also reveals as the improvement is recognized by international organizations like UN and UNICEF. However, the main intent of the news story is to show the government's activity in increasing the coverage of the health service that benefits the public. Giving coverage for such stories helps the ruling party to acknowledge itself in front of the public and other organizations found internationally. This

reflects the practice of PRs in order to create and maintain favorable relations between organization and the public in various forms of media as Sandia and Simolin (2006) reflect. Thus, though few news stories are extracted in this section, the majority of news reflects the same theme as discussed so far. The study by Terje Skjerdal (2009) on how development journalism is practiced in Ethiopian media institutions corroborates this finding. It revealed as the Ethiopian media institutions neglect critical stories, avoid oppositional voices and hide information from the public. Every story published either in print media or broadcast media is about the positive role of the government. It is tough to see a critical or investigative story which is designed to act as a watchdog over the government. This shows as journalists are there to serve the interest of the government against that of the large public. Therefore, it can be concluded that ETV largely focuses on development news and the theme for the majority of the news is centered to build the good images of the government and void of critical reporting in general.

#### **4.5.1.2 Political News**

In ETV, political news stories were presented in a manner that embellished the actions of the ruling government. The news stories were presented to exhibit the strength of the ruling party and its contribution in the development activity of the country. It seems that what Herman argues for a 'propaganda model' of journalistic production, to analyze the numerous and important cases where the mass media serve as instruments in campaigns of ideological mobilization (Herman and Chomsky 1988:175). Below is some of the news:

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn explained that Ethiopia is currently established on soiled foundation of peace, as well as the EPRDF government is a government of development, and the people of the country are also peace loving. In the aftermath of the passing away of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, some parties have reflected suggestions that the development activities will come to a halt, a suggestion which failed to take the governing party's and the

development governments institutional strengthens, as well as the diligence and peace loving people of Ethiopia into consideration. (December.02, 2012)

Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP) marks its 13<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary in Logia and Avira towns. Regional chiefs and party chairman took note that the public in the state are benefiting from fruits of development happening in the country. The party has taken massive activities in combating, progressing and improving the livelihood of pastoralists. (December 05, 2012)

In ETV, whatever the issue is, in one way or another the news can be related with the development and growth of the country. The following news stories illustrate this:

Ethiopia is elected to host the 2013 Africa and European Union parliaments' combination assembly. The speaker of house of people's representatives, Mr. Aba Dula Gemeda explained that Ethiopia was elected as a host country due to its significant role throughout Africa and other areas. 13 countries in the zone also delivered their support to Ethiopia's election. Like the speaker explained, the election was made in consideration of the current peace and security, as well as the development activity in the country. (January, 03, 2013)

Members of AEDM in Addis Ababa have announced that they strive to ensure and hasten the country's renaissance and to sustain the results of development activities in the country, through good governance. The 32th anniversary of AEDM was celebrated in Addis Ababa under the name of 'Operation Meles for Growth and Green Development'. As per the explanation of the ministry of trade attended the celebration, AEDM has executed a number of activities to ensure the benefit of the people. (December 01, 2012)

Mr. Ali Suleman, commissioner of the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, was elected as the advisory member of board for the anti-corruption commission of African Union. It is announced that the election of Mr. Ali a proof that the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission is carrying out encouraging and producing activities, as well as it is an indicator that Ethiopia has a solid anti-corruption stand. (February 06, 2013)

One can discover the same theme for the texts above though the issues in question are different. The texts worship the development activity that is taking place in the country. The texts illustrate the ideology of ETV, which is pursuing Development Journalism. As one of the informants of the study revealed so far as the notion of development journalism is misinterpreted in the

country, the main purpose of ETV is heralding the success of the country in different aspects by hiding critical stories that may hamper the country's image. It is the government that can benefit when the country is portrayed in positive way. Whatever the event is in ETV, what can be raised on the event is obvious because they all relate with the success of the country economically, politically and socially. Government uses events or occasions to bring to light the validity of its work so as to influence others. And the above texts reflect this notion.

In the following news stories, the speeches of different organizations and individuals were incorporated in a manner representative of the development activity taking place in Ethiopia.

World Bank announced that the growth attained by Ethiopia in the past nine successive years is a double fold in comparison with other sub-Saharan countries. The bank also announced that the growth enables more than 2.5 million citizens to break free from poverty. (December, 13, 2012)

The European Union member states ambassadors explained that the union appreciates the fast growth secured by Ethiopia in every sector. It is reported that service delivery of health care centers situated in Benishangul Gumuz has shown progress from time to time. (December 13, 2012)

Japanese Professor Turtu Shih explained that Ethiopia is in the right trajectory of development. As per the explanation of the professor, Ethiopia is one of the African countries in the middle of better industrial growth, and country with the appropriate industrial development. (December, 11, 2012)

Like the news stories discussed so far, the above news stories which incorporate speeches of different bodies deal with the same core point as before though they came from different bodies. They all deal with the economic growth of the country. These show the news stories that were given coverage in ETV are those that deal only with the progress of the country. The researcher doesn't find news critical of government in this regard. So, it is possible to conclude that ETV doesn't give coverage for speeches or reports of international or individual that is critical to government. An informant of the study said 'BBC doesn't work to ruin its country's image, ETV

too' (informant 5). As informants of the study, ETV doesn't give coverage for either internal or external sources that are critical to the national interest.

When we look at some news stories which deal with the constitution of the country, it is possible to discover its interior as of the subsequent demeanor.

The announcement is made that various opposition forces have entered in the city of Addis Ababa pursuant to the peace call made by the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to various insurgents and territories groups. An opposition/insurgent group namely AL-ATHAD has accepted the call of the Ethiopian government to peace and development, and commenced taking part in the development activities exerted in Somali region. The AL-ATHAD insurgent group has also accepted the peace process carried under Kenya's negotiator role, which was commenced by the great Ethiopian leader, the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The anti constitution forces are not acceptable any more in Ogaden. They have a very limited support in the region. The Somali region, which is benefited from the system of the Federalism, has started to administer its affairs like other regions, hence, the anti peace forces has joined the mainstream. (December, 02, 2012)

The above news story seems to suggest that the FDRE government is the peace loving and development-centered government and shows as the system of federalism is the fruitful system of governance. This builds good name for the ruling party. In line with the above context, the following sound bite by the Deputy Spoken Person of the House of People's Representatives followed by the news story broadcast on December 07, 2012 corroborate what has been said above.

The people of the country are becoming beneficiary in economic and political aspects due to the ratification of our constitution after steadfast process and its implementation has played a significant role for the overall positive direction of the country and the economic growth, which is astonishing to the whole world. Due to each nation and nationality was emancipated by the constitution, and each ethnic group has equivalent right and freedom, they carry out their education in schools in their own language, as well as in court of laws. Thus, the constitution is a source of pride and beneficiary to the people.

