

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**YOUTH'S LISTENING HABIT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
RADIO PROGRAMS: A Case of *Sinehizb-ena-  
Akababi* Environmental Radio Program.**

**BY  
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**November 2009  
ADDIS ABABA**

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## Abstract

This study examined the radio listening habit of the youth on environmental issues. It also explored the effectiveness of the environmental radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

To generate the appropriate data, a three stage triangulated research design, employing qualitative approach was devised. Using purposive sampling a total of 36 high school students in Addis Ababa who are between the ages of 15-24, who are listeners of radio and also who are willing to take part in the study were drawn from three high schools and participated in the study.

This study elicited some insights which can help in understanding the radio listening habit of the youth on environmental issues. Accordingly, the study showed that the radio listening habit of the youth group on environmental issues was irregular and poor. It is found that the youth audiences give priority for issues of sport activities and social matters. They also incline to listen to programs which incorporate entertaining elements in them. The study also identify that the youth audience don't attend the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* because of the inconvenience transmission time of the program. Some don't want to attend some radio stations in relation with the problem of credibility showed in the stations.

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## ACRONYMS

**EPA:** Environmental Protection Authority

**MOE:** Ministry of Education

**S.S:** Secondary School

# CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Study

### 1.1.1 Environment and the Youth

Protecting environment becomes a key question of the day. Climate is changing globally climate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity are some of the major environment issues on the globe that make the front pages of news papers and top stories of news bulletins of radio and television broadcasts. To tackle the problem, a plan of action like Agenda 21 is set by different stake holders. This comprehensive plan of action is meant to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations system, governments, and major groups in every area in which to minimize human impacts on the environment; to address such a problem the role of different stakeholders is vital.

The youth are critical stakeholders in the global economy and are the main actors and the motor for change now and in the future. The energy, motivation, and creativity of youth are essential assets for bringing change in environmental issues. The involvement of today's youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programs is critical to the long-term success fighting the problem of environment. The Director General of Environmental Protection Authority; Dr. Tewolde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, in the Speech he gave at the International Mountain Day (2007) said the Ethiopian government is doing its best to tackle the environmental problem: *“Can we, in Ethiopia, do anything to stop, or at least slow down, climate change? The only things that we can do, we are doing. This year, we planted about 700 million trees.”* the Environmental Protection Authority declares that it designs a project to incorporate the youth in the activity of tackling desertification: *‘The currently fragmented and disparate youths in Ethiopia need to be mobilised and organized for combating desertification and mitigate the effects of drought by conserving*

and sustainably utilizing the natural resources and at the same time improving their livelihoods.” [http://www.epa.gov/epa/Files/Combating\\_Desertification.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/epa/Files/Combating_Desertification.pdf)

The issue of environment has become a dominant theme for research, public policy and media during the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Banister et al (1999; cited in Temesgen, 2006:14) the issue of environment is becoming dominant issue and will continue to be like that:

*Banister et al explained that the global interest in environmental change in part stems from the increasing pressures that a mounting population puts on the planet's natural resources base. The rise in conservation interests has fostered the idea that the way in which society is stripping resources from our planet simply can not continue unfinished. The finite nature of natural resources means that we may exhaust our planet of critical resources at some point in the time. (Temesgen 2006:14)*

In recent times environmental protection is becoming a central topic in the world's public agenda. Understanding environmental science and giving them special concern in political, media, economic, and cultural policies and development programs is becoming imperative. To make youths involving in such environmental issues Medias has great role in raising their awareness. So preparing effective media out puts in relation with environmental issues and finding out their impact is vital. The study, therefore, attempts to investigate the radio listening habit of high school youth on environmental issues.

### **1.1.2 Sinehizb-ena- Akababi Environmental Radio Program**

To combat environmental problems, raising the public awareness is mandatory. According to Shibru and Kifle(1996) studies indicated that there is very limited environmental education in Ethiopia. A study made by Daniel(2005) revealed that, unlike previous days, environmental education has become non-existent in the curriculum of college and schools.

This situation thus makes the media as a significant tool in raising the awareness of the people on environmental matters. The mass media which are widely considered as 'agents of change' are expected to employ different methods and be the ring leaders in what Kojo Yankah(1999:50) described as "the consciousness raising effort". Even Article 4:10(6) of the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia stresses on the role played by the media in raising environmental awareness. (EPA, 1997)

In Ethiopia, where illiteracy is very high (36%) (World Bank,2007) and the communication and transportation infrastructure are also poor, the impact of the print media in educating the public about environmental issue is limited. Given that the majority of Ethiopians per capita income is around US \$ 220(World Bank, 2007), which can't afford to buy a TV set, the impact of television in this aspect is also minimal.

By far the most efficient way of medium in Ethiopia is radio when compared to other media outlets. As Laekemariam notes in the case of Ethiopia, where there is rugged topography, high prevalence of illiteracy and poor transport facility, radio is the preferred means of communication (Laekemariam, 2000:185). Moreover as most scholars agree radio is inexpensive with small capital costs and operating expenses. Also, from the perspective of the listener radio sets are cheap to buy (McLeish, 1999:5)

According to the Ministry of Information of Ethiopia (2003:491), Radio Ethiopia in its national service, covers 100% of the country in short wave and 70% of the country in medium wave transmissions. The station went on air for the first time on January 2, 1934. One of its earliest programs was the *Agriculture program* that focused in part on environment related issues. Currently the Amharic service of the radio station transmits environmental programs that are part of its agriculture and population programs. This research also focuses on the weekly radio program dubbed in Amharic as '*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*' (population and

environment). This radio program has been broadcasted on the national service of radio Ethiopia for more than 10 years. *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* is a 20 minutes radio program aired every Tuesday starting from 12:30 am local time.

Conducting research on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program as well as finding out the radio listening habit of youth on environmental issues would be significant, considering the grave environmental situations and the helping role of the media.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Youths are perhaps the most important group of radio listeners. According to the result of the national census conducted in 2007/08, the total number of youth between the ages of 15-24 counts more than 15.2 million (Central Statistical Agency, 2008). So addressing this group on environmental issues is unquestionable. As researches conducted in US shows, youths are perhaps the most important group of radio listeners. As a survey conducted in the USA by radio rating company known as Arbitron; 97% of teens aged twelve through seventeen listen to the radio at least once in a week. "Radio is simply a part of their daily lives," concluded one study (McCutcheon et al, 1994).

For McCutcheon et al (1994) not only radio immensely popular with teens, but it is the most universal of all the mass media-the means of communication that can reach large audiences. As these scholars put it, "Nowhere is there a patch of land or stretch of ocean so remote that it can not be reached by radio signals beamed from more than 26,000 stations world wide.

Thus unequivocally conducting research on environmental radio program as well as finding out the listening habit of youth on environmental issues would be significant, considering the grave environmental situations and the helping role of the media.

Accordingly this study will try to explore youth's listening habit of environmental radio programs taking the environmental radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* as a case. The research will attempt to see how understandable, relevant and interesting *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program is. It also tries to show how successful the radio program is in achieving the objectives set by the owner of the program-Radio Ethiopia.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study is to find out the radio listening habit of the youth audiences for environmental issues and assess the effectiveness of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* regarding environmental issues.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- Does the youth audience have special interest in listening radio programs related with environmental issues or not?
- How much does the youth like to listen to environmental issues as compared to other issues and why?
- Is the environment coverage of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* easily understandable, interesting and relevant to the youth group?
- Does the program shape the youth's understanding about the environment?

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

This study may help people to know the radio listening habit of the youth on environmental issues. It will also help in showing the youth audience's preferences in selecting items for tuning to.

It may also be useful to media institutions and others who are working on environmental awareness programs and communication to consider youth audiences or target group social fragmentation and characteristics so as to produce appropriate messages. It is also believed that this study might serve as a springboard for those who intend to carry out further study on this area.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study has its focus on environmental radio program which could be tuned in Addis Ababa and its examination mainly based on the responses of students of three high schools in Addis. The research design included a focus group discussion and semi-structured in-depth individual interviews with the students. For the focus group discussion and in-depth individual interviews, the study employed a two stage sampling process - one for the selection of schools and the other for the selection of student participants.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The study has adopted the most common way of organizing a thesis that is dividing into five parts. A brief discussion on environmental situations of Ethiopia, background about environmental radio program of *sinehizb-ena-Akababi* as well as objectives and significance of the study are treated under chapter one.

Issues related to the various theories in audience studies from historical and practical perspectives are treated in chapter two. Chapter three is dedicated to a discussion of the research methods employed in the study. Presentation of findings and analysis makes chapter four of this study while conclusions and recommendations are given in the last chapter.

# CHAPTER TWO: Review of Related Literature

## Introduction

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

## 2.1 Defining the Audience

For the pioneers in the field of media research the word 'audience' is very familiar as collective term for 'receivers' in simple sequential model of the mass communication process (source, channel, message, receiver, effect) (McQuail,2005:396)

As Ross & Nightingale (2003) put it, a close look at the history of the term audience reveals that it has been in use long before the introduction of 'broadcasting modes of accessing information.' (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:4) According to McQuail, the early origins of today's media audience lie in public theatrical and musical performances as well as the games and spectacles of ancient times.

Delia(1987) explains how the audience was portrayed in the early times of media research:

At an early point in the media research, actual audiences were shown to consist of many overlapping networks of social relations based on locality and common interests, and the 'mass' media were incorporated into these networks in different ways.(Delia,1987;cited in McQuail 2005:399)

In a concept where audiences are taken as a market, the term 'audience' may be defined as an 'aggregate of actual or potential consumers of media services and products, with a known social-economic profile.' (McQuail, 2005:399) Croteau and Hoynes(2003) describe the term 'audience' as, "...the image of a mass of passive receivers ingesting their daily dose of media products."(Croteau and Hoynes, 2003:266)

The term 'audience' has now broad meaning and used to describe people who are engaged in accessing information in a manner that ranges from individual to large group activities. This term in media studies is often used as "a way of talking about people either as groups or as individuals" (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:4)

For McQuail(2005) 'audiences' are all those who are actually reached by particular media content or media 'Channels'. For him 'audience' can also exist as an imagined 'target' or intended group of receivers. He adds, "It may coincide with a real society group or public."(2005:548) McQuail(2005) in his detailed discussion of the audience, he gives a more comprehensive definition of 'audience' arguing that the term can be described in divers ways:

'Audience' can be defined in different and overlapping ways: by place(as in the case of local media); by people(as when a medium is characterized by an appeal to a certain age group, gender, political belief or income category ); by the particular type of medium or channel involved(technology and organization combined);by the content of its messages genres, subject matter, style);by time(as when one speaks of the 'day time' or 'prime time' audience, that is feeling and short term compared with one that endures). (McQuail, 2005:396)

As far as this research is concerned:

- The definitions that assume 'audience' as 'those who actively engaged with mediated message as audience'; and
- McQuail's definition of 'audiences' according to the relevant media and content or in terms of their social composition, location, or time of day); will guide this study when ever there is a reference to the term 'audience'.