The head of Harreri region administration explained that the constitution is fundamental and base for the journey of the renaissance of the country. Like the explanation of the head of the region, Ethiopia has managed to attain successive economic growth as of the time it has started following the constitutional system. In the future, as per his explanation, it is important to ensure the renaissance of Ethiopia through policies and strategies designed by the great leader Mr. Meles Zenawi. (February 11, 2013)

As can be deduced, every government officials rejoices in the ratification of the FDRE constitution. They all celebrate as the implementation of the current constitution in the country, apparently, have paved a way for national renaissance of the country and have given equal rights to all people of Ethiopia. Within the sampled news stories, the way most news stories were presented especially with regard to the constitution is to capture the attitude of the audiences; the researcher couldn't find any story that damages government's image and most of them were presented from the angle of the opportunity that the constitution created for people of the country. So, the political theme revealed that most news stories of this category were centered on presenting government in most positive way.

#### **4.5.2 News coverage**

The foundation of journalism is the desire to serve the general public interest and to act as a check and balance on society and government. As communication policy scholar Robert Horwith (2005) has written, "The public interest in broadcasting was translated to mean the presentation of diverse viewpoints-a general balance of programming-and equitable treatment of political candidates". If we take a look at some selected news stories, the majority of the reporting in question deals with government interest news because it is framed in the way that lauds the actions of the government. Here is one of the selected news stories.

The Ministry of Agriculture announced that the model farmers in all areas have increased their produce through using fertilizers such as Urea, Dap and Potassium on their farm. (February, 12, 2013)

As can be inferred from the above excerpt, the model farmers increased their produce due to the government support paid to agriculture sector. The aim of the bulletin is to show the government role in increasing the production output of farmers. So, this builds the government's good image in front of the audiences.

The Silte Zone trade and industry department explained that it has rendering training for more than 400 small and micro finance enterprises. It is also delivering various enhancement trainings. It is believed that the training could tackle the problem of joblessness in the region as well as to strengthen the enterprises. (January 14, 2013)

Southern Gondar farmers who sow in the method of line sowing explained that they have achieved the produce of more than 40 quintal per hectare. They explained that the technology has helped them to increase their produce in double fold. (February 07, 2013)

These extracts aptly demonstrate the role of government in decreasing the problem of joblessness and increasing the output of farmers by equipping them with modern technology. So, the extracts are more beneficial for government rather than for the public's. They build a good name for government. Moloney (2000:65) argues that PRs is often used to support the government interest at the expense of other interests. The excerpts given above also reveal the interest of the government because it has a little to do or to serve the interest of the public. With regard to this problem, the researcher asked the informants 'to which issue (public/government) do ETV's media professionals give priority in their coverage? The informants responded as follows:

**Informant 4:** Exceptional coverage is given for government related issues. There is a rationale for this, Most of the time we collect '*Tikoma*' (*lead*) from different sources. The *Tikoma(lead)* is based on government plans. There is an

extraordinary case in which we collect news based on our own plans because we are not permitted to do so. This hinders us to leave the public's interest; news stories which deal with different problems of society will not be discovered. This doesn't mean that ETV doesn't give treatment on public related issues, but it is given less focus when we weigh against the government.

This argument substantiates the themes discussed within the extracts above. The main reason why most of ETV's news stories resemble public relations work is that reporters depend on events that the government prepares. This means that ETV is serving the governments' interest at the expense of the public. Journalists have the responsibility to serve the public's best interest. It is rare to see stories critical of the events. The majority of the reporting at ETV focuses on copying the speeches of government officials without critically analyzing them. Thus, it is difficult to see in ETV when journalists produce news based on their professional judgment and creativity. This displays the manner in which media cover the speeches of government officials in order to manipulate public attention. Bernays (1955) provided a seminal view of public relations, defining it as "the attempt, by information, persuasion and adjustment, to engineer public support for an activity". The journalist is considered to be the independent source of information, and it is believed that the information provided by the journalist is free of any manipulation, exaggeration, and nepotism. The following news story shows how reporters at ETV transcribe the speech of government officials without critical analysis.

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn has announced that most of vast projects in the country are executed in line with the set forth plan. As per the explanation of the prime ministers, Ethiopia is in the right trajectory of growth. The country's economy is also expected to show a rise of more than 11% in the current budget year, like the prime minister explanation. He is also explained that it is obvious that as the country is known in agricultural sector, our produce of agriculture is increasing from time to time. Farmers training centers were established and various efforts were made to enable the farmers. With regard to the industrial sector, various industrial zones were established. (January 01, 2013)

The above text serves as evidence that ETV's reporters focus their full attention on the speeches of government officials. Viewers are hard-pressed to see a sentence critically analyzing the problems of the country. All of the coverage deals with what government is doing and has done to improve the country. ETV's reporters focus on government speech and the achievement of Ethiopia's ruling party. It is thus rare to see diversified coverage in ETV's news programming because most of the news stories depend up on the government's agenda. In line with this view, the researcher asked whether ETV's coverage reflects attention to the public interest.

**Informant 3:** Substantiates what is said above in the following manner:

In ETV it is not the public that can be seen; it is the government officials that speak and seen on media most frequently. To me, I don't think that ETV is giving a chance for the public to transmit their voices in the way it should be. It is the government plan that the station is reflecting. This means, to me, a kind of propaganda. *Justify why ETV reflects government plans/interests at the expense of the other.* The informant said: we are under pressure of our bosses; so we don't have the power to use the journalistic independence.

From the above excerpt, it is again apparent that reporters from ETV focus on the speech and actions of government officials because of the institutional pressure weighed upon them. There is a 'systematic and highly political dichotomization in news coverage that is based on serviceability to important domestic power interests' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:35). Similarly, most news coverage of ETV aligns with the interests of the government. Danny (2000), proffers that the job of journalism is to provide service for the larger publics by uncovering truth that otherwise hidden. From here it can be deduced that journalists are a vital source of information for society. The service to the public involves revealing necessary information of which average citizens may not be aware.

Some news stories that appeared in ETV served little value to the public. Rather, they lauded the achievements of government for the purpose of constructing a positive image. The following news broadcast on January 02, 2013 deals with this issue.

It is announced that the utilization of technological inputs for farmers has increased in 2005 in comparison with the year 2004. Pursuant to the forecast the national statistical agency, the produce secured in the year 2004 was 218 million quintal. As per the current year research of the national statistical agency, it has forecasted 229 million quintal produce will be attained. According to the announcement made by the ministry of agriculture, the produce is increased due to the agricultural inputs have progressed. The other reason for the increase of the produce is wide utilization of technologies and new methods of implementation.

Thus, according to the researcher, the aim of the above text is to show the sustainable effort of the government to increase the production output of farmers by providing agricultural inputs. It is thus obvious why the news is broadcast in such a manner. Based on the text, it is due to the fact that the inputs have increased which have increased farmers produce. This has something to do with government's image. Riaz (2008) contends that the increase in the news coverage is thought to bring about an increase in the salience of particular issues or events. Journalists are required to "Report and interpret honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts" (Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance 2012). One can from the excerpt above, deduce that ETV values government interest news stories above all other types of news. It covers issues of the government. The media are there to serve the government at the expense of the interest of the large public. As the media products showed and confirmed by most informants of the study, journalism practice of ETV seems PRs of the government. It is possible to say that most stories of the media product build the image of the government. From this point of view, it is possible for somebody to bring to a close this media institution as PRs organization. This is

where the media role in building democracy and in reflecting diversified views would stop working.

### **4.5.3 Tone of the News**

McCombs (2000) argued that the content of mass media messages including the tone of the messages influence the pictures of the world in our minds. The news coverage of ETV lacks critical reporting. Though there are hardly negative stories in the media's news coverage, they deal with how the government is playing its own role to alleviate the problems or how the government solved the problem. Besides, the news stories are presented as the problems occurred due to other bodies not due to the negligence of the government. The news stories excerpted below justify this claim:

The Gedo Bako Nekemt road construction project's delay has created serious and negative influences on their day to day activity, as per the explanation of the dwellers of the area and road users. The Ethiopian roads authority also explained that the problem is created by the contractor, which is in charge of the construction of the road. According to the explanation of the authority, possible effort will be made to finalize the construction of the road. (January, 09, 2013)

As can be seen from the extracted text above, though it deals with the problem residents of the area are facing, the blame is placed on an entity other than the government. The passage displays how ETV provides very scant coverage for potentially critical stories. It is the way it not negatively affects the government.

From the sampled news stories, almost all of the news deals with positive actions of the government. The news celebrates and appreciates the progress and development in the country in different sectors. What the researcher observed in the news coverage of ETV is that the network

prefers to cover the problems of society, whether they involve scarce access to clean drinking water or transportation-related issues, after the problem is solved by government. There is no evidence of the network detailing the complaints of society before the project had been started.

The following news story further illustrates this problem:

The administration of Hosana town has announced that different investors with capital of birr 1.5 billion have contributed significant role to the town's growth. The dwellers of the town also explained that as the project of clean drinking water commenced its service, the problem of drinking water is tackled. According to their explanation, they used to get clean drinking water once in 3 days. Nonetheless, the project carried out in birr 120 million has sorted out the problem of drinking water. The lack of drinking water also discouraged the investors to invest in the town previously. As the explanation of the Hosana municipality, the completion of the project will sort out the problems once and for all. The current investment activity also will be improved. (December, 09, 2012)

It is possible to understand from the above news story that the government solved the problem that the area residents encountered. Maybe it hasn't been given any coverage about this problem before the problem overcame. From this excerpt, it is easy to conclude that ETV as a media network follows and reports on governmental progress rather than revealing the problems Ethiopians face. Such kind of coverage is not in the interest of the society. The public does not benefit if reports of such issues are filed after the problem is solved. This type of coverage benefits the government in molding the attitudes of society members by displaying positive actions of the government in media. The mass media are instruments of power that mobilize support for the special interests dominating state and private activity (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: Xi). PR academics similarly claim (Bernays and Goldman and others) that PR has served as a type of manipulative communication in the vast majority of its practice.

One can thus conclude that ETV is providing coverage for the stories of most positive tone which vaguely resemble development journalism in their content. This refers to the absence of

critical reporting, which may have affected the attitudes of people to government in ETV. This calls to question whether ETV is really practicing journalism. So, government is using the media as a means to control and shape the public's attitude for the purpose of building good name.

The researcher questioned the informants of the study on how they cover critical stories in their news reporting. Their comments are displayed below:

**Informant 1:** in the first place, to do a critical reporting you need to have journalistic independence. And when follows you need to select news and source of the news by yourself. However, in ETV both news and its sources are selected by our bosses who are parts of the government. The source we contact is also parts of the government. So, there is no way in ETV to do critical reporting. Sometimes when you bring critical news, they can edit it the way they want it.

**Informant 2:** though it is rare, we cover critical reporting, but neither in-depth nor the way the name of government officials are negatively raised.

The arguments offered by the informants reflect the issues plaguing the stories discussed so far. In ETV though, sometimes critical reporting is given coverage, but they are not the way the government name is mentioned negatively. This shows as the media is working or giving coverage for news story which doesn't affect any government officials. This means ETV is serving the interest of the government rather than focusing on the problem of the society. It is clear to infer also that there are external pressures on journalists not to engage on investigative reporting.

Generally, the findings reveal that ETV gives more coverage from the government interest's news stories. As a result most portraits of ETV are deal with positive tone which is concerned with success and development stories. In contrary, the investigative responsibility of media is disregarded in ETV.

## 4.6 The Differences between Journalism and Public Relations

It is possible to say that all of the key informants of the study clearly defined the discrepancies between journalism and public relations as defined and discussed under chapter two. The researcher was unable to find any disagreement or differing opinions among the respondents of the study in differentiating the two professions in the clearest way. The following response of only one informant is taken as a representative or sample of the others informants of the researcher's study.

**Informant 5:** Public relations focus on only the success of the organization. By any means you cannot get negative information from PRs. Even if you raised by yourself he/she will tell you the means they have used to solve the problems. They show you the capacity they have in solving problems. So, they are there in the organization to make you believe the positive aspect of their organization.

On the other hand, purpose of journalism is informing the public to reveal information that is important, however it is done hidden from public. Unlike PRs, journalism doesn't take side in order to support one group and reject the others and to act as watchdog over the government and to serve the interest of the public.

As can be seen above, the informants of the study can tell apart the professions in the same way the scholars of media define it. 'As a journalist, my inclination is to say the similarity stops here. Journalism does indeed attempt to describe the world as it is, not as people wish it to be. It is to be a witness to the world, and tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth whereas the profession of PRs is quite different (Jenkins, 2006:45). Hypothetically, the media practitioners can understand the differences between journalism and PRs. However, when it is seen in a matter-of-fact sense, it is difficult to say that media practitioners plant demarcation on the differences between the two professions. This happens as a result of the pressures on reporters. As discussed so far in this study, journalists in Ethiopia are servants of the government. They do

not have the power to opt for their own news and source of the news. They depend up on the government officials and PRs sources. At the same time the informants told the researcher as it is not easy to verify information of the PRs or other government officials.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that though ETV's media practitioners display the discrepancies between the two professions, they do not have the power to crosscheck information of the public relations officials because PRs are part of the government. That is why in ETV, a majority of the news resembles the testimony of PRs because stories are presented in a manner that serves the interests of the government. Not only the information that they get from PRs but also the news stories produced by the media's reporter reflects the positive actions of the government in most cases due to the fact that journalists are under the control of their bosses. The PM's 'The Five Filters' provide a basis for the general argument that the news which is deemed 'fit to print' will overwhelmingly be that which is politically and ideologically advantageous to the interests of power ( Chomsky:1989).