## 2.2 Theoretical Overview of Audience Studies

### 2.2.1 Direct Effect Approach

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, looking at audiences as passive and considering media as powerful was a dominant view in explaining the relationship between these two entities. In that period media was considered as a powerful tool of persuasion. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:74-75) This premise considers audience as only receivers of media messages as presented by the media outlet. But other groups who criticize this idea argue that 'responsible audience activity' should be taken into consideration when talking about media effect. For this group the audience has the ability to 'select, interpret and use of the media content.' (Baran & Davis, 2006:261)

This view was reflected by the traditional effect theory which was also known as 'magic bullet' theory or 'hypodermic needle' theory. This theory argued that all members of the audience receive media messages in a homogenous manner and their reactions whether 'immediate or direct' happen as the result of the messages they have received. (Williams, 2003:171) This effect paradigm emphasized the power of media in determining how audiences think and behave. (Williams, 2003:206)

However, study after study proved that media were not powerful and had no direct effect on people's attitude or opinion, as people also could be influenced more by other factors like education and social position. (Baran & Davis, 2006:135)

Herbert Blumer criticized the direct effects perspective by noting that the approach has 'ignored three factors' namely "the variability of media contents, the variability of people's responsiveness to media contents, and the independent connection of all forms of communication." (Blumer, 1959; cited in Staiger, 2005:44) Schramm also raised his skepticism about the direct effect approach. Saying that the audience might interpret the message in a different manner than the sender's intention. (Schramm, 1963; cited in Staiger, 2005:44) It

was out of such skeptics that another rival audience research approach evolved as we see in the next discussion.

### **2.2.2 Limited Effect Approach**

Later researchers like Tudor(1979) challenged the ideas of the hypodermic needle theory. For them the 'effect' of a particular item or image was not solely outcome of the content of that item or image'. According to their findings audiences were regarded as 'individuals who could interpret what they saw and heard inline with their own already established beliefs.' In this regard the media were found to have fewer roles than previous assumption in changing behavior but more in reinforcing existing beliefs.(Tudor,1979:cited in Williams,2003:174)

This theory gave emphasis to the role played by opinion leaders and argued interpersonal contacts as more important than the media in influencing audiences. As a result this limited effects model came to be called the two-step flow theory.(Croteau and Hoynes, 2003:241;Williams,2003:174) Its worth nothing here that the two-step flow theory like the hypodermic needle theory believed in the influence of media but the later trends in 'enforcing existing attitudes and opinions' not in changing them.

One of the critiques of this theory argued that the limited effects approach has undermined the complexity of the communication process and the manner in which influence occurs. According to Williams the theory considered influence as the authority of one person on the other overlooking other factors that have the power on the flow of information' in any given social setting. He cited 'the power of political and economic institutions' as an example. The limited effect approach has also given vague explanations concerning the make up of the inter face between the opinion leaders and audiences. The theory has also faced criticism for labeling 'the majority' of the audience as passive. (Williams, 2003:176)

### **2.2.3 Uses and Gratifications Approach**

By the mid 1970's, the use and gratifications theory emerged as a reaction to the effects studies. Their theory was characterized by its basic assumption that audiences "actively involved in selecting messages to gratify individual needs."(Pitout, 2001:244). As being an opposite of the early effects theories, it assumes media "with no effect on their audience... With power what part the media play in their lives" (Williams, 2003:166).

As opposed to former theories this approach came to consider audiences as active with the capacity of picking preferred content message from the media.(DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach,1989:187).

The uses and gratifications approach, while accepting the active role of audiences, focuses its examination on, the uses to which people put media and the gratifications they seek from that use; (Baran& Davis, 2006:262-263).

This theory shifted the attention of audience research from the medial and media content to the audience's role with emphasis on how audience use to please ones social and psychological desires. Some scholars also regarded the uses and gratification theory as the first approach to place audiences at the heart when it comes to studying medial effects. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:29).

The uses and gratification theory was criticized for its incapability of clarifying human interaction with media. Reimer criticized this theory for its focus on individualism, ignoring" the context within which media use takes place" (Reimer cited in Pitout, 2001:244). Grossberg, Wortella and Whitney, quoted in Pitout (2001) also challenged the use and gratification theory by saying that the theory provides" no understanding of the connection between our individual psychological needs and the influence of cultural and social contexts on our media uses and interpretation of media message" (Pitout, 2001:244).

The theory's attention on the individual as the unit of analysis' made it to ignore the social aspect. The theory asserts that individuals consume media with purpose; critics however argue that attending media producer is something that happens more casually and with out planning. According to these critics, people might attend a certain media because of its prominence or lack of access to or absence of alternative media outlets.( Williams,2003:178-179) Other researchers like Baran And Davis (2006:275) also criticized the uses and gratifications theory for its failure to show whether there is effect or not in a given audience research.

#### **2.2.4 Reception Analysis**

The current phase in audience research has its focus on finding out what the audience did with media not the later did to the former. Ross and Nightingale in their book *Media and Audiences* put this approach as the "latest phase" where emphasis is given to 'agency rather than passivity'.(2003:76).

With the reception approach, exploring what audiences think of the influence the medial have brought in their lives became the main interest of the researchers. This theory bases its argument on the premise that audiences 'interpret media message' and this capacity is decided by a host of 'individual, social and cultural factors.'(Williams, 2003:193)

In this phase of audience research the arguments endorsed by the preceding approaches that consider audiences as homogenous mass of recipients were challenged by the reception analysis approach which started to view audiences as 'a multitude of different group with their own histories, habits, and social interactions'. Here the researchers are also keen to know the condition with in which the reception of media message transpires. The researchers also indicated that there are specific audiences for particular media products. This statement has come out of the notion that audiences are more powerful and have freewill of choosing what and when they want to watch, listen and read a particular media output. (Williams, 2003:198-199).

Klaus Jensen writes audience and content analysis must remain the core investigations of a reception analysis if the study has to come out with convincing description of 'the reception, uses, and impact of media.'(Jensen & Jankowski, 1991:135) This is to mean that media texts and their audiences are corresponding elements that any researcher engaged in reception analysis pay utmost attention to.

Many scholars agree that Hall's encoding /decoding model has the basics for reception theory. This was clearly observed back in 1978 in the audience study conducted by David Morley and Charlotte Brunson for *BBC TV news magazine Nationwide*. The approach adopted by these researchers was significantly influenced by Hall's encoding /decoding model. (Williams, 2003:195; Ross & Nightingale, 2003:36-39) Hall's model differed from other theories in that it made media effects to be dependent on the interpretation of audiences and 'thought processes.' It also focuses on the interaction between audiences and 'texts' as well as the social settings where such interaction takes place. (Williams, 2003:196).

Ian Hutchby (2006) in his book, *Media talk: Conversation, Analysis and the study of Broadcasting*, identifies two ideas which he referred as 'key significances' of Hall's theory.

One key significance of Hall's theory, therefore, is the recognition that there may not be any necessary symmetry between the frameworks of meaning involved in encoding a particular text and those involved in decoding it....A second significance is the implication that either 'end' of the encoding/decoding circuit can be subject to empirical enquiry: we could go and do a study of how media producers encode their products just as much as we could look at how audiences actually decode them. (Hutch, 2006:8)

As opposed to the uses and gratifications theory, Hall emphasized on the various social setting and background that determine and affect the audience's interpretation of 'texts'. In Hall's case "perception was not conceived in personal or psychological terms but social."(Williams, 2003:196)

The uses gratifications as well as the reception analysis approaches have a shared view concerning the power of the audience which they say possess an 'interpretive freedom'. But they have underlying divergence when dealing factors affecting interpretation.

The uses gratifications theory seems to give much emphasis to individuals as far as interpretation is concerned. In the regard Morley says to this theory "differences of response or interpretation are attributed to individual differences of personality"( Morely,1989;cited in Sterlitz,2000:40). Williams writes "some say this [uses and gratifications theory] represents a retreat from the two-step flow approach."(Williams, 2003:179).

Proponents of the reception analysis on the other hand regard the uses and gratifications tradition as" psychological' which is incapable of seeing the media or the audience in a broader "social context". In reception studies pinpointing social dimensions and examining response or interpretation based on those dimensions remains to be an important task of the research.(Williams,2003:178-179& Staiger,2005:55).

Thought considered the latest approach in the study of audiences, analysis does not escape the attention of critics. Like the case with the uses and gratification, reception theory is considered as an approach short of indicating the "presence or absence of effects'. The fact that reception studies depend on the "subjective interpretation of audience reports' as well as their use of qualitative research methods which prevent the findings from describing cases were also listed as weaknesses of reception analysis.(Baran and Davis:278).

In spite of the criticisms forwarded by some scholars; it seems, least at this moment reception analysis is to be most applicable approach in media audience research. In support of this argument Staiger considers reception studies as something that has an important part in the 'individual or social and political lives' of humans. While acknowledging difficulties seen in some reception studies in

coming up with 'specific conclusion' Staiger underlines that in mass communication research "It [reception studies] is particularly pragmatic field"(2006:4).

When explaining significant and uncontested place of reception analysis in current audience studies, Schroder writes:

With more than 20 years' experience, reception research has now consolidated itself as an established research tradition, still developing but with a solid theoretical and methodological foundation, and accumulating record of substantial findings. (2003:141).

It is thus with these above consideration that this reception study on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* environmental radio program employed the approaches of reception analysis.

Inline with the researcher's choice of definition for the term 'audience' scholars in reception analysis see audiences as "disparate, fragmentary collection of individuals, rather than the homogenous mass often envisaged by earlier approaches". In reception analysis audiences are portrayed as active ones engaged in making their own stands as far as 'text' is concerned that may enable them to 'question' challenge or reject elements of the text's message'(Hutchby,2006:8).

Mass communication experts like Baran and Davis advise researchers involved in reception studies to refrain from making their own statement about encoding or decoding. What they instead recommend is to make meticulous examinations on "the social and political context in which media content is produced and the every day life context in which it is consumed."(2006:276).This statement thus shows the two elements to be dealt in reception analysis-content of media and the audience.

## Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has outlined the theoretical basis of this study. It has addressed the debates surrounding the roles of the audiences in successive theories which rose to prominence at different times of the age of mass communication research.

To Croteau and Hoynes the concept of active audience is the underlying principle of current audience research. The authors argued that any effort to examine the effect of media has to first accept the hypothesis "...media consumption is often an active processing of information, not just a passive reception of media words and images". (2003: 247) Thus this paper stands on the theoretical foundation on the active audience theory which brings insight into how audiences understand and interact with the mass media.

Such views, as discussed in the literature review, are rooted in the reception theories, and this study which focuses on exploring the radio listening habit of the youth on environmental issues, has taken the resulted strengths of the audience reception research tradition continues to embrace them throughout.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Method of Study and Research Design**

### **Introduction**

This study sought to produce data and understandings on the listening habit of the youth in relation with environmental radio programs. To this effect, the study has followed the qualitative data gathering and analysis tools applicable in line with audience reception analysis. This part of the paper therefore, discusses the principles underlying the qualitative method of research which provides the guidelines for conducting this study.

Accordingly, the study attempts to provide justifications as to why this study opts for qualitative methods of research. It also discusses the data gathering tools, i.e., qualitative content analysis, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews, which are often put to use to provide the ‘insider perspectives’ of the research subjects.