The researcher asked why ETV reporters cover news in a manner that builds the government reputation and neglects a majority of critical stories, despite being aware of the differences between journalism and public relations. Almost all of the informants provided the same response. They said they are under dearth of journalistic independence and yet every one of their activities is managed by government-assigned bosses. One informant (informant 5), declared that 'it is the fear of the journalists themselves who neglect to cover critical stories not the government. Most importantly the experienced culture of work has shaped the journalists.'

To conclude, ETV's manner of practicing journalism resembles PRs functions in building the good image of the ruling party not due to the lack of knowledge from the media practitioner's

side, but rather due to the working culture the media has established and the overarching pressure from the government.

## 4.7 Factors Affecting Journalists News and Source Selection

As mentioned already, news and sources are two major factors in journalism. The researcher believes that in order to properly analyze the practice of journalism at ETV, it is crucial to see the news and source selection of ETV. At the same time the study on factors that affect the selection process is important too.

Weaver (1998) argues that reporters work can only thrive and flourish in a society that protects its media from censorship and in a company that saves its journalists from the marketers. A majority of the informants have pointed out that they have different challenges on selection of their own news and sources based on journalistic principles. The extract below illustrates this:

**Informant 1:** There are lots of challenges we face. We can't run a story which we believe serve the interests of the public. We are framed according to the plan of government. Since the government plan is focus on development story, we are doing the same. We don't have the power to deal with critical story. Our boss gives us direction on what kinds of story should we focus or not. Even there are times when our editors cut out the core point of the news when we bring newsworthy issues to the newsroom. Most of the time, this happens due to the lack of adequate knowledge from our editors. Most of our editors are people who are not from journalism background and their working experience is below acceptable. They are given the position as a result of political affiliation. They cut the most important part of the news by assuming that it may ruin the image of the government which is not concerned with. So, the structure of the works like reporters, editors and editor in chief is given in our media institution not based on your journalism knowledge. This highly affected the news selection process inside ETV.

As can be inferred from the excerpt above, the big challenge for news selection is the lack of journalistic knowledge displayed by some media professionals. Those who are placed at different

positions in the media are selected according to their political affiliation, not for their knowledge of journalism. This means that those high up in media management give editors enough power only to serve the interest of the ruling party. In general, a lack of enough journalistic knowledge is hampering the profession; the government's role in appointing people of its interest at different positions is affecting the quality of journalism. As a result, most of the news stories were shaped to serve the government's interest.

With regard to the challenge on source selection, the same informant said:

Most of the time before we live the media, we receive order. Then we act as a "dispatch order" that is going to address or receive a message for and from somebody. There is no time in which we plan by ourselves to go wherever we want and do whatever we like. This means that we do not have the authority to select our own sources.

From this it can be determined that ETV has already established its source of news. That is why it sends its reporters to gather news to its own sources. This affects the diversity of views that certain news addresses and becomes what Paletz and Etman (1982) argue. They assert that use of official sources would result in homogeneity of reporting.

Informant 2 also eagerly described the challenge of news and source selection in the media as follows:

There are lots of interferences on our job from government. We are not independent in selecting our own news and sources. We are working as per the governments plan. So, it is the government decision that would take place in news and source selection.

Informant 5 (editor) expressed extremely negative opinions regarding the point of the above informants. He feels that "I allow reporters to select and gather news. I cannot impede them, and

others cannot interfere with my work. However, if it has a problem in damaging the image of our country, I will revise it.” This shows that journalists enjoy freedom of selecting their own news story as far as it doesn’t have a negative impact up on government. If they do, their bosses have the authority to interfere with their work; this implies indirectly what informant 1 and 2 said above.

ETV’s practice shows that the media practitioners are working to portray the government’s image positively. They act as image builders of the government due to the lack of editorial independence in their organization. As a result, they work as per the order of their bosses.

According to Gans (2004), while discharging lofty responsibilities, journalists use their power to determine what news story enters the symbolic arena. Dryly, MacManus (1954), Kovach (1990) and others claim that the move over the past ten years to ‘market driven journalism’ has fundamentally changed the daily role of journalists in making the news. The changes are characterized by a gradual and increasing lack of editorial independence within media organizations.

Almost all of the key informants of the study proved as it is so challenging to cover any critical stories on the government in ETV. The researcher asked the respondents to reason out their responses and said the following:

**Informant 1:** I do have about 23 years of work experience in ETV. All the way through these years, there is hardly any story which negatively disclose about the reputation of government or its official’s. I remember the report of my coworker about a certain government organization. He challenged the government officials of the organization and made the report accordingly. Another government official called to our media and then ordered a reprisal to be taken on the reporter. ETV made another report to do a piece on the reporter by labeling him as “*yegili tikim abarari*” which means as the one who runs for self-benefit. Those who are on management position in ETV also took their own punishment up on the reporter. This shows as there is no right to cover news which may negatively hurts one of

the government officials. If one of them is mentioned, it is taken as if all of them are damaged equally. So we keep our self refrained from doing the same activity.

The above extract revealed that journalists practice of self-censorship due to the pressures from government in selecting news story. This means that in order to survive within the profession of journalism, the journalists should work for the good name of the government. According to Solomon (2005:11), journalists practicing self-censorship often favor government authorities over other groups with different views in a number of ways. For instance, information could be suppressed in such ways as choosing safe-side, avoiding sensitive issues or giving responsibilities to faithful bosses, suppressing the stories in favor of politicians in power, giving emphasis for official speeches over other significant events and unquestioning the news worthiness of events where government authorities involve. It can be inferred from this that those journalists commit self-censorship serve the interest of those few people in government power. They become the activist of the government.

**Informant 6:** Sometimes we can do critical stories in ETV, but not in the way the name of government officials is negatively raised. For instance, last time, what we have seen on one Sugar Factory project called '*Tendaho Kasem*' project is too nauseating work when you see the finalized project in comparison with the allotted budget for the project. Here, it is the role of journalists to challenge the concerned body about the budget and the quality of the project. However, we had not done anything. I feel we should work hard, but it requires not only the media practitioner's commitment but also the political commitment leadership too.