### **3.1 Research Design**

#### **Opting for qualitative Research –**

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the history of media audience research has made its eventual transformation from a powerful media perspective to active audience approaches. With this researchers began to look for methods that could offer ‘satisfactory’ justifications regarding media and audiences. The new method, according to Morley (1980), adopted an approach that enables the researcher to make an insightful examination of the involvement and reaction of audiences with media. This approach [qualitative method], Morley (1980) argues, is one that attaches due importance to audiences.

And when justifying why researchers started to adopt qualitative methods, Morley (1980) writes “There was a growing recognition that audiences should be allowed to express their thoughts and their feelings about media content in their own terms” (1980; cited in Gunter, 2000: 54)

While explaining the significance of qualitative approaches in audience studies, Mytton (1999:126) in his book *Handbook on Radio and Television Audience Research*, says it is clear from various studies that audiences might be influenced more by 'the intervening influence of other people' but not simply by the 'media messages' they receive. And he adds it is the qualitative research method not the quantitative one that can only reveal these influences in a lucid manner. Mytton thus argues:

This is partly because quantitative research tends to focus on individual behavior within a household or family, whereas qualitative research in focus groups puts the respondents into a social setting in which the personal influences that operate in social settings are reproduced and can be observed. (1999:126)

In a move to show how qualitative methodologies are central in communication studies and best equipped to uncover the meaning making process Lindlof writes "If communication is primarily a matter of signifying meanings and purposes, then qualitative inquiry is interested in how signifying occurs and what it means for those who engage in it." (1995: 22). Another mass communication researcher Moran, when explaining how qualitative approaches best suit audience studies, writes "A trend in audience research has been to use qualitative methodologies to uncover how audience members interact with the mass media" (2003:3)

It also seems plausible to quote the statement made by Schroder et al. (2003) as to what makes qualitative data gathering methods applicable in reception studies.

Reception research is premised on the belief that neither the semiotic analysis of media texts nor questionnaire-based analysis of media gratifications is capable of grasping the complexities of the media experience. Consequently, the prescribed methodological approach to reception analysis is some kind of qualitative interview, in which viewers [audiences] verbalize their experiences of media material. (2003:122)

As a research on radio audience, this study tends to take up qualitative methods. One of the characteristics and may be the strengths of qualitative research is its utilization of host of techniques of data collection which Rossman and Rallis call "methods that are interactive and humanistic" (1990; cited in Creswell, 2003:181). Accordingly the different methods that were employed in this study are presented in the following discussions.

## **3.2 Methods of Data Collection**

The research followed the following methods of data collection.

### **3.2.1 Focus Group Discussions**

Thirty-eight individuals were interviewed for this research. Of these respondents 36 were students of drawn from three high schools in Addis Ababa.

The research participants who were in the ages between 15-24 are students currently enrolled in high school level (9-12) and most of them participated in the environmental club in their perspective schools.

Though it is hardly possible to say the study was gender sensitive, efforts are made to incorporate more women participants. Accordingly, put of the total 36 students participated in the study, 22 of them were females. This shows us that about 60% of the respondents in the research group were females.

### **Why FGDs?**

Reception researches mainly use the two main alternatives of in-depth interviews- focus group and individual interviews- to study how people make sense of a media product (Schroder et. al. cited in Mabweazara, 2006:5).

Accordingly, as being a reception analysis, this study has used a three stage triangulated method, which employed qualitative data gathering approaches of qualitative content analysis, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews.

The first stage of the triangulation; the focus group discussion was intended to examine the radio listening habit of youth audience on environmental issues, taking '*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*' environmental radio program as a case.

A focus group discussion offers opportunities for obtaining in depth responses to how people think and feel. Strelitz, (2005) quoting Deacon et. al. (1999) writes: this method has been used widely in media studies to explore "the social context

of media consumption and the creative role that audience members play in decoding media texts” (Strelitz, 2005:91). Kitzinger also noted that focus group discussion helps researchers to reveal “the parts that often remain untapped by more conventional data collection techniques” (1995:1).

“A focus group is characterized by homogeneity...in terms of variables such as age gender, education, family characteristics, or use of a particular mass medium” (Du Plooy, 2001: 305). Consequently, to set up the focus groups in this study, a criterion will be class or grade level variations among the members.

Each group has been moderated by the investigator and an assistant moderator. The themes for discussion in the focus group discussions included the youth listening habit of environmental radio programs and their reflections on the environmental radio programs of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

During the discussion, as an aided recall, samples of the program have been played to the participants. Then, the moderator made the participant talk about the programs to get their impression on the environmental messages. All the discussions held in each focus group been recorded. Notes were also being taken to see what sort of information was being secured and what was missing during each discussion. So as to keep the discussion on the right track, based on the themes of the study, a discussion guide was devised.

### **3.2.2 Individual In-depth Interviews**

The second stage of the triangulation used, was an individual in-depth interview with selected participants of the focus group discussions. Cognizant of the fact that focus group data should be supported with a range of data collected through different research methods; individual in-depth interview method has been used as a follow up to focus group discussion.

Individual in-depth interview method is believed to yield different kinds of information from focus group. Schroder, et. al. quoted in Mabweazara, (2006) explains that individual in-depth interview is important as it circumvents the fear and shyness of participants in expressing their typical views and experiences in a group discussion (Mabweazara, 2006:12). For this reason, individual in-depth interview can be taken as best method to explore “an issue that is felt by the individual to be too sensitive to talk about in the presence of others, other than a researcher who grants the informant full anonymity” ( Schroder et. al. cited in Mabweazara,2006:12).

Besides, during the focus group discussions, it was observed that some of the participants had hesitant stands on the issues discussed which might be the influence of other participants' ideas. It was also noticed that although there were participants who had strong arguments and keen to forward it, they were inhibited by their shyness to speak and argue more on issues raised during the discussions.

Taking these in to consideration, an in-depth interview method was employed to further elaborate the data generated using the focus group discussion and solicit additional insights that could not be obtained through the group discussions. At this stage, then, a total of 12, semi structured in-depth individual interviews had been conducted.

Since the in-depth interview is a supplement for the focus group discussions, the discussion guide applied to the focus group discussions has been used to guide the interview.

As for the convenience and comfort of the participants and the investigator, both the focus group discussions and the semi-structured in-depth interview were conducted at the premises of the three schools.

### 3.2.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

It is unthinkable for a researcher in media reception studies to embark on the task of focus group and in-depth interviews with out having a prior knowledge of the media out put under investigation. This initial acquaintance with the 'media product' helps the researcher to have a valuable and 'focused' dialogue with the research groups during the data collection. (Schroder et al., 2003:154-155)

An examination of the media out put [content analysis] became a necessity due to the purpose of reception analysis that requires 'a comparative examination of the audience data as well as content data' (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990 cited in Strelitz, 2005:121).

This argument is further substantiated in one of Jensen's articles where he notes the significance of textual analysis in reception studies saying that "Reception analysis shares an interest in cultural codes as expressed in media texts with various forms of *textual analysis*."(1988:3)

The need for conducting content analysis also arises from the premise that any media reception study has to consider the content as much as the audience. (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991:135)

Conducting the content analysis might also help the researcher to asses well the selected programs and corroborate the results with the responses of research participants regarding the content of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

It needs to be noted here that in a qualitative content analysis of this kind, the required analysis is only at elementary level in a way that familiarizes the researcher with the media product. As Schroder et al put it "it is often wiser to abstain from a detailed preliminary textual analysis; and just to familiarize oneself with the text sufficiently to be able to pursue the cultural or political research questions that motivates the project" (Schroder et al.: 2003, 126). In the same

manner this study has made reviews of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* programs aired between the months of September 2008 up to April 2009. A rough examination of the programs aired over this period might enable the researcher to how different environmental issues were presented on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

### **3.3 Sampling and Engaging with participants**

The following part of this paper will discuss about the sampling process and the engagement conducted with the research participants.

#### **3.3.1 Sampling**

As it is true to qualitative research methods (Deacon et al., 1999:54) the selection of research participants was made purposefully and based on the research agenda. When it comes to the nature and composition of focus groups, the researcher used 'relatively homogenous groups' which has been proved effective in getting audiences' own experiences concerning media content (Jensen, 2002:241; Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:82). The research participants in the six groups were grouped based on their grade level.

The researcher started recruiting respondents by looking for those who listen to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program and then those who listen to the radio in general. This technique of selecting research participants based on whether they use the subject under investigation seems quite common. (Mytton, 1999:130). Six to ten is the recommended range for the number of participants in a focus group. Accordingly this study kept 6 participants in each group all over the discussions.

Ten individuals were selected for in-depth interviews. Out of these, two were the producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program whom the researcher met in their respective office. The rest eight were students who were picked by the researcher based on their active participation in the focus group discussion and their revealed interest in environment and media. The researcher used in-depth

interview as another chief means of data collection because recent studies on radio audiences have come to show the more 'individual' nature of listening rather than 'family based or group activity'(Mytton,1999:141)

### **Sampling Process**

As it is stated earlier, the main objective of this study is to explore the radio listening habit of high school youth audiences between the age group 15-24 in Addis Ababa. The research focused on the environmental radio programs, taking the '*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*' as a case. The very reason why the study focused on this age group is that the youth in this group has a significant number in the society and has the potential to participate actively in environmental matters. .

'*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*' is not a targeted program to a specific part of the society; rather it is prepared and transmitted targeting the general population. However, as being part of the society, the youth also receive messages from this radio program. As a result, the target population of this study was all youth listeners of the program in Addis Ababa as '*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*' radio program is transmitted on the national service of radio Ethiopia. However, because of the budgetary and time constraints, the study was limited to a small number of high school youth.

The study included a focus group discussion and semi-structured in-depth individual interviews with high school students in Addis Ababa. For the focus group discussion and in-depth individual interviews, a two stage sampling process - one for the selection of schools and the other for the selection of student participants, were implemented.

I investigated that the Education Statistics Annual Abstract of the City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau for year 2007/08 is not ready. So it is inevitable to use the data from the 2006/2007 academic year. In the previous academic year there have been 123 governmental and nongovernmental secondary (high schools) in Addis Ababa which has accommodated about a total

of 114,993 students. The enrollment annual growth rate was 88.7%. (City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2006/07:11-40)

All high schools in Addis Ababa that enrolled Ethiopian students in grades 9 through 12 for the 2007/2008 academic year were considered for the study. Schools with a special student population (such as prisoners), foreign community schools, and students needing special assistance (such as the visually impaired) were excluded from the study. Then, out of the total 123 high schools the remaining 31 high schools put for the collection of data. From them three high schools have been selected using, simple random sampling method. Accordingly, *Dagmawi Menilik*, *Yemane Birihan*, and *Addis Ketema* secondary schools were selected as the settings for this study.

The research focused on between the age group 15-24 in Addis Ababa, and who are regular listeners of radio, understand and make sense of the messages of environmental radio programs. If one has a complete list of all these youth audiences, it would be possible to have a truly representative sample of the target population either using a randomly or a systematic sampling method.

However, for one reason, it was impossible to do this. Since there was no a complete list of all these youth listeners, some youth who may not listen to and have no idea about the program at all might be included in the sample, as the selection was taking place randomly. This made the sample to have elements, which were out of the sample frame. As a result, the subjects of this study have been selected purposively using a non-random sampling method.

Accordingly, using purposive sampling method, twelve students from each school, that is, a total of 36 students who are between the ages 15-24, who are regular listeners of radio programs, and who are willing to take part in the study have been selected from these three schools.

While selecting the subjects from each school, an attempt has been made to include students from grade 9 through 12. To secure access to reach each section of grade 9 through 12, voluntary teachers been approached. And then, these teachers have been asked to take the name of the volunteers who wanted to participate in the study (if there are any at all) until the required number, i.e. twelve students in each school been obtained. After the subjects of the study have been selected, six focus groups were formed.

Subjects for in-depth interviews were represented from the participants of the six focus group discussions. The participants have been selected based on the criteria, namely, being the most expressive and being eager in the focus group discussions. Accordingly, a total of 12 participants, two from each focus group, have been taken for individual in-depth interview.

### **3.3.2 Researcher's role**

In all the focus group discussions I acted as a moderator. Before the discussion begins I did make sure that all participants were comfortable with my audio recording. All have agreed to my requests. My role as a moderator was mainly raising issues in their sequences, inspiring participants to respond and making sure every member of the group has got fair chances to speak.

## **3.4 Data Analysis Process**

The focus group discussion data has been analyzed qualitatively. After the data was collected through tape recordings and note taking, the tapes have been transcribed to capture all of the main idea in to words of the participants and then, translated into English. Then, to make the qualitative analysis more systematic, the data has been categorized into a common frame of analysis; in this case, a set of responses with similar themes as structured in the discussion guide. The data gathered from the in-depth interview has also been categorized similarly.

After that, the responses that seem to belong together in each category have been interpreted, summarized and presented including direct quotes of the participants which are believed to be representative of the responses to particular issues under discussion.

## **Conclusion**

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were the main tools of data collection in this research. This decision emanates from the set objectives and purposes of the research project that in a way determined the research method which in this case is using qualitative methods of inquiry. I made a description of sampling techniques and procedures that has been used in the research. This component of the methodology has been employed in the data collection phase to come up with the findings put in the following chapter. It seems worth noting at this point that as it is the case to all qualitative methods, generalization would not at all be the intention of this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Presentation and Analysis of Data

### Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt is made to analyze the data obtained from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Emerging issues in the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are analyzed simultaneously as they deal with the same idea.

As it is already mentioned in Chapter One, the main objective of this paper is to explore the radio listening habit of the youth on environmental issues, taking *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* environmental radio program as a case.

As the interview guides for both the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were organized around the two major themes pertaining to the main objective of this study, the information obtained was also analyzed under these two themes. The first theme focused on assessing the listening habit of environmental radio programs by the youth. The second theme was concerned in finding out that the coverage of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* environmental radio program is understandable, interesting and relevant to students of high school at Addis Ababa.

Based on the discussions in the foregoing chapters that adopt the theory of reception analysis and qualitative audience research method; this chapter mainly tries to identify whether the research participants listen to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program, how much the program has shaped their understanding of environmental issues, how understandable, interesting and relevant the program is to their respective environmental concerns.

The presentations of direct quotes of research participants are made based on the degree of relevance and representation of the responses as well as the relative articulation respondents have.

## 4.1 Description of Research Setting

This research was conducted on three high schools in Addis Ababa. The selection method of the schools is described in Chapter three of this paper. The selected high schools were *Dagmawi Menilik S.S*, *Addis Ketema S.S* and *Yemane Birihan S.S*. In the next sections we are going to see the brief descriptions of these schools.

### ***Dagmawi Menelik S.S***

This school was established in 1898 E.C as Ethiopia's first modern school. This school which is located in the sub city of *Arada* started with no more than 20 students at the early stages but presently has 4,198 students. Out of these 2,038 are males and 2,160 of them are females. The school started with 6 classrooms in the initially but now reached to have 64 sections and 37 classes. The numbers of teachers in the school is currently 122, out of these 101 them are males and the rest 21 are female teachers.

This school is not only known for its pioneer in establishment but also in bringing many known personalities like artists. This happened because students are encouraged to participate in different extracurricular activities in the school. The environment protection club of the school is one of the forums to perform for this kind of extracurricular activities. The environmental protection club of *Dagmawi Menelik S.S* has 25 members, of these, 17 Of them are girls and the rest 8 are boys. These active members of the club strive in accomplishing the objectives of their club which centers on minimizing human impact on the environment and make the environment clean and green. As the chair man of the club, Yoseph Dagnachew (a grade 11 student), told to me the club became successful in achieving its main objectives and this effort recognized by different stakeholders in different times. As instances the chairman mentioned the club earns different awards of excellence in keeping the environment. In the group discussion held at the school premises most of the members of the club participated as research participants.

### ***Addis Ketema S.S***

*Addis Ketema S.S* was the other place where this research conducted in. This school established in 1960. The school is located in the heart of “the biggest open market in Africa”-*Merkato*. The school has 4,352 students held in 66 sections; of them 2,374 are males and 1,978 are females. The number the school’s teachers are 111. Male teachers’ are 102 in number and the females’ number is only 9. The students who participated in the environmental protection club reached currently up to 30. Of these members 20 of them are female students. As the coordinator of the club, Atnafu Baynessagn who is a Biology teacher of the school told me the club gives priority for cleaning the surrounding of the school. He said as the school located in the center of a market place, its surrounding is highly polluted by wastes left by traders and consumers, this is why the club gives priority for cleaning he added. Some of the club members participated in the focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews conducted in this research.

### ***Yemane Birihan S.S***

The third school where this research took place, *Yemane Birihan S.S*, was established in 1976 as a private school. It started as a primary and junior school but before three years ago the school administration opened the high school in its compound with 6 class rooms. This school which is located in the sub- city of *Kolfe-Keranio* currently has 345 students, of these 159 are males and 186 are females. The number of teachers in the school is 8, and only one of them is a female. As this school is upgraded to high school level recently, its experience in extracurricular activities is also limited. But the coordinator of the environmental protection club, Ebrahim Ahmed argued, even if the school has limited experience in handling extra curricular activities, member of the club have great potential to activate for the betterment of the environment like those students who belong to senior schools did. As I observed, members of the environmental club planted different trees in their school compound. As Ebrahim told me the students have done this within only one year, and he added that the club members planed for this year to plant more trees inside the school compound

and nearby areas as well. Most of these students participated in this research as respondents.

Four of the FGD sessions were held in class rooms of two schools ( *Dagmawi Menillik* and *Addis Ketema* Secondary Schools) and two sessions were held in the environmental club office of *Yemane Birihan* Secondary school. The same office is used by the club members for various meetings. Coordinator of the environmental club told the researcher that most students have been to his office many times. All research participants also gave their consent to the researcher when he mentioned that office as one of the venues for the FGD.

## **4.2 Listening Habit of the Youth**

The following section of this paper has tried to discuss about the listening habit of the youth by showing their media choice and selection of issues.

### **4.2.1 Media Choice**

Most respondents choose TV as a primary source for information. They mentioned television's power to attract audience as a reason for attending the media regularly. Dawit Mekonen, 17 year male student, said that he preferred TV from other media because of one major reason:

*The presentation on TV always appealed to me because of live pictures. This has the power to catch the eyes of the viewers. I prefer seeing tangible activities via TV rather than hearing or reading about it in other media.*

(Dawit, Yemane Birihan S.S, 20/5/09)

Most of the discussants indicated that radio is preferable in presenting entertaining programs and music. Because of this, they prefer radio next to TV. For the question how often they listen to the radio. Most discussants are found to become occasional listeners. Mostly they choose radio to listen to entertaining programs like music, short information about sport, traffic flow and the like. They also indicated that most of them don't regularly listen to radio programs which have serious genres such as news and current affairs. For 15 year old Samrawit Tsegaye, radio is only serving her as a source of entertainment: "I usually tune radio to listen to music and drama. I don't waste a minute to listen to any radio

program especially if it is a serious genre.” (Samrawit, *Dagmawi Menillik S.S*, 10/5/09)

The respondents exposed that if they obliged to tune educative radio programs, they prefer programs which incorporate entertaining part in it. These kinds of programs have the power to appeal audience, they described. Birtukan Demisse, 18 year old female student on her part made the following comment:

*I usually incline in listening to entertaining radio programs which incorporate elements like music, drama, short story narrations and the like. I have never been bored to listen to such programs. (Birtukan, Yemane Birihan S.S, 20/5/09)*

The research participants also pointed out that they don't read that much magazines and news papers as the price became unaffordable for the social class like them. Assefa Alemu, 17 year old male student, complained on the high price of Magazines and News papers.

*The price of Magazines and news papers currently rose up to 5 Ethiopian Birr. Students can't afford to buy them. I personally don't even watch ETV because it is full of advertisements and music. So that I am enforced in listening to the radio. (Assefa Alemu, Addis Ketema S.S, 15/5/09)*

When the respondents asked which radio station they tuned most, most of them put FM radio stations as their primary choice. They were also asked whether they listen to the national service of Radio Ethiopia or not? In their response, most of them said they don't tune to the station that much. As they put it, they prefer to tune to FM stations because most of the stations have entertaining programs. *Sheger* FM 102.1 is the most popular and favorite radio channel chosen by most of the discussants. Following *Sheger* 102.1, FM 96.3, *Fana* FM 98.1 and FM Addis 97.1 are also favorite channels chosen by the respondents.

#### **4.2.2 Which issue and Why?**

Being asked which issue appeal to them more for listening, most respondents confirmed that they give priority for issues of sport activities and social matters. Few of the discussants described that they have interest in tuning in to issues concerning environment, health and economy. As the participants of the

research said, the way issues presented in the media, 'peer pressure' and family's influence are factors which influenced their choice of issues.

As the research participants explained in the FGDs they don't make a conscious decision to listen to a specific issue on the radio. For the youth, not the issue which forces them to listen, but the way it is presented in the media influenced them to attend to it. They confirmed that, may be after tuning such programs for some times, they might develop interest to follow some issues in the media. Nardos Gorfu, 16 year old female student's experience could be taken as an example:

*Previously I don't have the interest to follow social matters. But a radio program which presented social matters like family problems, via direct phone-in session made me to have interest on such matters. I am now a regular listener of this radio program. (Nardos, Yemane Birihan S.S, 20/5/09)*

'Peer pressure' is the other factor which influenced the youth's choice of issue. As respondents put it, some times they tuned to some specific issues to cop up with their friends. Asmelash Tekalegn, 16 year old male student, confirmed that he regularly attends sport items because of the influence of his class mates.

*I don't have that much interest in sports especially for foot ball. But my class mates always talk about football in the class room. So in order to be active participant in the group and not to be alienated, I usually tune to sport issues and discuss with my friends. (Asmelash, Dagmawi Menillik S.S, 10/5/09)*

A significant number of respondents also mentioned that some family members have considerable influence in shaping their listening habit of specific issues. Nuria Hashim, 15 year old female student, indicated that her family members are the ones who decided what to listen to.

*When ever I stayed home, I don't have the power to choose what ever I like to listen from the radio. If my parents tune to radio news or other programs that interest them, that will be the only choice left for me to listen to. They don't allow me to search the channel I want to tune to. (Nuria, Addis Ketma S.S, 15/5/09)*

For 15 year old female student, Bethlehem Alebachew, the struggle to choose favorite channel is a cause of conflict among her family members.