What can be deduced from informant number six is that leaving out negative stories about the government is taken as a working culture within ETV. The culture in the newsroom is also one of the factors that affect news production process. As a result, journalists select stories which fit what has been said in editorial meeting. Underwood (1993) states that editors who need to allot

space in the news pages well in advance prefer stories that are predictable, and fit the preconceptions that have already been discussed in editorial meeting. As can be deduced from the above view, government pressures on media practitioners resulted in self-censorship. It can be argued that self-censorship became the culture of the news room. However, one informant said this from another angle:

**Informant 5:** in ETV, I don't think that there is a challenge on journalists not to cover critical stories. Journalists censor themselves. Nobody asks them if they do it by substantiating their data by different evidences. In ETV on "*Aynachin*" program, different problems of government official are raised and government takes its own judgment. What is more, on the program called "*Yegna Guday*", the same thing is done. On these programs, different people raise various problems of their social environment then the government takes remedial solutions for the problem. Generally, as far as my knowledge is concerned, the government doesn't order them do this and not to do that. However, the problem is on the media itself. The trend we have experienced doesn't allow us to do an investigative journalism. There is no brave journalist who breaks through and engages himself/herself on such activities. As far as the past trend continues, the same activity will continue.

According to the above response, the journalists have censored themselves due to the problems that had been in the media. The informant claims that there is no pressure on journalists currently. According to the informant, journalists are free to cover critical stories of their own, but the effect of the past trend brought self-censorship. The same informant blames the media as follows:

The problem is not from the government. Though ETV is working about critical stories on certain program as I told you earlier, on news, ETV should work hard in covering the problems of some government officials so that the other officials learn from them. This helps others to correct themselves. Covering such kinds of issues doesn't have any concern with government.

However, one informant has a point of conflict with the above argument.

**Informant 3:** In Ethiopia the problem is the way the meaning of development journalism is interpreted by government, which focus on success stories only. Almost all of the news deals with the positive actions of the government, in the production of news, those assigned in core positions of the media are assigned directly by government. These people work to keep the interest of the government. These people work to entertain the voices of the political elite. If there is a controversial point, they want to handle the issue by themselves. They do not allow and encourage journalists to do an investigative work and journalists are responsible to do what their boss orders them. There is no chance for journalists to cover critical stories even if they get the opportunity; they pass over such stories because we are looking journalists who are punished by their salary and other vigorous punishments. This is why ETV's tone of news is positive most of the time.

So, most of the informants do agree that due to the order they receive from their bosses, they are not able to focus on investigative reporting. The people on positions in ETV are assigned to serve the interest of the government. Due to this, journalists select stories that meet their bosses' expectations. What they do is to meet the interest of the government. Hence, in ETV journalists are not independent in selecting their own news and sources. Most news stories were presented from the government's point of view. As a result, the media practitioners engage in news stories that promote government positive image and ignore critical stories that may affect the government reputation.

When the researcher asked the informants how they verify information for their report, most of the informants make reference to their news sources. According to the respondents, most of ETV news is event oriented. Due to this, their sources are government officials and public relations officers. Since most of their sources are government bodies. So, they revealed as they do not attempt to verify these sources in view of the fact that they are safe sources in ETV.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) aver that the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from public relations or propaganda. Woolever (2002:44) also advises journalists to verify information they get from one source says “ Once you have the information in front of you, the next step is to decide if source is an appropriate” and he emphasizes that one sided nature of news which do not add the opposite, neutral views is poor argument or report. The informant of the study responded their verification system for their report in terms of the following.

**Informant 1:** Shares his extensive experience by saying:

Most of our news is based on government events. We go to the event and report what government has done. During this time, we get “*ready made*” information in which we need no investigation. For example, the event may be the inaugural ceremony of condominium, what you do this time is to report the statements made by the government officials. People you want to interview are also there who are pleased in getting the chance to live in this condominium. You cannot find people who raise grievances on the system of the lottery or who raise other complaints on government. Even you don’t have time to contact different bodies because of the deadline pressure. ETV doesn’t encourage us to make a report while the project was on progress. Our organization sends us to make a report only after the completion of the whole project. So, you don’t know the ups and downs that the project passed through. Even if you know the problems with the project, they do not allow you to make a report on it. You simply say the government has done this and that. Therefore, to me, in ETV there is no way for information verification especially if the info comes from government sources.

As the extract showed, it is possible to raise a number of reasons why ETV reporters often do not verify information, especially those of government officials. Firstly, due to the newsroom influence for deadlines. Because most of the news comes from government events, they copy what government officials said on the occasion. Secondly, government official sources are a safe story for most reporters. There is no need to verify if the information comes from government officials because they fit the agenda of the government and the media too. Thirdly, it is

challenging to make an attempt to verify government information. In regards to the third claim, another informant had the following to say:

Though we do have the interest of verifying information especially the statement of government officials, the way to do it is closed. Sometimes when you do it and come up with different perspectives, our editors reject and present only the good version. So, we don't have the power to verify government sources (informant 2).

Almost all of the respondents agree that because the majority of their sources are government bodies, they do not worry about crosschecking their information, and even neglect to do so to satisfy their bosses. Due to the fear implanted in journalists' minds, they do not crosscheck from other bodies even if they question the information provided by officials. Scholars like Hadland (2005) recommend that journalists crosscheck every fact. Ironically, ETV journalist's present information from one side as a result of the pressures weighed upon them. Independence is a major journalistic ethical foundation that should be given emphasis. This is due to the fact that credibility is very crucial for building the image of a given media group in the eye of the public. Kruger (2004:13) states, our credibility is massively affected by any perceived or real conflict of interest. We are unable to work if audiences discount our reporting because they see it as influenced by considerations outside of journalism, such as any personal, commercial or political motives.

Depending on the findings, it can be concluded that there are a lot of pressures affecting journalists' news and source selection in ETV. The journalists are not doing critical stories or investigative journalism. They act as the mouthpiece of the government. News can be selected and distributed only if it talks about the positive actions of the government. Even journalists are

neglecting to verify information because the source selection is done by the media and journalists lack independence.

## **4.8 The Impacts of Public Relations on Journalism**

Public relations has a stronger influence on the profession of journalism nowadays. Many studies in the past link the rise of PRs in relation to the government elite need to manage the public at times of difficult social transition (for instance, Tulloch 1993; Ewen 1996). It seems that the current activities of ETV fit well with this interpretation according to the interview with informant 1. The informant was asked to identify his or her criteria for selecting news. In response, the informant said, ‘we are servants of government. We act as a mouth of a government; we follow what government says and we select news based on government plans and contact sources that are part of the government like government PRs’.

This statement shows journalists are a critical component of government because their news and source selection process is based on the interest of the government. To serve the government interest, journalists use PRs officers of different organizations as their source since PRs are part of the government. Media scholars like Dennis L. Wilcox (2005:304) avows that PRs and journalists operate under a longstanding love-hate relationship as a result of the different roles the two professions play, despite the similarities in their content. However, the situation in ETV seems as this situation is in conflict with international trend. Asked to explain ETV’s media practitioner’s relations with different public relations officers, almost all of the respondents bring forth similar explanation.