*I have two brothers and one sister. We always argue each other whenever some one tries to switch on the radio. Our brothers are crazy about foot ball, my sister don't want to miss any radio drama or music choice. Me, I don't have the taste for my brothers' or my sister' choice. I incline to listen more of educative genres. But as the youngest in the house, no one would give me the chance to tune to my favorite station and issue. In our home the decision what to tune to is decided by my elders, so as a result I am forced to listen about sport or music. (Bethlehem, Dagmawi Menillik S.S, 10/5/09)*

Concerning serious genres like educative radio programs, a considerable number of the participants in the study declared that they rarely listen to such programs.

When exploring why the youth do not attend to those serious genres, it is found that it is mainly related with the presentation of such items. For most of the research participants, educative radio programs have no entertaining elements in them. For the youth listeners, entertaining elements like jokes, dramas, short story narrations, music that are appropriate to them should be included. Other wise such programs become boring for them. For Frehiwot Wuhib, a 17 year old female student, it is challenging to listen to educative radio programs because of the 'less interesting presentation': "For me it is boring to listen to dry and serious radio programs. Even I couldn't have the patience to stay for few minutes to check what the program is all about." (Frehiwot, Dagmawi Menillik S.S, 10/5/09)

The other reason research participants gave for not tuning to educative radio programs is related with the transmission time. As most discussants identified most of the educative radio programs of Radio Ethiopia, are transmitted at the day time. This hindered them not to get the chance to tune to some programs. Belay Kefyallew a 17 year old male student, stated that the transmission time of some programs forced him not to attend them.

*Most of the educative radio programs which I would like to attend are transmitted in the day time. At this time of the day, I will be at school. I rather suggest those programs to be transmitted in the evening hours or at the week ends. (Belay, Addis Ketma S.S, 15/5/09)*

In general, the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews revealed that the radio listening habit among participants was not regular. Most of the research participants don't listen to the radio program of the national radio station- Radio Ethiopia. They mostly listen to the entertaining programs of FM radio stations where as serious genre programs are not preferred by them. The choice of issue was determined by the presentation of the matters, peer pressure and family members' dominance.

#### **4.2.3 Audience's Knowledge on Environmental Situations**

In order to know the knowledge of the research participants on environmental issues they were asked some questions. Results from the Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews revealed water resources to be the highly endangered part of the environment according to the research participants. This concern is pronounced in almost in all focus group discussions held with students. The participants also mentioned that forests are also be endangered in their respective localities. Because of this situation other resources like soil and air are also getting affected, the respondents assured.

The discussants also asked to mention what they think are the causes for environmental degradation in their localities. They put lack of awareness on environmental issues as the major cause for the problem. Weakness of the government to implement proper protection and management of the environment also mentioned as an additional cause for the problem.

As a solution they suggested to rise of the public's awareness on environmental matters. In this regard they underlined on the important role the media can play. Frehiwot Wuhib, 17 year old female student and regular listener of environmental radio programs, expressed what she said the media is reluctant in giving attention on environmental matters.

*As far as I observed the Ethiopian media, especially many radio stations, give too much time in dealing with for issues which are less irrelevant like football, music and art. I think serious issues like environment and health are neglected when we compare it with the coverage of other issues. (Frehiwot,Dagmawi Menillik S.S,10/5/09)*

This view was also shared by most of the respondents who participated in the group discussions.

As to the sources of environmental knowledge, student participants of this study mentioned that regular class and participation in the environmental clubs are the main source of environmental information. Most respondents also described the media, in particular, TV and radio, to be their second sources of environmental information.

### **4.3 *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* Environmental Radio Program**

This section deals in identifying the listeners of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* and it presents audience's view on the content of the program and the rate they gave for the program. The section also discusses about the language usage in the program and how the audience apply the message transmitted by the radio program.

#### **4.3.1 Who are Listeners?**

Form the 36 respondents who participated in the FGD, only four of them are found to be regular, and six of them are occasional listeners of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*. The rest, 26 respondents never tune to the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* environmental radio program or know about it. As they reported, it is for the first time that they heard about *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program when the researcher talked to them. Even, some of the respondents wondered if Radio Ethiopia has any environmental radio program. This kind of question reminds the researcher the same opinion reflected by some studies conducted in the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University. For instance, the research conducted by Eyob(2006) stated that Radio Ethiopia doesn't have a single environmental radio program dedicated to serve farmers as target audiences. (Eyob, 2006:83)

But the fact, as far as I know, Radio Ethiopia has environmental concern radio program known as *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* (population and environment). Even though this program is treated environment issues combination with the issue of population, the predominant issue addressed in the program much of the time is the environment one. (See the result of the qualitative content analysis conducted by the researcher on page 43)

In the FGDs, the occasional listeners revealed that the transmission time of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program which is on Tuesdays from 12:30 am-1:00 pm is not convenient to them. This is the reason for their occasional tuning out to the program. They said *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program transmission time should be on weekends, or at evenings, if the transmission time adjusted in this manner, it will be convenient for them to attend the program regularly.

The 26 respondents who claimed not having knowledge of the existence of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* along with their respective FGD members were made to listen to sample *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* programs taken by me to the research location. After listening to the sample programs, respondents recommended that Radio Ethiopia should change the content of its environmental radio program- *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* especially for the youth group. They also suggested switching the transmission hour of the program to the convenient time to attend by students.

As occasional listeners and those who didn't tune the program at all put it [after having the information about the airing time of the program] the current broadcasting time of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* is not convenient especially for the students to tune it.

*I am a regular listener of the radio program Sinehizb-ena-Akababi. I get the chance to tune the program only because my residence is near to the school. As you know the airing time of Sinehizb-ena-Akababi is on lunch break time. Because I am near to the school I could go to home and tune to the program. But all my friends don't get this kind of chance as they stayed in the school or around the premises with out access to radio sets. (Sara Chane, Addis Ketema S.S, 15/5/09)*

Considering such kind of suggestion is supported by the theory of reception analysis which depicts audiences as having the free will to decided what and when to watch, listen and read a certain media products(Williams,2003:199)

The in-depth interview conducted with the producer of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* , Beyene Engdaw, revealed that in contrary to what the students said, the producers of the program believed that the airing time of the program is convenient to all audiences. Because of this, they never thought of shifting the transmission time.

*We believed that the airing time of Sinehizb-ena-Akababi (12:30 am-1pm) is convenient for every audience. This time of the day is lunch- break for most of the people. This would enable most audiences to have the chance to tune our program. This time is also considered as prime time of the radio station- it is believed that most people attend the station at this time. (Beyene, 1/5/09)*

Concerning their reaction to the duration of each weekly program, most of the respondents said 20 minutes are reasonable for them to stay at a place and following the program. Some of them said what matters much is not the length of the program rather the way the program is presented and its 'beauty' weighs much. Meaza Worku, 18 year old female student, on her part made the following comment.

*When educative radio programs have the element of entertainment, I could tune the programs for hours without being tired or feeling bored. But if the presentation doesn't appeal me I couldn't stay even for few minutes; I immediately turn to another channel. (Meaza, Yemane Birihan S.S, 20/5/09)*

As the producer of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program, told me, the length of the program-20 minutes, is enough for the time being. But for the future they have the plan to separate the two joined issues- population and environment, and give enough time by entertaining in different radio programs.

This research shows that most of the research participants don't listen to the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*. But the occasional listeners complain about the inconvenience of the transmission time of the radio program and suggest the program to be shifted to the weekends or to be aired on night time.

### 4.3.2 Content of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*

The in-depth interviews conducted with the producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program gave the researcher a clear picture about the program. Mesfin Assefa- the former producer of the program, stayed for 8 years in the program. Mesfin was the one who proposed to start the program. As he recalled, he was inspired to start the radio program after attending on environmental radio coverage training held in the capital of Ghana, Accra. After submitting the proposal and getting the go-ahead from his supervisors he launched the program with his colleagues.

The in-depth interview conducted with these two senior journalists showed that the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* contained various environmental issues related to urban as well as rural areas.

*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program is designed to have a magazine format. The former producer of the program, Mesfin Assefa, told to the researcher that the producers used the Magazine format because they thought that this approach will attract many audiences. But as he remembered this didn't continue long.

*After three years, we couldn't keep up in following the Magazine Format. The main reason for this is related with lack of support from sponsors. For instance one organization had supported us in airing short radio plays for sometimes. But when the fund stopped we also interrupted presenting the radio dramas. (Mesfin, 3/5/09)*

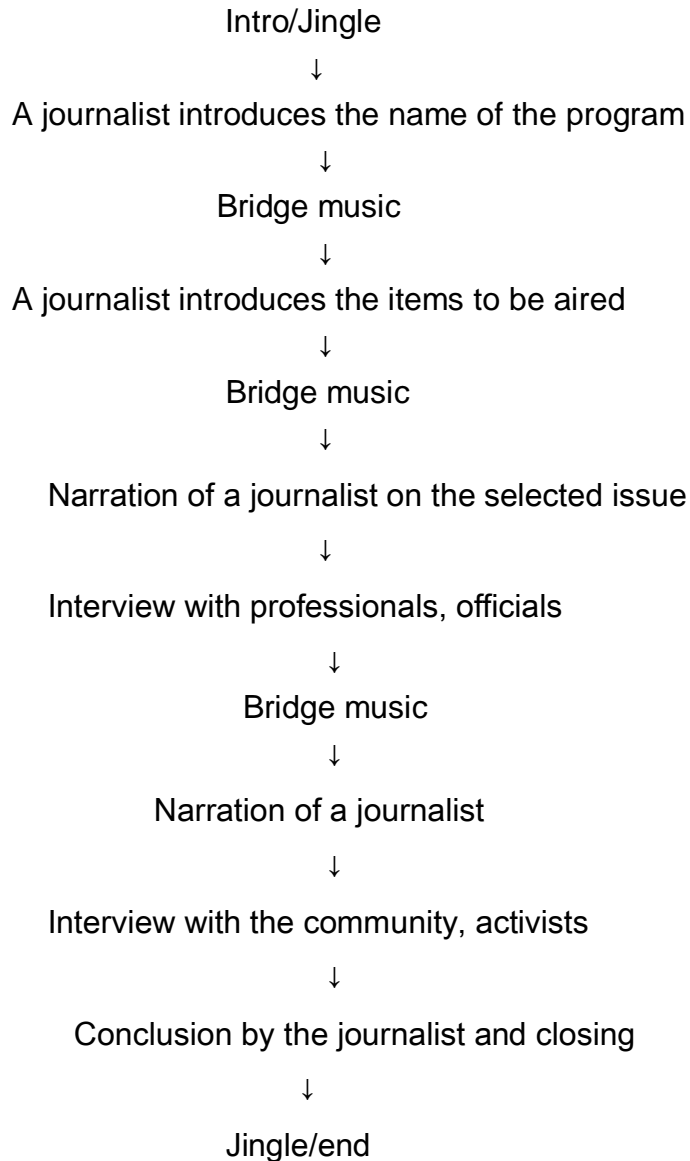
As Mesfin recalled there were different packages in the Magazine format like interviews, Analysis, Short story narrations and radio plays.

Beyene Engdaw, the current producer of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, stayed for three years in producing the program. He told the researcher that the current producers of the program also tried to present the program in a Magazine format.