**Informant 1:** We do have smooth relationship with PRs officers of all organizations. In ETV we have the phone number of all PR officers. We contact

them when we want them. We take information about that organization and use it for our report.

**Informant 4:** We do have a good relationship with PRs practitioners. However, the majority of news is produced by ETV reporters. PRs officers send huge amount of information to our media and we use them by adjusting it the way the information fits for broadcast news.

According to the arguments displayed above, ETV's reporters maintain good relationships with PRs officials. Most informants agreed that the main reason for the smooth relationship is due to the absence of investigative work in the news making process of the media and suggested as their work is to put the government in most positive light. The informants also weren't afraid to accept the idea that their relationship with PRs is unprofessional. It is discussed in chapter two that the two professions serve different purposes. A journalist's role in society is to provide information that serves the public interest (Dueze, 2005) whereas PR officials serve the interest of both their organization and its publics. However, they engage in serving the interest of their publics from the angle of their organization's interest. This means that PRs cannot serve the interest of the public like journalism because PR officers are hired to serve first the interest of their organization. So, it is possible to infer from the arguments of the two informants above that ETV uses PRs officials as one of their main sources of information. This has its own impacts on the practice of journalism. The researcher asked all respondents whether the use of PRs officials' information has an impact on the practice of journalism or not. All of the respondents agreed that the use of PRs as sources of information has negative impacts on journalism. In response, the informant claim "PRs has a big impact on journalism. So, when we use PRs as a source, the story we produce inclines to positive tone only because PRs doesn't focus on the deficiencies of their organization. The loyalty of journalism is to the public, but PRs officers are loyal to the

organization he/she is serving above all. So, using PRs as a source means threatening the purpose of journalism.” (Informant 6)

As can be seen from the argument above, the two professions are different. So, using PRs as a source means making the two professions similar and threatening journalistic integrity. According to the informant, the loyalty of journalism is to citizens, which is one of the principles of journalism. So, using PRs as a source means disturbing this principle. Another informant describes the impacts of PRs on journalism in the following way.

**Informant 2:** PRs hinders us from working investigative journalism. As a working culture, ETV reports the good only. For instance, if the Ministry of Health invests hospital in Oromia region, what normally reported is that the ministry has increased its health coverage from this percent to this percent and this shows the focus that the government gives to health sector. However, investigative questions like did the hospital consume all budgets appropriately? Is it finalized within the planned time with its all standard qualities? These and other questions will remain uncovered. Such kind of coverage is PRs works which hides the critical story. So, use of PRs as a source negatively affects the purpose of journalism. To me, ETV is working without touching the core points of news.

One of the most important qualities that separate journalism from PRs is that journalists engage in investigative works. They do not see things from only one angle. PR offices present ideas in one way - the positive way. It is obvious that when a reporter talks to PR officers, he/she is merely obtaining only one perspective. So, the argument above shows that the use of PRs negatively affects journalism. It teaches viewers not to see things from multiple perspectives, rather to absorb news from one angle. That is the most positive angle which lauds the activities of government. However, journalism’s foremost principle is, as stated by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), to serve as an independent monitor of power, not only to speak and report the positive sides of the government. Journalistic loyalty, the authors claim, is to the citizens.

Most of the key informants agreed as they are using PRs as their source knowing its negative side on journalism. The researcher asked the informants to justify this.

**Informant 3:** PRs is one of the news sources of ETV. Our boss orders us where to go. We don't have power to select our own news source. We want to balance the information we get from PRs, but we fear the punishments that follow because the PRs are part of the government. So, what is experienced is to report what the media and the PRs official desire.

The argument above shows the reason why journalistic work resembles the PRs jobs. Journalists have the responsibility of balancing and verifying stories they receive from PRs sources. But they cannot do so due to the pressure exerted on them by their bosses, or the culture of work the media have experienced. This pressure obliges journalists to dispatch information provided by PRs of government officers said which is simply promoting development activities. This also played its own role in hurting the profession of journalism. So, based on the argument above, PRs is recognized news source of ETV. This indicates as the media itself is using a source which affects journalism in order to serve the interests of the few in power. According to Chomsky (1989:153), the general predictions concerning patterns of media behavior is that what enters into the mainstream will support the needs of established power. ETV's use of PRs as formal established news sources shows the media is designed to voice the needs of the government so that the government name will not be tarnished. This damages the credibility of media which should strive to serve the public interest.

One of the negative effects of PRs is on presenting views from different angles because PRs main job is to build the good image of the hired organization not on the critical stories about the organization. During this time, PR officials focus on presenting ideas from one angle. So, using PRs as a source means taking the one side of the story. The following informant illustrates this:

**Informant 6:** as I told you on the discrepancies, the two professions have both different purposes. When we use PRs professionals as a source of news, we can shape journalism as PRs. Since PRs is for the hired organization, it covers no negative news about that organization. It focuses only on the positive story the way it serves government interest. In contrast, journalism purpose is to serve the public. So, using PRs as a source means serving the interest of others instead of public. This can negatively affects media credibility.

As cited in, Dan Berkowitz, 1997, Ralph Barney noted: a first reason for journalists to exist is the gathering and distributing of information, most particularly information that others are taking pains to keep from being distributed. It is that type of information that would prove most valuable to society. In contrary, ETV's experience regarding this argument is void. What the public's to hear is not only the positive side; they also want the media to present the background information of something that is what media professionals call it the public interest.

Generally, as Salter (2005) says the increasing influence of PRs on the press has a negative impact on the dissemination of impartial information. Moreover, the role of media to entertain different viewpoints in order to maintain fairness and balance would remain in question when journalists use PRs officers as their sources. ETV's experience is obvious as discussed earlier; majority of the news was one-sided because PRs is one of their sources. At the same time, journalists who use PRs as their source do not have the power to crosscheck due to the government pressure on the media practitioners since PRs is recognized source of the news by government. This impairs the ultimate objective of journalism which is the search for truth and to serve the public at large. So, it is possible to conclude that ETV's use of PRs posted at different levels of government offices is aimed at giving a voice to the government officials and to serve their interest. This directly brings forth the destruction of quality journalism as a whole.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study mainly aimed at investigating the practice of journalism in ETV. In doing so, the study attempted to investigate the main sources of news and speakers within the news. In line with this, the criteria of news and source selection of the station were also the other points of the research. The study further tried to uncover whether the media practitioners were cognizant of the differences between journalism and public relations. The impact of PRs on journalism profession has also been a focus of this study. In addition to these, factors that affect journalist's news and source selection were discussed and analyzed based on the theoretical framework of the study.

To address the above objectives, the research has employed mixed method of content analysis (qualitative and quantitative). Purposive sampling was used to select 147 news stories which were broadcast in ETV from December, 2012 to February, 2013. The first two weeks of each month were used for the study and analyzed. In-depth interviews with six media professionals of the station were conducted.