*We would like to present the program in a magazine format. But sometimes we can't keep the format because of lack of materials. In this kind of situations we forced to present the program in one package type-only interviews or journalist's narration. (Beyene, 1/5/09)*

The researcher of this study also found that the current presentation of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* doesn't follow the magazine format. Seeing the common format of the program would provide a clear picture about this situation.

**The common format of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi***



As we can see from the above format of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, the program always starts with presenting the introductory part of the program. This part is focusing on presenting to the audience the name of the program and its theme. Then a fragment of seconds is used for tuning to a bridge music, which intends to keep the attention of the audience till the voice of the host journalist appears on the air.

When the host journalist (the journalist who leads the program) appears on the air, he/she introduces the content of the program for that day. Then according to the type of the issue, professionals and officials share their experience through interviews they conducted earlier.

After tuning in to the bridge music in between, the host journalist continues strengthening the opinions raised by the experts or the officials in their interviews. The host journalist does this by reading the script he wrote earlier.

When the program is winded up, the closing jingle (the short music which signals the end of the program) be aired as a final input of the program.

The above format of the program clearly shows us that most of the programs contained one package like interview with experts or the public. In order to make it a Magazine format, different packages like Analysis, Short story narrations and radio plays should be included.

I tried to make a rough examination of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio programs transmitted between September-April 2009, which is equivalent to about 11 hours of audio production. A total of 32 programs dealing with various environmental issues were aired.

Almost all programs were made of interviews with experts and officials. Out of the 32 programs only eight of them contained sound bites of communities like farmers and youth. In these interviews, farmers who participated in recovering environment and youths who actively participated in environmental protection activities were presented.

When we see the 24 aired programs, we found that next to the voice of experts and officials the journalists do much of the talk. Journalists act like the expert and give explanations about different environmental issues by quoting from different reading materials. Here there are no sound bites at all and it is not likely to tune to the voice of the ordinary people.

When we see the topics of those 32 aired programs in the last eight months, we get the issue of forest having much coverage. Other environmental issues like pollution, climate change, biodiversity are also entertained in the program. The programs incorporated global and national concerns, having focus on different activities under taken by regional administrations and the capital city Addis Ababa. The table presented below shows us this situation.

TABEL 1- *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* programs aired between the months of September 2008 up to April 2009

Month	Week	Topic of the Program	Focused Area
SEPTEMBER	1	Industrial Pollution-part -1	Addis Ababa
	2	Industrial Pollution-part -2	Addis Ababa
	3	Reproductive health and Family Planning	National
	4	Forest	National
OCTOBER	1	Environmental pollution by house hold garbage	Amhara-Gonder
	2	Usage of 'Ethanol'+ population policy	National
	3	Population policy	National
	4	Fuel and Forest	National
NOVEMBER	1	Forest rehabilitation/Afforestation/-part 1	Amhara-Wogera Woreda
	2	Forest and fuel-Part-2	Amhara-Wogera Woreda
	3	Family planning service	Amhara
	4	Family Planning service	Amhara
DECEMBER	1	City beautification part-1	Addis Ababa
	2	City beautification part-2	Addis Ababa
	3	Forest and National park	Southern Ethiopia
	4	Afforestation	Amhara-Gonder
JANUARY	1	Water-Nile	National+ Continental
	2	Rehabilitating degraded areas/Forest/	Amhara-Gonder+Wollo
	3	Water-Nile	National+ Continental
	4	River Pollution	Addis Ababa
FEBRUARY	1	Natural coffee forest- part-1	Oromia- Illuababora
	2	Natural coffee forest- part-2	Oromia- Illuababora
	3	Keeping the forest	Benishangul Gumuz
	4	Climate Change and Government policy	National
MARCH	1	Forestry college of Wondo Genet- part-1	National
	2	Forestry college of Wondo Genet- part-2	National
	3	Forestry college of Wondo Genet- part-2	National
	4	Biodiversity	National
APRIL	1	Climate Change and government stake holders	National
	2	Sound Pollution	National
	3	Afforestation and Farmers- part-1	Southern Ethiopia
	4	Afforestation and Farmers- part-2	Southern Ethiopia

Source- a qualitative research conducted by the researcher on the aired program of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* and documents from Archive.

Generally speaking, the intended format of the program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* was a magazine one. This was thought to attract the audience. But the real practice in the program showed us that the content of the program is dominated by the voice of officials, experts and journalists by forgetting incorporating ordinary people. Due to this, the program could not attract audiences.

#### **4.3.3 Respondents' View on the content of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi***

Regular as well as occasional listeners of the radio program of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* claimed that they found the program covers various environmental and development issues. Nura Abdella (15-year-old-female student from Addis Ketema S.S) also agreed with this idea: "As far as I know, *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program covers a variety of issues like afforestation, climate change and pollution." Eyasu Kellele(16-year-old-male student from Yemane Birihan S.S) also forwarded what he observed on the content of the program:

*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi radio program presented Varsity of issues and interviewees in it. As I remember farmers who worked in rehabilitating degraded lands and youths who participated in environment protection appeared as guests in the program. (Eyasu Kellele, 20/5/09)*

The qualitative content analysis conducted on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program revealed that much emphasis was given for the issue of forest. The producer of the program, Beyene Engdaw , also agreed with this finding: " In the last 8 months transmission period we gave much emphasis for the issue of forest. This was happening due to the government focus and campaign to plant more trees in relation with the Ethiopian Millennium."

In each Focus Group the researcher made participants listen to sample programs. This in particular enabled those who didn't listen to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program to be active participants it enabled the respondents to react to the questions related to the content of the program.

Most of the respondents said that the messages of the programs are in conformity with what they already know from their life experience and their schooling. Some also noted that they gained knowledge from the programs.

Concerning the question what kind of messages they want to get from *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program, most students in the research group opted for facts on environmental conditions and success stories of people who have changed their environment for better.

*For me I choose to hear the voice of the ordinary people- those people who dedicated themselves in protecting the environment and became successful. (Mezgebu Abera, Dagmawi Menilik S.S, 10/5/09)*

*It is boring to listen to only experts and officials' voices. The media should be able to bring celebrities and people who can be taken as a role model. Bringing these kinds of people will provide more power to the media to attract audiences and send the intended message. (Hafiza Kedir, Addis Ketema S.S, 15/5/09)*

Over all it seems the respondents like to listen to people whom they can take their steps for action. Especially the youth would like to tune to their fellows' experience.

Even though most of the respondents are not the listeners of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, their feedbacks after listening the sample programs were valuable for this research. Over all it seems the respondents would like to listen to people whom they can take their stapes for action. Especially the youth would like to tune to their fellow's experience in the practice of changing the environment for better.

#### **4.3.4 Language usage of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi***

Scholars in the study of media and audiences argue that producers of 'media texts' may think that they are producing messages with clarity and simplicity but these messages won't be "simply dumped in to the minds of passive audiences." What the audiences do according to these scholars is to infer from the media texts various meanings. (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003:267) This view is also

supported by the active audience theory which is discussed in the previous chapters of this study. Accordingly an attempt has been made to check whether respondents speak and understand the language used by the radio program under investigation.

As FGDs with research participants revealed, producers' use of unfamiliar words and phrases affect the interpretation of listeners of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

*Some experts who appeared in the radio program Sinehizb-ena-Akababi used too many technical words and jargons. This will make understanding the whole message difficult. (Yosef Dagmawi, Dagmawi Menillik S.S, 10/5/09):*

Metasebia H/Mariam(18-year-old-female student from *Yemane Birihan S.S*) also discussed what he faced in relation with the language usage if the program

*Concerning the language used in the radio program Sinehizb-ena-Akababi, for me it is some how understandable. As member of the environmental club in my school, I do have some knowledge on the concepts related with environment this helped me to in understanding the terminologies raised in the program. But my doubt is could every listener understand those ideas easily? (Metasebia, 20/5/09)*

The producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* also acknowledged the problem in related with the use of language.

*Most of the time we try to translate English coined words and terminologies in to Amharic version. But we can't assure to any body this happened every time. Sometimes when we don't have synonym for those terminologies, we just let the English version to be aired as it is. (Beyene Engraw, the current producer of the program, 1/5/09)*

According to these producers, the problem mixing English words and phrases as well as jargons are to come in most cases from the interviewees. Scholars in the broadcast recommended producer to abstain, as far as possible, from using words or phrases that listeners might not understand. The result of inserting such words or phrases will only make audiences lose their focus to the program. In Boyd's words "while they [Listeners] are puzzling over its meaning the information that follows will vanish in to the ether"(Boyd, 2001:62; cited in Solomon, 2008:49)

### 4.3.5 Applying of Media Messages

As many respondents who participated in the research are members of environmental clubs which reside in their respective schools, they reported that they mainly get in formation about the environment from their clubs.

Many of the respondents also described that the information they get from the radio programs like *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* can reinforce what they learned from school and environment clubs. The message can help them in boosting what they already started- in protecting the environment, according to the respondents.

*I get much of the information about the environment issue from the club I participated. From the media, especially from the radio program Sinehizb-ena-Akababi, I usually get information about scientific innovations and new data in relation with the environment. (Belay Kefyalew, Addis Ketema S.S, 15/5/09)*

Some regular listeners of the program confirmed that some kinds of messages transmitted via the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* inspired them for taking actions in protecting the environment. For them, bringing people who actively participated in environmental protection activity is the one which can create this kind of inspiration.

*I always am inspired to protect the environment when I see or hear about successful people in action. For instance, I personally became member of the environmental protection club after inspired by the actions of the famous environment activist 'Gashe Abera Molla'. (Shikur Mohammed, Addis Ketema S.S, 15/5/09)*

Given the power of audiences as forwarded by proponents of the theory of active audience, it is difficult to assume media as sole source of change. It however seems reasonable to agree with the view that says "the media are more likely to reinforce than to change " (Servae, 1999 cited in Eyob, 2006:71) Likewise student respondents said that the issues raised in the program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* have served them as reminders of environmental issues they already know. They also claimed that the message they listen to on the radio may inspire them to relate the issue with their environmental situation and act accordingly.

#### 4.3.6 General rating by Research Participants

In every FGDs conducted in this research, participants asked to rate the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* by giving their own reason.

Out of the 36 respondents 20 of them or 55% of them gave the radio program the mark 'good'. Ten of them or 27% respondents gave the grade 'excellent' and the rest six of them or 16% gave 'very good' grade to the program. As most respondents agreed, the program would be better than this if some improvements be taken.

The respondents suggested that if this kind of important radio program blended with entertainment element, it would catch the interest of the youth and able to educate them well.

Including those who didn't listen to the program before [after listening to sample programs] appreciated the content of the program. The respondents especially appreciated the attempt of the program to incorporate various voices like experts, officials and some member of the community. However, the respondents also strongly recommended that if the program continues in presenting the experience of those who participated in environmental protection activity, it would catch the interest of most audiences. They also advised the radio stations to identify burning issues of the public and treat those matters well.

In addition to these as the respondents put it, audiences are refraining from tuning to radio stations like Radio Ethiopia in relation with the problem of credibility. Yared Teshome, 18 year old male student agreed with the above idea.