This section of the research presents the summary of the findings, the conclusion and recommendations.

#### **5.1. Summary of Findings**

As indicated above, the aim of the study was to investigate the practice of journalism in ETV. To this end, understanding the source of the news and speakers in news stories reveal something

about the station's practice of journalism. The findings showed that the government sources were the main sources of news in ETV. The result of the study indicated that out of 147 news stories broadcast in ETV, 64.62% of the news was produced by ETV staff reporters. The regional government communication offices covered about 17.7% and ENA and PRs practitioners accounted for 8.16% and 6.12% respectively.

Similarly, the government officials both at federal and regional levels were the main speakers in each news stories. Government officials at federal level covered 51% out of 147 news stories. The regional government officials accounted for about 27.9% of stories, where as the community members covered about 8.84% only. The community members were given less attention.

The finding of the study also revealed that journalists have been under continuous pressures from the government in news and source selection. The bosses, not the journalists, selected both news and its sources. The bosses were appointed by the government based on their political affiliation, not on merits. The finding also showed the lack of professional independence in ETV. Lack of professional independence has forced ETV to focus on stories that portrayed the government positively.

In ETV, the major criteria of news selection were based on the value of the news in building the image of the government. The news that lauds the government actions was given coverage no matter what the source is. In contrary, the station neglected any news and its sources if they coupled with negatively affecting the government's actions/name.

The findings of the study also indicated that the media professionals were aware of the differences between journalism and public relations. However, due to pressures often from their bosses, they were unable to practice journalism. Journalists of the media acted as the mouthpiece

of the government. Journalists were responsible to gather and report the good sides of the government and they evaded any critical stories. And this has been taken by journalists as working culture in the station. As a result, journalists were engaged in self-censorship. Hence, the journalists were engaged in putting and developing government positively and voided critical stories in their news content.

The majority of ETV's news content, whether it was social or political news, was presented within the aim of lauding the government actions in front of the public. The news was presented in the way it served the government. The themes that emerged from the data mostly centered on quoting government as development government and celebrating its actions.

In the case of news coverage, ETV gave priority for government issues. This means that ETV served the interest of the government at the expense of the public. Most of the news was presented from the government point of view. Journalists directly quoted government officials posted at different levels and presented it in the media. It was too rare that news of public interest was given coverage. The voices of ordinary people were also absent in ETV.

It was also found out that almost all of the tone of ETV news about government was positive. It was rare to find news stories that were critical of the government. Even if the news was critical, it was showed from the angle of the government's effort made to solve the problem.

Finally, the results suggested that the use of PR officers as one of the main sources of news has a negative impact on the journalistic practices. Based on the findings, it can be argued that ETV journalists were aware of the negative impact of PRs on journalism. Regardless of this awareness, PR officers have been used as one of the station's main news source. It was also revealed that ETV's journalists used PRs because it was recognized by the media as one part of

government. The findings also showed that media practitioners have worked in ETV knowing the differences between journalism and public relations and PRs impact on journalism, but due to pressure by the government, they worked by portraying the government positively.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

As indicated above, the study aimed at investigating journalism practice in ETV. In doing so, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The quantitative content analysis was used to examine the main sources and speakers of news in ETV. This paved a way to study the station's journalism practice qualitatively. In-depth interview also used to substantiate the data and to achieve the other objectives of the study. The research data asserted that the practice of journalism was not done in ETV in line with Journalism Principles, especially with journalism principles adopted by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001). As argued by these scholars, journalism first obligation is to the truth. ETV journalism practice showed that sources of the news were government officials. In the way to the truth, diversified views in certain news story is crucial. However, ETV didn't use diversified sources in news production. Even though Kovach and Rosenstiel and other scholars raise as journalism's loyalty is to citizens, ETV gave priority service to government interest news story. As Campbell (2004) argues news media which is controlled by government (the ruling party) has great chance to be manipulated by government officials and restricts the practice of journalism to public interest. ETV operated under government control and consequently served government interest. ETV dominantly used government sources and gave coverage for the voices of the government officials. This finding concurs with Gans (2003) point. He contends that top-down coverage

reflects the perspective of those who are powerful. Therefore, issues which are of priority to citizens interests were not covered in ETV.

With regard to the contents of ETV news, media's power to act as an independent monitor of power was not observed. Critical reporting on government which reveals the wrong doing of the government was neglected in ETV. Rather it was used to manipulate and shape public attitude. Herman and Chomsky (2002 ) state, through the structure of ownership, and power and pressures on news organizations, business and government elites are able to ensure that certain views prevail and news become a means for the ruling to control ideas in society to produce its pre-eminence. This notion was reflected in the finding of the study. The media professionals were acting as the mouth piece of the government to make laudable the voice of government officials. The media acted to shape the public attitudes by presenting the views of the government elites. Moreover, the contents of ETV news reflected that development news was given above all a special attention over other issues. The news was presented in the way it brings forth government in most positive light.

As a principle, journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise. This was not reflected in ETV's news content because it was the voice of the government that was being heard in the media. Schudson (2003) emphasizes that media's reliance on government officials doesn't guarantee to provide favorable news for the audience. The role of journalists in serving as a bridge between government and the public was not seen in ETV because the journalists gave for the government voices by favoring government officials and their actions. This undermines the public's right to criticize the government's wrong doing.

The discipline of verification is the most important principle of journalism. For verification to take place, journalists are supposed to contact different sources. This develops the diversity of views in a certain news story. However, because ETV's news source was government sources and the speakers of the news were also government officials, it was impossible to verify their information as confirmed by the informants of the study. Collecting information from diversified sources enables the media to serve the majority of the public (Byrd, 1992).

Generally, it is possible to conclude that the practice of journalism in ETV appears to contravene the principles of journalism. The news stories were presented in building the positive deeds of the government and void of critical stories about the government.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to effectively practice journalism in Ethiopian Television.

- The media needs to incorporate diversified views in the news because ETV dominantly used government sources and reflected the voices of government officials.
- Because journalists of ETV were aware of the differences between journalism and public relations, the media needs to encourage journalists to practice journalism based on its principles. The government should ensure professional independence in ETV.
- The media needs to practice investigative journalism rather than simply portraying different government officials positively. Exposing wrong doings needs to be practiced so that elected officials would learn from it.

- Principles of journalism like journalism's obligation to the truth, its loyalty to citizens and the importance of verification are the cornerstone of journalism. Therefore, ETV may be advised to look into these and other principles to produce news and to maintain credibility in front of public.