*Nowadays media like Radio Ethiopia are losing their credibility. This happened because the stations present unreliable and false information concerning different issues. For instance these Medias disseminate information about the current price of food items like 'Teff' and onion, but when you go to the market place and check the reality; you will find that what has been told in the radio and what is observed on the ground are contrary. You can observe this kind of mismatch also on information related with the economic growth of the country. (Yared, Dagmawi Menillik S.S, 10/5/09)*

Another respondent, Birtukan demisse, 15 year old female student, also shares the idea forwarded by her friends.

*Audiences especially the youth are detaching themselves from tuning radio stations like Radio Ethiopia. This is happened because most of the time the stations entertained propaganda and dry political issues. That's why most youth audiences turn their attention in attending issues like foot ball and entertainment. (Birukan, Yemane Birihan S.S, 20/5/09)*

In general the respondents recommended that Radio Ethiopia must be able to select issues which are of the public interest and entertain them with incorporating much of the voice of the ordinary people in order to gain its credibility as well as to achieve its objective as a public media.

#### **4.4 Environment Reporting at Radio Ethiopia**

Mass communication experts like Baran and Davis (2006:276) warn researchers involved in reception studies not to make their own statements about encoding or decoding but rather to meticulously examine the situations in which the media messages are produced as much as the audiences. That is why this study tried to asses the situations at Radio Ethiopia where the media output of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* produced.

The in-depth interview conducted with the founder and former producer of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, Mesfin Assefa, showed how and why this program started. As he told me, the idea of starting this program emerged in the year 1993/94. At that time as Mesfin recalls, new policies concerning population and environment protection were drafted.

The need to introduce the newly drafted policies to the public had created conducive situation for starting of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*. This program as its name indicated focuses on the issue of population and environment. One of the themes of this program (the environmental aspect) has intended to create public awareness on environmental issues. The other mission

of the program is disseminating messages to make the public know about the newly drafted environmental policy. According to Mesfin, it was in the year 1997/98, the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* started to be on air.

When we examine how the producers plan and prepare the program, we found that the whole process begins with setting an Annual plan. In this process, the journalists are expected to propose the thematic area (general topics) to be dealt with in the year. Then the journalists are required to prepare monthly plan. This is a more detail plan than the annual one and is the critical step in selecting and proposing specific topics which are going to be dealt in each week. In this step each journalist is expected to present the detail of the topic he/she plan to deal for the editorial group of the department. The editorial group, which is mostly composed of editors, will examine and comment on the topics and finally pass it for the individual journalist to implement it.

*Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program is currently produced by one permanent editor and assistant editors who change from time to time. According to Beyene Engdaw, the permanent producer of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, the program needs more producers who are going to handle it permanently: “We have shortage of man power. I am the only permanent editor reside in the program. Other editors, who can handle the program attentively, must be assigned.”

For the producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* the most challenging thing in producing the program is getting the necessary information from the right person. Because the current producers of the program are less experienced and have less contact with professionals, it becomes difficult to get information.

It is obvious that in order to produce a radio program, the journalist need materials like sound bites of interviewed people. When we come to the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, some times when producers couldn't find the necessary material, they are forced to cover the program with reading materials from a magazine or other sources.

As Beyene admit it, this kind of presentation is against the intended format of the program which is the 'Magazine Format'.

*Sometimes when we lack input materials; we just take a text from internet, magazine or news paper and present it in narration without adding any sound bites. Or we might call to some expert, conduct the interview via phone, and let the whole material to be aired as it is. Of course this kind of presentation is against our magazine format and could make our program to become boring.*  
(Beyene, 1/5/09)

Beyene mentioned that this kind of situation happens because the journalists are not well trained in sniffing and digging different issues related to environment. As he said, there is lack of capacity in getting enough and relevant materials to entertain on the program.

In relation to the skills and education of the producers, the main producer of the program Beyene Engdaw has a diploma in Adult Education. He is also currently a BA student of Global Study and International Relation at Generation University College in Addis Ababa.

As Beyene told me besides taking some general training on radio journalism, he didn't take any training in relation to producing environmental radio program. This in turn hindered him from producing effective environmental programs: "I believe that taking relevant trainings on global and national environmental situations would be helpful in treating such matters well and producing effective radio programs."

Concerning how journalists are assigned to work on the program, Beyene acknowledged that most of the time journalists are assigned to work on any program as a matter of chance. As he explained what this means, journalists are not assigned to produce any program by considering their educational background or according to their interests- this kind of assignment is done randomly, he added.

In relation to getting feedbacks from audience, the producers of the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* could be taken as having poor relationship with the audience.

*We tried to get feedbacks from the audience mainly only from telephone while the program is airing. Other than this we don't receive significant number of letters from the audience. Yearly we only get 3-5 letters from our audiences. (Beyene, 1/5/09)*

The researcher of this study believes that having strong relationship with the audience is vital in getting feedbacks for the program. So I recommend that the producers should work hard in promoting and encouraging their audiences to write and call them regularly.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I tried to present and interpret the reaction of research participants to a set of questions concerning the listening habit of the audiences in environmental messages and the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*. In line with the research questions and objectives of this study, the findings and interpretations were presented and categorized under thematic areas. Regarding reinforcement theory and presence of active audience, results of the interpretation are found to be inconformity with the basic tenets of the theory of active audience which are also adopted as the theoretical foundation of this study. In other words, the respondents do not display homogeneity in their reception of messages of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program; they rather develop meaning by actively relating to their lived experiences and social settings. And out of the discussion in this chapter, conclusions and recommendations are made in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER FIVE: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

In a situation where environmental issue becomes critical issue, nations should focus on fighting the environmental problem by educating and equipping their citizens with the necessary information about the situation. To reach the general population with these messages, mass media has a great role. However, it is also vital to cross check whether or not the intended message reaches to the right audience and meet the targeted plan. Like wise In Ethiopia, the information concerning whether the youth group listen to radio programs related to environmental issues or not is almost non existent. This study, therefore, explored the radio listening habit of high school youth on environmental issues, with particular reference to the environmental radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*.

In fact, as this study is limited to a small group of high school youth so its findings cannot be generalized to the whole youth population. However, it is believed that the findings offered some important insights into the understanding regarding the listening habit of youth on environmental media messages.

In this study it is observed that most of the participants considered environment protection clubs and the formal education as their main source of information. But they didn't mention the media in general and the radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* particular as their main sources for information in relation to environment.

Most of the discussants indicated that for them radio is preferable in presenting entertaining programs and music. When the respondents were asked which radio station they tuned to most, most of them put FM radio stations as their primary choice. They prefer FM stations because most of the stations are entertaining.

As some research participants pointed out that they don't read that much magazines and news papers as the price became unaffordable for the social class like them.

Being asked which issue appeals them most for listening, most respondents confirmed that they give priority for issues of sport activities and social matters. Concerning serious genres like educative radio programs, a considerable number of the participants in the study claimed that they rarely tune to such programs.

As this study showed, radio programs which include drama, songs, stories and phone-in programs are the preferred ones amongst the youth for delivering environmental messages. Most respondents also agreed to the insignificant attention paid by the media to the coverage of environmental issues. Some audiences also mentioned lack of credibility in national media; make them to refrain from tuning to them.

As the FGDs showed, research participants make a conscious decision to listen a specific issue on radio. The listening habit of radio among the participants was not regular. The choice of issue is determined by the presentation of the matters, peer pressure and family members' dominance. This kind of situation shows as what Croteau and Hoynes (2003:273), points out- we are not simply free of constraints while we confront with media messages. The finding also shows us what Pitout mentioned- Factors like age, parental status, gender neighborhood and the like shape our media experience (2003:273). Pitout also indicated that our family setting and our social group membership in which our media consumption takes place have influence in our interpretation of media messages (2001:258).

Form the 36 respondent who participated in the FGD, only four of them were found to be regular, and six of them were occasional listeners of the radio program, *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*. The rest 26 respondents never tuned to the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* environmental radio program or know about it. They stated lack of entertaining elements from the program and lack of credibility as major reasons that force them not attending such programs.

Those listeners who tuned the program occasionally revealed that the transmission time of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program which is on Tuesdays from 12:30 am-1:00 pm is not convenient to them. This was the reason for their occasional tuning to the program. They said had *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program transmission time been on weekends or at evenings, they would have attended the program regularly.

Most of the respondents said that the messages of the programs of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* are in conformity with what they already know from their life experience and their schooling. Some also noted that they have gained some knowledge from the programs.

The production of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* has very much relied on inputs from experts and academicians which creates less interest to the some part of the community. But as most respondents indicated, they like to listen to people whom they can take their steps for action. As youth group, they would like to tune their fellows' experience. Most respondents said they would like to listen to the voices of ordinary people though they consider professionals' voice as an important component. However the current program format is not interesting for the audience as respondents put it.

From the perspective of the producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi*, lack of manpower and poor capacity to get information are mentioned as the main constraints in producing the program. They also admitted that lack of professional education and training constrained them from producing effective radio programs. Having poor relationship with their audiences also mentioned as one of the producers' weakness.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that most youth don't use those serious genres, like environmental issues. This was mainly related with the presentation of such items. It is thus suggested that, educative radio programs should include entertaining elements like jokes, dramas, short story narrations, music that are appropriate to them.

The findings of this study also suggest that the environmental radio program *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* has to incorporate the voices of people at grass roots who have direct attachments with environmental issues raised by the radio program. The study would like recommend that the program should continue in presenting the experience of those who participated in environmental protection activity. This will catch the interest of most audiences.

It is also appropriate to advise the radio program producers like *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* to identify burning issues of the public and treat those matters well. Radio stations and other media are expected to avoid credibility problems and give adequate emphasis for serious genres like environmental issues.

The producers need to develop a method to popularize newly coined Amharic words as well as foreign terms of environment science that have no equivalent terms in Amharic to the audience before using them. The producers need to always explain the newly coined terms and jargons immediately after mentioning them. Concerning interviewees, before every interview the producers have to remind the experts that their listeners are people who mostly understand Amharic. It is also appropriate to recommend journalists in consultation with professionals working on environment to come up with a style book for environmental reporting.

The producers of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* should be able to conduct and identify the convenient time for listening and possibly switch the transmission hour of the program to the convenient time for students. They also need to encourage audiences to write more letters and to have contact with the program producers. This will help the producers to get valuable feedbacks for the betterment of the program.

It is also in the interest of this study that a more comprehensive research based on quantitative inquiries be made on audiences of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* to be able to come up with results that can be more representative of the general audience of the program.

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## APPENDICES

### ANNEX 1: List of research participants

#### FGD participants

##### Yemane Birihan Secondary School

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Grade Level	Listening to <i>Sinehizb-ena-Akababi</i>
1	Abdi Waqeyo	M	15	9	Don't listen
2	Azeb Abrham	F	17	10	Occasional
3	Nardos Gorfu	F	16	9	Don't listen
4	Meaza Worku	F	18	11	Don't listen
5	Nardos Tilahun	F	15	9	Don't listen
6	Metasebia H/Mariam	F	18	12	Don't listen
7	Eyasu Kellele	M	16	10	Don't listen
8	Anaoli Mersha	M	15	9	Regular
9	Dawit Mekonen	M	17	11	Don't listen
10	Eyerusalem Tilahun	F	15	9	Don't listen
11	Birtukan Demisse	F	18	12	Don't listen
12	Feven Tewodros	F	15	9	Occasional

##### Dagmawi Menillik secondary School

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Grade Level	Listening to <i>Sinehizb-ena-Akababi</i>
1	Fikrte Demsse	F	15	9	Occasional
2	Samrawit Hailu	F	16	10	Don't listen
3	Eyrusalem Mezgebu	F	17	9	Don't listen
4	Sintayhu Wondossen	M	17	10	Don't listen
5	Yared Teshome	M	15	9	Regular
6	Yoseph Dagnachew	M	18	11	Don't listen
7	Frehiwot Wuhib	F	17	11	Don't listen
8	Asmelash Tekalegn	M	16	9	Occasional
9	Betelehem Alebachew	F	15	9	Don't listen
10	Embet Tadesse	F	17	12	Don't listen
11	Samrawit Tsegaye	F	15	9	Don't listen
12	Mezgebu Abera	M	17	12	Don't listen

Addis Ketema secondary School

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Grade Level	Listening to <i>Sinehizb-ena-Akababi</i>
1	Shikur Mohammed	M	15	10	Don't listen
2	Nuria Hashim	F	16	9	Don't listen
3	Tesema Belay	M	17	11	Occasional
4	Sara Chane	F	17	9	Don't listen
5	Belay Kefyalew	M	15	10	Regular
6	Birtukan Abebe	F	18	9	Don't listen
7	Hafiza Kedir	F	17	10	Don't listen
8	Nura Abdella	F	16	9	Occasional
9	Assefa Alemu	M	15	10	Don't listen
10	Tenagne Abera	F	17	11	Don't listen
11	Tsega Alemu	M	15	9	Regular
12	Asres Bekele	F	17	10	Don't listen

**Individual in-depth interviews participants**

**Students**

No	Name	Sex	Age	Grade Level	Listening to <i>Sinehizb-ena-Akababi</i>
1.	Nardos Tilahun	F	15	9	Don't listen
2.	Azeb Abraham	F	17	10	Occasional
3.	Feven Tewodros	F	15	9	Occasional
4.	Eyrusalem Tilahun	M	17	10	Don't listen
5.	Sintayhu Wondwossen	M	17	10	Don't listen
6.	Betelhem Alebachew	F	15	9	Don't listen
7.	Frehiwot Wuhib	F	17	11	Don't listen
8.	Eyrusalem Mezgebe	F	17	9	Don't listen
9.	Nuria Hashim	F	16	9	Don't listen
10.	Belay Kefyalew	M	15	10	Regular
11.	Nura Abdella	F	16	9	Occasional
12.	Asres Bekele	F	17	10	Don't listen

**Journalists**

Mesfin Assefa, Beyene Engdaw

## **ANNEX 2a: Interview guide for FGD and In-depth Interview with students**

### **Part 1: Biographical Information**

1. Name/Code\_\_\_\_\_
2. Age\_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender\_\_\_\_\_
4. Grade level\_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 2: Knowledge of local Environmental Issues**

1. Which part of the environment is more affected in your area?  
*(list them in sequence):*  
a, soil b, forest c, water d, air
2. Why do you think the above component/s of the environment is/are affected?
3. How does the status of these components affect your life?
4. What will be the future of the environment in your locality? Will it improve or get worse?
5. What solutions do you suggest to environmental degradation? (E.g. Prayers, better management, policy, more media work...)

### **Part 3: Access to media and use**

1. How is your access to the media?  
a, Radio b, TV c, Print media d. Internet  
e. Other medias\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which programs/ columns do you attend often?
3. How do you get information about environmental issues?
4. From the different sources of information which one do you prefer most? Why?

### **Part 4: Listening habit of Radio**

1. How often do you listen to radio?
2. Which radio station do you listen to most?
3. Do you listen to Radio Ethiopia?
4. How often and what program do you listen most?
5. Which radio programs are your favorites? (List them in order of importance)  
a. environment b. sport c. health d. news

e. others\_\_\_\_\_

6. What are your main reasons for the priority?

### **Part 5: Listening habit of 'Environmental' radio programs**

1 How often do you listen to environmental radio programs?

2. Which radio station's environmental radio program do you listen most?

3. What do you like and dislike most about the program?

### **Part 6: Listening habit of Radio Ethiopia's *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program**

1. Whose radio do you usually listen to?

a, your own radio b, friend's radio C, families radio

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

2. When did you start listening to Radio Ethiopia?

3. How often do you listen to Radio Ethiopia?

a, almost daily b, about 2/3 days a week c, once a week

d, other\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which radio programs are your favorites? (*list them in order of importance*)

a, environment b, sport c, health d, news

e, other\_\_\_\_\_

5. What are your main reasons for the above priority

6. Do you listen to the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

a, Yes b, No

7. If you are listening to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program , who is the owner (producing agency) of the program?

8. What comes first to your mind when you think of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

9. Why are you listening to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

10. How often do you listen to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

a, regularly b, not regularly

11. When did you start listening to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

12. How do you use *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program program?  
a, as a source of entertainment b, as a source of information and news c, as any other radio program d, don't know
13. What features of the program interest you most and make the program particularly relevant to you? Why? (*Could be more than one answer*)
14. How are your needs met in the radio program (refers to the issues you think were made particularly for you)?
15. What do the programs lack/miss to meet your demands, (if they do)?
16. In what condition are you listening to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program? (*While studying, eating, sitting in your room...?*)
17. Was there a time where you decided to stop listening to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?  
a, Yes b, No
18. If your answer to the above question is yes, what were your reasons?  
a, the broadcast time is inconvenient with your own activity  
b, overlap of the program with other program(radio or TV) c, Irrelevance of the program to personal activity(interest)  
d, other \_\_\_\_\_
19. Is the bi-weekly *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio programming enough? For how many days a week do you like to listen to *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?
20. What is your reaction to the duration of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program? Should it be extended (longer than the current) or reduced (shorter than its current duration)?
21. Are you comfortable with the timing of the program contents? (Are they compatible with the seasons/farming calendars of farmers ...?)
22. Are there any programs that inspired you? Can you try to remember one or more programs?
23. Which issues do you think have got more coverage on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program? (*List in your own sequence*)  
a, water & irrigation b, soil c, agriculture d, forest  
e, other \_\_\_\_\_

24. How relevant are the above issues to the environmental realities of your locality?
25. How easily/clearly do you understand the language/words used by the journalists and interviewees (experts, farmers...)?
26. Whose language do you understand better: the journalists' or the interviewee's?
27. Among the interviewees whom do you find easy to understand: Professionals/experts or farmers?
28. To what degree do you think has the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program helped you know the causes and solutions for some of your environmental issues?
29. Have you ever heard from your teachers what you have heard from the radio program?
30. If your answer to the above question is "YES" , then What do you feel when you hear again the same issue (aired on radio) from your teachers?
31. Does the content of the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program conform to what your teachers and other professionals telling you?
32. Do you discuss the issues raised by the *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program program with your friends or teachers? If so, how often?
33. Have you ever tried to put into practice the information you have got from the program? (E.g. stopped cutting trees, planted trees, construct terraces...)
34. How do you generally evaluate the coverage of environmental issues *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program ?

**ANNEX 2b: Interview Guide for all FGDs on Interpretation of Messages** (after listening to two sample programs)

1. What are the programs about?
2. What meaning did you make after listening to the programs? Why?
3. Were they interesting to you? Why?
4. Are they inconformity with what you already know?

5. How does each program appeal to your own life experience as a human being and as member of environmental club?

6. To whom do you think the programs need to be presented? Why?

7. What kind of messages do you want to get from the programs on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

(Facts, people's experience, educative, entertaining, apprehensive messages...)

8. If you were to evaluate *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program, where do you put it and why?

a, excellent b, very good c, good d, fair, e. poor

## **ANNEX 3a: Guide for In-depth Interview with the coordinator/producer of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program.**

### **I. PART ONE**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position \_\_\_\_\_

3. Responsibility in the production of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_

### **II. PART TWO**

1. For how long have you been involved in the production of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program

2. When and how did you start airing *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program on radio Ethiopia? What were its objectives?

3. How do you get program ideas?

4. Are the issues nation wide or do you focus on specific areas of the nation?

5. What are the sources of the commentaries/scripts you read on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

Do you edit scripts/stories you take from other sources (newspapers, magazines, websites...) so that they can appeal to radio audience?

6. Do you use newly coined *Amharic* words/terms (such as *sine-mehedar1*, *sinetewaldo1*, *sine-hizb1*...) in your commentaries?
7. Do you edit interviews you have had with experts that use English words and terms?
8. Do you make efforts to have sound bites of farmers? How do you balance farmers' voice with that of professionals?
9. What format do you commonly use while producing *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program (*prioritize if you are using more than one format*)
  - a, Lecture /straight talk b, interviews/discussions
  - c, drama d, music e, jingles/slogans f, feature
  - g, magazine (containing a number of issues in the form of interviews, music, straight talk...) h, infotainment
10. Do you think the issues you raise relate to the reality of the society?
11. Have you ever thought of changing the transmission time of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?
 

Why?
12. Are there plans to air *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program more than once a week or to increase or decrease the duration? If there are, how did the idea come?
13. How do you get feedback about *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?
14. What kind of comments do you get?
15. How many letters do you get on average weekly?
16. What kinds of messages are sent via letters?
17. Are there specialist environmental journalists or beats in your institution?
18. In which part of the country do you have more listeners?
19. If you are one who is not trained in the fields of environment/ agriculture or related areas, what challenges are you facing in doing programs on environmental issues?
20. Have you ever received media related trainings? And in particular on environmental reporting?
21. Do you think lack(if there is any) of training on the field affecting the

performance of your producers?

22. Who decides the contents of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

23. Has the owner of the station (Radio Ethiopia) editorial power/right over your productions? Are there cases where you were forced to drop an already produced program/s as a result of exercising this 'editorial power/right'? Please mention.

24. Any challenges you are facing in dealing with the Ethiopian Radio?

25. Has there been any assessment such as audience research concerning *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

## **ANNEX 3b: Guide for In-depth Interview with the producer of**

### ***Sinehizb-ena-Akababi***

#### **I. PART ONE**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position \_\_\_\_\_

3. Responsibility in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Educational background \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. PART TWO**

1. For how long have you been involved in the production of *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

2. How do you get program ideas?

3. Are the issues nation wide or do you focus on specific areas of the nation?

4. What are the sources of the commentaries/scripts you read on *Sinehizb-ena-Akababi* radio program?

Do you edit scripts/stories you take from other sources (newspapers, magazines, websites...) so that they can appeal to radio audience?

5. Do you use newly coined *Amharic* words/terms (such as *sine-mehedar1*, *sinetewaldo1*, *sine-hizb1*...) in your commentaries?

6. Do you edit interviewees you have with experts that use English words and terms?

7. Do you make efforts to have sound bites of farmers? How do you balance

farmers' voice with that of professionals?

8. How do you get feedback about the programs you produce from the audience?

9. What kind of comments do you mostly get?

10. In which part of the country do you have more listeners?

11. If you are one who is not trained in the fields of environment/ agriculture or related areas, what challenges are you facing in doing programs on environmental issues?

Have you ever received media related trainings? And in particular on environmental reporting?(Please specify)

## **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work. It has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Daniel Amare Feleke

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\_\_\_\_\_, 2009