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## Appendix A

Categories of news stories that were broadcast by *Ethiopian Television* from December, 2012 and February, 2013 (The first two weeks of each month)

No.	Date	Source of the News	Speakers of the News
1	01.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
2	01.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
3	01.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
4	01.12.12	ENA	Community Members
5	01.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
6	02.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
7	02.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
8	02.12.12	ENA	Community Members
9	02.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
10	03.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
11	03.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
12	04.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
13	04.12.12	PRs Practitioner	Others
14	04.12.12	NM Organization	Regional Gov't Official
15	04.12.12	ETV Staff	Scholars
16	05.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
17	05.12.12	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
18	05.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
19	05.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
20	05.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
21	05.12.12	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
22	06.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
23	06.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
24	06.12.12	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
25	07.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
26	07.12.12	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
27	07.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
28	07.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
29	08.12.12	ENA	Regional Gov't Official
30	08.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
31	09.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
32	09.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
33	09.12.12	ENA	Regional Gov't Official
34	09.12.12	ETV Staff	Scholars
35	10.12.12	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
36	10.12.12	ETV Staff	Community Members
37	10.12.12	ETV Staff	Scholars
38	11.12.12	Others	Federal Gov't Official

39	12.12.12	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
40	12.12.12	PRs Practitioner	Others
41	12.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
42	13.12.12	Others	Regional Gov't Official
43	13.12.12	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
44	13.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
45	14.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
46	14.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
47	14.12.12	ENA	Others
48	14.12.12	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
49	15.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
50	15.12.12	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
51	01.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
52	01.01.13	PRs Practitioners	Regional Gov't Official
53	02.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
54	02.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
55	02.01.13	ETV Staff	Political Parties
56	02.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
57	03.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
58	03.01.13	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
59	04.01.13	PRs Practitioner	Regional Gov't Official
60	04.01.13	RGCO	Political Parties
61	04.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
62	05.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
63	05.01.13	NM Organization	Regional Gov't Official
64	05.01.13	RGCO	Community Members
65	05.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
66	05.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
67	06.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
68	06.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
69	07.01.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
70	07.01.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
71	07.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
72	07.01.13	PRs Practitioner	Federal Gov't Official
73	08.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
74	09.01.13	RGCO	Community Members
75	09.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
76	09.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
77	09.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
78	09.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
79	10.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
80	10.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
81	11.01.13	ENA	Others
82	11.01.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
83	11.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official

84	11.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
85	12.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
86	12.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
87	12.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official

88	12.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
89	13.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
90	13.01.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
91	13.01.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
92	14.01.13	PRs Practitioner	Federal Gov't Official
93	14.01.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
94	14.01.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
95	14.01.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
96	15.01.13	RGCO	Scholars
97	15.01.13	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
98	15.01.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
99	01.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
100	01.02.13	NM Organization	Community Members
101	01.02.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
102	02.02.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
103	03.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
104	03.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
105	03.02.13	ETV Staff	Others
106	03.02.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
107	04.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
108	04.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
109	04.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
110	04.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
111	04.02.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
112	04.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
113	04.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
114	05.02.13	ETV Staff	Others
115	06.02.13	ETV Staff	Others
116	06.02.13	ETV Staff	Regional Gov't Official
117	06.02.13	ETV Staff	Others
118	07.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
119	07.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
120	08.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
121	08.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
122	08.02.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
123	08.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
124	08.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
125	09.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
126	09.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official

127	09.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
128	09.02.13	ETV Staff	Political Parties
129	10.02.13	ETV Staff	Community Members
130	10.02.13	PRs Practitioner	Federal Gov't Official
131	11.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
132	11.02.13	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
133	11.02.13	ETV Staff	Others
134	11.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
135	12.02.13	PRs Practitioner	Federal Gov't Official
136	12.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
137	12.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
138	12.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
139	13.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
140	13.02.13	RGCO	Regional Gov't Official
141	14.02.13	PRs Practitioner	Federal Gov't Official
142	15.02.13	ETV Staff	Political Parties
143	15.02.13	RGCO	Scholars
144	15.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
145	15.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official
146	15.02.13	ENA	Federal Gov't Official
147	15.02.13	ETV Staff	Federal Gov't Official

Where: RGCO represents Regional Government Communication Office

NMO represents News Media Organization

## Appendix B

### Interview Guide for Individuals In-Depth Interview

#### I. Interview questions for Reporters

1. To which issue (government or public) do you give special priority in your news making?

Why?

Public issues: news which deals with the problem that the public has.

Government issues: news which deals with good deeds of government.

2. What are your criteria when you select news?
3. Do you think that all sources are acceptable in your media institution? If no, why?
4. Who do you think are your main source when you deal with government issues and public issues?  
  
A. PRs officers      B. Involve yourself with the issue      C. Other sources
5. What considerations do you make when you choose your news sources?
6. Is there any factor that hinders you in news and source selection? If yes, what are the factors?
7. What mechanisms do you use to verify information for your report?
8. How do you handle (practice) the principle of 'objectivity' when you gather news?
9. What qualities do you think differentiate journalism from PRs jobs ?
10. What is the impact of using PR professionals as your source of news on the practice of journalism?

11. Do you give coverage for critical stories about government? Yes/no, why?

## **II. Interview questions for editors**

1. For what kind of issues (public or government) your media institution gives a special priority in news making? Why?

Public issues: news which deals the problem that the public has.

Government issues: news which deals with good deeds of government

2. What are your criteria for news and source selection?

3. What qualities do you think differentiate journalism from PRs jobs from the angle of information presentation?

4. How do you explain the relationship between reporters and PR practitioners from your experience? A. Smooth relationship      B. Rough relationship

Why if you say either A or B.

5. How can the presence of good relationship between journalists and PRs practitioners can affect journalism?

6. Do you think ETV presents news which can reflect the interest of the public like the problem they face, it may be road, water and sanitation problems? If yes, how? If not. Why?

7. Do you think ETV entertains diversified points of views in news reporting? If yes, how, if not, why?

8. Do you give coverage for critical stories about government? Yes/no, why?

9. It is said that media are autonomous. How might you interpret this in context of your media institution? Do you think that you are autonomous in news and source selection?

### **III. Interview questions for editor in chief**

1. What qualities do you think differentiate journalism from PRs jobs from the view of presenting events or information?
2. Do you cover critical stories about government? If no, why?
3. Could you tell me issues which you don't let be aired in your media institution as being chief editor? If there are, why?
4. Who are the main sources of news for your media institution?
5. When you supervise reporters, what are some of the advice you give them in gathering and reporting news?

## Appendix c

### Code and Titles of the Interviewees

<u>Code</u>	<u>Title</u>
Informant 1	Reporter
Informant 2	Reporter
Informant 3	Reporter
Informant 4	Editor
Informant 5	Editor
Informant 6	Editor in Chief

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that “An Investigation of the Practice of Journalism in Ethiopian Television” is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Name: Temesgen Alemu

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Submission: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia