

**NEWS SOURCE USAGE IN OROMIA RADIO  
AND TELEVISION ORGANIZATION: A CASE  
STUDY OF OROMIA RADIO**

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## ABSTRACT

News Source Usage in Oromia Radio and Television Organization: A Case Study of Oromia Radio

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This study presented an examination of news source usage in Oromia Radio. The study explored the dominant sources used in Oromia Radio news program, the major criteria of news source selection, the number of source used in each news item. It also assessed how gatekeepers had impact on news production, and the way journalists presented facts they obtained from sources. Five basic research questions were raised to guide the study, and scholarly articles related to the issues were discussed.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Content analysis and in-depth interviews with key informants were used to collect data. In the quantitative, 196 news items of 30 days evening news programs were selected by using systematic random sampling technique and analyzed. In the qualitative, six key informants who directly responsible for news production were selected by purposive sampling technique.

The finding of the study showed that being government official was the major criteria to select news source in Oromia Radio. The results of the study also showed that government officials were extensively used as the main sources of news in order to express the policies and strategies of the government. Government officials accounted for 70.48 % of news stories. This implied that government voices and issues were preferred for news production and the public were given less attention to express their opinions through Oromia Radio.

Those government officials played as a single gatekeeping roles indirectly in influencing reporters, editors, newsroom head , editor in chief and the station's manager. Journalists were influenced to report the positive sides of government and hid the weak side of the government and wrong doing of government officials. The findings revealed that single sources were used in more than half of the news stories, it accounted for 54.1 %. Double and multiple sources were offered 33.2 % and 11.7 %, respectively. The findings also indicated that nearly 96 % of sources were human, and nonhuman sources were only offered 3.14%. 41.3 % of news were presented with journalists' personal opinion and 24% were not balanced. In addition to these, there was limitation of attributing the source of information professionally.

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

BBC : British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN : Cable News Network

E.C: Ethiopian Calendar

ERIS : Electoral Reform International Services

GMT: Greenwich Meridian Time

NGO : Non Governmental Organization

ORTVO: Oromia Radio and Television Organization

PMC: Population Media Center

UPI : United Press International

US : United States

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In the contemporary world people depend on media basically to get news, implying that news is the major genres of journalism indispensable to media institutions. According to Newsom and Wollert (1985), news is information that people want and need to know. Mass media particularly television, radio and newspaper are primary sources of information. Most of broadcast media start their transmission by news. Hence, news is fresh information and the backbone of media institutions.

Broadcast media get information in different ways. They can get information from wire services, newspapers, magazines and other stations. Radio reporters observe and select diversified sources and cover a variety of stories. They scan wire services, read latest newspapers, listen regularly to other radio stations and watch television newscasts to learn about interesting stories that are not covered by their stations (Gibson, 1991). Based on what they consumed from other media, reporters see new angles, facts and opinion and come up with new information to their audiences.

However as Royd (2001) says that staff reporters are the main sources of news for broadcast stations. "The biggest source of news for any radio or television should be its reporting staff" (Royd, 2001, p.29). Otherwise, if broadcast stations depend only on wire service news shortage may face them. Getting news from news agencies is not primary work, but it is only a foundation of which to build news stories. (Gibson, 1991).

Reporters can observe what is going on around their living or working areas. Observation by itself is nothing unless they critically and objectively see and research for information sources (Newsom and Wollert, 1985). Journalists are expected to deal with different kinds of sources. Basically sources are classified into primary and secondary.

Primary sources are people who are directly involved in the event or observed the situation as an eyewitness as well as their written documents (Ibid). These human sources enable the news media to be more credible and readable. Information which journalist gets from participants of the event lends immediacy to a story (Rich, 2003).

In addition to human or primary source, secondary source also helps news media to be rich in information. A secondary source is a written report based on primary source like press release (Potter, 2006). These secondary sources are used as background information. Relying on them, journalists try to talk to people who directly concern the issue. In terms of institutions, reporters can get news sources from different sources like government sources and institutions attached to them, non-governmental organizations and members of public (Shrivastava, 1996).

When reporters gather and report news, they must take all side of sources, and there is no single source that can provide all of information they might need (Potter, 2006). Using diversified sources makes the news accurate, objective, balance and fair report. So, it is too essential to check and double check the information provided by sources (White and Barnas, 2010).

McLeish (1999) urges journalists to take care of accuracy. Any information shouldn't be broadcast without checking facts delivered by sources. The accuracy achieved through critical observation and using different sources on the same issue (McLeish, 1999). Journalists must also detach themselves from the source of news to achieve objectivity. They are expected to produce impartial report by avoiding subjectivity and personal comments (McQuail, 1994). Potter (2006) and Bhatt (1994) also emphasis the other journalistic principles , balancing and fairness, factuality and credibility. Journalists should give equal chance for all important parts and present all significant points and avoid irrelevant information at the expense of significant facts. Again reporters have to present news in neutral tone without favoring and disfavoring anyone. When they do so , the audience believe them as they are telling them the truth. After facts are collected from different sources, the sources of information must also be attributed.

News passes through process. This process is called 'gatekeeping'. Gatekeeping is applied from the selection of sources to deletion or addition of facts on news content. Gatekeepers are reporters, editors, editor in chief, managers, sources, media owners, and sometimes advertisers. McQuail (2000) elaborates the importance of gatekeeping in deciding which information goes forward to the audiences and which not. He says that facts relevant to listeners must not be omitted and irrelevant or unverified information shouldn't pass through those gates (Ibid). However, gatekeepers who are in different levels can play their roles positively or negatively in the process of news production. Hence, this study examined news source usage in Oromia Radio.

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

In selection of sources for the news, the media should consider the credibility of the sources. According to Gans (2004), media institutions must utilize their news sources to satisfy the needs of the audience. Journalists need sources of information that can explain current events. In the same way, sources need journalists to transfer their message through mass media. Hence, the relationship between media practitioners and news sources are interdependent.

Both media practitioners and news sources have the ability to determine news content. Even though reporters have the role in gathering and reporting information, news work is a team effort. Any individual can't act alone. However, gatekeepers can affect the contents of media (Vivian, 2005).

As studies indicated, news sources were mostly government officials. For instance, a study conducted by Sigal (1973) on New York Times and Washington Post newspapers revealed that among sources appeared in these papers, government officials are the most frequently cited (Soley, 1992). In case government sources are dominantly used as sources, they get chance to manipulate the news. Campbell (2004) warns that manipulation of media content by sources is serious, whatever individual or institutional level sources try to divert the media attention to their interests (Ibid). Rich also reminds that reporters must ask relevant and critical question when such kinds of sources come to media and strive to add others' point of views from opposite sources (Rich, 2003).

According to (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002, p.15), in countries media are controlled by government, news media are used as propaganda tools for those government officials. “...where government-controlled media serve as a propaganda machine, framing every story so that government is presented in the best possible light”.

A research conducted by Getachew (2006) on Ethiopian Television indicated that 73.4% of news sources were government officials. According to (Shimelis, 2000; Getachew, 2003, cited in Birhanu, 2009), in developing countries like Ethiopia, the role of mass media is shaped by the interests of government. In such cases, the sources of news media are expected to be government officials that tend to proclaim the government interest.

News stories need multiple sources in order to utilize news by sources. Potter argues that a single sources cannot provide all necessary information. Instead she advices to use diversified sources in news report (Potter, 2006). A study conducted on US local newspapers by Fogarty (2011) indicated that 49.68 % of news used multiple sources and 44.81 % used double sources. But only 5.52 % of news items presented on those local newspapers used single sources. Hence, this study wanted to examine how *Oromia Radio* uses different sources in each news items. The research attempted to assess the news source usage and identified the major factors that influenced the usage of news sources in *Oromia Radio*.

## **1.3. Objective of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General objective**

The main objective of this study was to discover how news sources were used and presented in *Oromia Radio* news and to identify how journalists treated different news sources in the Station.

### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

The Specific objectives of the study were to:

- Examine news sources selection criteria in *Oromia Radio* station
- Discover the dominant news sources used by *Oromia Radio*
- Explore how the Radio station used different sources in each news items
- Examine how journalists presented facts obtained from sources and factors that affected news sources selection in *Oromia Radio*

## **1.4 Basic Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer the following basic questions:

1. What were the major criteria of news source selection in *Oromia Radio*?
2. Who were the dominant news sources in *Oromia Radio*?
3. How many sources were used in each news item to utilize news with sources in *Oromia Radio*?
4. How did journalists present facts obtained from sources?
5. Were there pressures affecting the journalists in selecting news sources in *Oromia Radio*? If yes, what were they?

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on news source selection and usage of the radio department of Oromia Radio and Television Organization (ORTVO). The focus was on news stories that were reported by staff reporters and correspondents. It did not include news that came from wire services and other media because those news that came from other media were prepared by other journalists.

Even though *Oromia Radio* presents news in its morning, noon, and evening programs of a day, this research focused on the evening news program which was transmitted at 16:00 GMT because the evening news program is expected as it comes up with fresh and diversified news items.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

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

First, the researcher believes that the findings of the study could serve ORTVO to look into its short comings (if any) concerning news source selection, cultivation and usage and make relevant corrections accordingly.

Second, the finding of the study could help others who want to conduct research on related topic. Media institutions and practitioners that provide news for their audiences might also use this thesis to enhance their news source usage.

## **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

This study focused on *Oromia Radio*. The choice of the station for this study was important since it was newly established radio station, and anyone has not conducted research on the medium regarding news source usage. In doing so, the researcher has faced some constraints. ORTVO has three stations (*Oromia Radio*, FM Finfinne 92.3 and Oromia Television). However, due to time and resource constraints, the researcher couldn't examine the news content of the three stations. Hence, the researcher has only conducted the research on the radio station. The shortage of references, especially researches conducted on news source usage was also another limitation.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This thesis has five chapters. The first chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, basic research questions. It also contains scope of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter two emphasis on theoretical frame works, news source principles and scholars opinions. It also include some ethics of news reporting concerning news source usage, and gatekeeping theory. In addition to these, the chapter introduces the brief background of Ethiopian mass media including ORTVO.

The methods, procedures, data gathering techniques, sampling and data analysis were employed in the third chapter. In chapter four the data are presented and analyzed in line with the theoretical frame work. The fifth and the final chapter contains summary, conclusion and recommendations.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Mass Media and News

Human beings need information to improve their life, protect themselves as well as to survive. People want to know what is going around and abroad. They can get this information through mass media since mass media have the ability to disseminate identical information at the same time to diversified audiences. Particularly, broadcast media (radio and television) have the ability to reach mass audiences simultaneously (Folkerts and Lacy, 2001).

From media outputs, people more rely on news in order to satisfy their information needs because news is an important part of every one's life. Traders and consumers need to know the price of world market. Educated people want to increase their knowledge, and everybody needs to know what is happening and will happen around the world. For that reason, Vivian (2005, p.4) expresses the number one function of mass media, "The heart of the media's informing function lies in messages called news".

Radio is one of the mass media that enables listeners to inform, educate and entertain them. Tuggle and his colleagues (2004) emphasize the uniqueness of radio in informing the latest event in a short period of time. "Radio is the fastest and most widely dispersed mass medium. It's ubiquitous. It's everywhere". (Tuggle et al 2004, p.83). Because when big newsbreaks, radio inform the public at first hand. And radio can provide dozen of news items within four minutes (Ibid). John Vivian also acknowledges the power of mass

media in educating and informing people, and people also express their feelings and opinions through mass media. Ideologists, propagandists and other powerful individuals use media to influence the mass (Vivian, 2005).

Vivian describes the more advantageous of radio than other media. It is the cheapest, portable and only needs the ear. Radio can be available everywhere, in the car, mobile cell phone, in home. Even people listen to radio in stadium while they are watching football game (Ibid).

### **2.1.1. The Concept of News**

It is too difficult to get a universal definition of news. Different scholars define news relying on their instincts, personal experiences and professional judgments (Fedler, 1993).

What is news for one person may not be for the other. According to Gans (2004, p.80),

News is information which is transmitted from sources to audience, with journalists-who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of a profession-summarizing, refining, and altering what becomes available to them from sources in order to become the information suitable to their audience.

Here Gans wants to emphasize that news is information which is accessed from sources and filtered by professional journalists (including other gatekeepers). Then passes through different channels and transmitted to audiences.

Still this cannot fulfill the definition of news. Thus, (Newsom and Wollwert, 1985; Fedler, 1993 and Potter, 2006) prefer to describe news than define it. They describe the

news worthiness of event based on certain characteristics in common. These are said to be news values. Some elements of news values are described below.

**Unusual-** news is something which is diverted from expected one; it is an extraordinary like natural or manmade disasters, epidemic diseases, accidents, etc.

**Timeliness-** events that are occurred recently. The recent of the information is depends on the medium. For radio it may be fraction of minutes because unlike print media, broadcast have the ability to transmit event from the place it occurred.

**Proximity-** something which is geographically or psychologically close to us. A roadside bomb blasts in Iraq is news for Baghdad residents, but it may not be news for Saudi Arabia unless some of the dead people are Saudi Arabians.

**Conflict-** people sometimes disagree. This disagreement becomes news. Human beings by their nature are interested in stories that involve conflict or tension.

**Impact-** if something has impact on the life of majority people, it becomes news. If there is inflation, unemployment, drought, new law and the like have influence on the audiences, it is news.

**Prominence-** when a well known person, official or celebrity involves in event that becomes news. If a prime minister of one country is attacked in his palace and killed, it is good news to the world media.

## **2.2. Factors Determining News Selection**

The decision of news selection can be determined by various factors. Involvements of government, advertisers, media owners, news values or editorial policy of the medium and even audiences influence news selection. Government controlled media are more influenced by the ruling party of that country. Campbell (2004, p.54) emphasizes this influence as "... the greater the state's involvement in news production the more restrictions journalism has up on it." He also emphasizes, absence of government control doesn't mean absolutely the medium is out of controls especially, in terms of economic control (Ibid).

Advertising is the other factor in the decision making of news selection. Most of commercial broadcast media rely on advertisements since their revenues depend on it. At this time advertisers attempt to influence the editorial content of news. Even non-commercial media which have their own sources of income significantly affected by advertising (ibid).

Fedler raises another factor that determines news selection that is owner of the medium. He says publishers (media owners) who deeply engaged in politics sometimes order their news staff to broadcast only the positive side of their favorite politicians and also order their reporters to broadcast the negative side of their rival politicians (Fedler, 1993). Campbell (2004) also agrees on the big influences of media owners on news content. Media owners have the power to influence or manipulate editorial content by dictating their editors. Editors decide which news must be transmitted or news sources used or not.

News values have their own impact in the decision of news selection journalists outline professional checklists in order to select news. Campbell cites the research findings of (Galtung and Ruge 1973; Gans 1979; Golding and Elliot 1979, Hetherington 1985 and Shoemaker et al 1987) which are called the most news value that enables journalists to select news. According to those findings, some of news values which help to select news are importance or significance, balance, quality, proximity, timeliness, surprise, conflict, attractiveness, prominence, etc (Campbell, 2004).

Audiences are other factors who influence news content. Tiffen (1989, cited in Campbell 2004) indicates, journalists make their decision of news selection based on the interests of their particular audiences. If journalists assume the story is news worthy to audiences, they select and cast that news story, otherwise they reject.

In general, Gans (2004) summarized factors that influence news selection into three theories. He says that journalist, news organization and event determine news selection. The first one is journalist centered theory; this means journalists judge news based on their professional news judgments (values) described above. The second one is organizational centered theory. News organizations have their own criteria in the process of news production and transmission. They determine story selection by designing editorial policy. Finally, an event-centered theory proposes how the kind of event influence news selection.

### **2.3. Sources of News**

News comes to broadcast stations in different ways. Most of the time, radio and television use readymade news from wire services, emergency services, and other mass

media. Press releases, internet and stringers are also sources of broadcast stations. In addition to these, radio and television media gather information by staff reporters. In this portion how news media use these news sources to satisfy their audiences is described.

### **2.3.1. Wire Services**

Wire services are the most news providers to news media. International news agencies like Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Reuters, and Agency France Presse (AFP) are the most common international news providers. Ted White (1996) describes that wire services help media institutions in feeding the latest news event. "Most national and international news comes into a newsroom from wire services (White, 1996 p.140). Dary (1967) also elaborates the usefulness of news agencies in feeding news to radio stations. He says, "The most common news source, providing the most news for the radio newsroom is the leased- wire teletype service" (p.51).

Wire services according to White (1996) collect information worldwide and provide local news, financial, business, agriculture, politic marketing, court and crime and other special topics to media institutions. The international wires do not only provide script for broadcast stations, they also provide audio, actuality, natural sound and videos. For instance, Associated Press provides a variety of audio feeds by using satellite "...including news on the hour and the half-hour. Special reports on the hour's major stories and an hourly feed of actualities and natural sound ...scripted national and international news agriculture reports, business news, sports, entertainment news ..." (White, 1996 p.141).

In previous time, news agencies were writing news in print style. Broadcast stations were being obliged to rewrite the wire copies in broadcast format. However, now a day, the broad cast wires provide stories designed to read without any need of rewriting. But according to White, this also has its own problem on broadcast stations. When every station casts the same story in the same way, it may be boring to audiences and it may reduce competition among stations (Ibid).

### **2.3.2. Monitoring Radio**

Emergency services like police, fire department, ambulance and coastguard services have their own radio stations and provide the latest events relating to their departments (Chanter and Stewart, 2003). Emergency services have a unique relationship with news media as media need them to provide the latest event immediately from them, and similarly, emergency services also need news media to awakening or warning citizens about the events. Chanter and Stewart describe the importance of those services. “Information from these services is often the stable diet of dramatic stories featured in local radio news bulletins... they often need to use the media to put over preventative messages about crime and safety, as well as appealing for witnesses” (2003, p.34).

### **2.3.3 Press Releases**

Press releases can be another source of news for radio stations. A lot of news releases come to newsroom every day through mail, fax or sent by public relations practitioners. Rudin and Ibbotson(2002, p.35) say, “News releases and handouts are constantly sent to newsroom by public relations officers from commercial, voluntary, public or official organizations”. Even though these news releases are excellent sources of basic

information, they need to be seen carefully. Because, according to Potter (2006), these news releases are written by government or private officials who only want to express their organizations' positive sides and ignore the failures of them. Hence, journalists must seriously look those press releases and try to balance or ask the public relations officers relevant questions.

Organizations that provide services to the society called public utilities like electricity, gas, water, and communication and transport services are other news feeders. They touch almost all lives of citizens and listeners are eager to hear information released by them. These public utilities also mostly release information which promote their activities and may hide their negative side; professional journalists must verify that information (Potter, 2006).

#### **2.3.4. Other News Media**

Rudin and Ibbotson (2002) advice media professionals not to ignore other media out put such as newspaper and magazines publications, radio and television news casts. These are fruitful sources of information and ideas. According to White (1996), most broadcast stations mostly rely on newspapers as sources of news since they have much larger news staffs than broadcast and cover events that broadcast stations left cover or not so much bother about that event. The only radio journalists have to consider that news taken from print media must be checked to factual accuracy, and it needs to find new development to make it fresh (Ibid).

### **2.3.5. Stringers and Tipsters**

Most broadcast newsrooms use non-staff members who regularly contribute for newsrooms called stringers or freelancers (White, 2010). These individuals boost their incomes by selling news events to other media. When broadcast newsrooms face a shortage of news they buy from stringers. Because of their cost-effectiveness, most radio stations use them; they are paid only for news that is broadcast. Stringers sometimes cover breaking news overnight when any one is not working at station. The only need is newsroom editors must check the accuracy of that information ((Rudin and Ibboston, 2002).

Most radio stations also encourage people to call them when news events occur. Such kind of people called tipsters. White (1996) says these tipsters should be taken seriously and most of news that come through tipsters are breaking stories. But it needs again checking for accuracy and important to know the identity of those tipsters.

The difference between stringers and tipsters according to Dary (1967), tipster may not provide full details of news as stringers; they only may alert the newsroom on the events happening. After that the work is left to reporters to follow up and get full information depending on the tip (Ibid).

### **2.3.6. The Internet**

Nowadays internet is the widely used search for information. Rubin and Ibbotson(2002) acknowledge that the access of internet simplifies and makes easiest the work of journalists. More or less all news media have their own websites; they upload on their

sites the latest news. Anyone who visits those sites can see the latest local or international events. These sites use journalists as source of news.

But scholars' advice news media when they use internet sources, it may mislead taking all the information provided through internet (Chanter and Stewart, 2003). Because some pressure groups not provide all necessary information rather they publish 'half-truths' and Rubin and Ibbotson warn the way journalists use internet news sources. "...the internet is a major and excellent addition to journalistic research but as such should be treated with caution respect in term of accuracy of information and self-interest. By all means' surf the web' for information but use it as a tool not a master" (2003, p.40).

The internet is not only used for news consumption, but also through its many websites it connects journalists with experts, authorities and spokespersons in many topics (White and Barnas, 2010).

### **2.3.7. Staff Reporters**

In any mass medium, staff reporters play a vital role in gathering latest information and making it news story. Chilton Bush a journalism professor wrote the importance of reporters for news organization and cited in Garrison (1992, p.33) elaborates the power of reporters, "...reporters are the arms, legs, eyes, and ears of their news organizations". The newsrooms give them responsibility to gather and organize information from every angle and come up with news stories.

Chanter and Stewart (2003, p.26)also describe reporters especially to broadest, "They are 'fire fighters' of the newsroom". According to Garrison (1992), staff reporters are the 'grassroots' of the news organization. Media institution which do not have reporters to

cover events and rely only on other stations or news agencies lose their identity; they cannot compete with other media. Again, Royd (2001) gives more emphasis to staff reporters in gathering and producing news for the media institution. He says, "The biggest source for any radio or television stations should be its reporting staff." ( p.29).

Journalists live in the society; they can observe when events occur and can be eyewitnesses by themselves, then they can ask people who are around the event, record, analyze and make it news (Potter, 2006). Unless reporters go to the sources, sources cannot provide information for media organization. David White in Tumber (1999, p.66) advises staff reporters to go to a place where events occur, "Sources cannot provide information until they make contact with a member of a news organization; and the organization will choose sources it considers suitable for the audience, even as it is chosen by sources who want to transmit information to the audience...".

All of the above scholars acknowledge that news organizations can compete with other media institutions only when they assign their own reporters to cover events. News stories come from other stations, wire services and news releases are supporters, but they are not base for media organization in providing latest and important information to their audiences.

## **2.4. News Sources for Staff Reporters**

Sources have a crucial role in the profession of journalism. They are information providers and 'the life blood' of journalism (Rudin and Ibbotson, 2002). Without sources, the information released by media professionals cannot be trusted. Dary (1967) defines sources as who supply information and that information must be accurate and affects the

lives and interests of the general public. Unless it is accurate, current, and reliable, the information may not be called news.

Journalists by themselves cannot write and report news based on their assumptions. Rather they rely on information gathered from different sources. Even though reporters can observe what is going around their working and living area, they are advised to attribute some sources of information in order to be trusted. Newsom and Wollert explain how journalists can access information by contacting people and referring documents:

Reporters ask other people what they have seen and heard. Reporters interview the participants in news events to learn their thoughts and feelings and to gain new information from a different perspective. Reporters check records and documents to glean background information and to verify the assertions of participants and observes. (Newsom and Wollert, 1985 p.145).

A political scientist Leon Sigal quoted in Schudson (2003, p.134) asserts “News is a product of transactions between journalists and their sources.” This indicates that journalists contact people who are authorized to provide relevant information, and then they analyze and selectively and finally broadcast as news. McQuail(1994) acknowledges that all media institutions depend on reliable information provided by news sources. Unconsciously, some reporters usually define source as only a human being, and a person who is in a position of high status can be trusted by listeners. They want to rely too much on word – of – mouth information (Neal and Brown, 1976).

However, scholars who criticize this thinking and argue with considerable justification say that the best source is the written document because of its legal status. But documents are not always available for journalists especially for broadcast media that struggle with deadline, written documents may not be available to report fast breaking news. So

reporters still rely heavily on first hand information (Ibid). But as much as possible, reporters are advised to use both human and non human sources in their news reporting.

### **2.4.1. Human Sources**

Since news is about people, the most suitable sources of information to news media are people. "Human sources add a face, credibility and color...provide expert testimony; elaborate on the statements of other sources; explain evidence; provide opinion and confirm or corroborate what you already know" (Forbes, 2005 p.27).

People become part of news in different ways. When they do good or bad things, achieve some goals and disagree on especial issues. Newsom and Wollert(1985, p.12) explain how people become part of news, " When people accomplish something, do something wrong, say something important, or even when they die, a news story may result. The more prominent the person, the more likely his or her activities will qualify as news". When those people directly involved in issues, they are primary sources. Most of the time, listeners want to hear people in the news rather than hearing from reporters.

Pultizer Prize – Winning investigative reporter Sydney Freedberg advises her students regarding the importance of people as a source. She cited in Soley (1992) and said, "The only thing that makes a story come alive is people. Go out and talk to them. Figure out what is on their minds...If you rely completely on documents to do a story, you are going to have a dead story" (1992, p.73).

Garrison (1992) explains the assumptions of some reporters in human source usage."In focusing only on human sources, you must remember there are different types to use in reporting. Some beginning reporters make the mistake in believing that only person is a

good source, as long as the person is someone who is quotable and make sense" (1992, p.72).

According to Gibbs and Warhover (2002), reporter has a great responsibility in the decision of using these sources. First, reporter must consider the source relating to the event. They are many people around, but among them, few become vital sources. The sources must be official (authorized to the issue or idea), expertise, horse mouth, and ability to explain the event in a very clear and concise ways.

This implies that reporters must find the best possible sources for every news story. The 'best' in a sense, a person who is directly involved in or the issue concerns him. Garrison lists at least five common types of human sources (Garrison, 1992).

### **Expert or Professional Sources**

These are individuals, who have specialized in the specific fields and have more professional knowledge than any other. They are authorized and experienced in the subject area.

Keeble (2001) stresses the ability of experts in explaining their subject area. "Journalists often use expert such as academics, think-tank members and pressure group campaigners...they can use them more subtly to add extra weight to a view they (or their proprietors) wish to promote." (p.44)

### **Public Sector Official Sources**

These people are sources who sometimes are expert or authoritative and more importantly inclined to official status. Official in a sense, they are not only politicians,

anyone who appointed or elected, bureaucrat, civil servant or other responsible person who can serve the public. They speak authoritatively on the behalf of group of people.

### **Private Sector Official Sources and Spokespersons**

Officials may also be private individuals who are posted and represent companies, factories, institutions or other groups like associations.

### **Eyewitness**

These people are who in some circumstance have become valuable to a story. Because they were present when event like traffic accidents, disasters and other events occurred. They can elaborate how the event occurred and what it was looked like.

### **Typical Citizens**

For some stories, the average residents of an area are needed. According to (Garrison,1992), they give their opinion or reflection on particular issue. They are directly or indirectly concerned with the issue. Journalism stands for the public; it reflects citizens' reflections for their society to become better place to live and work (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002).

#### **2.4.1.1. Source Considerations**

Journalists determine the appropriateness of human sources based on a number of interrelated source considerations Gans cited in Tumber(1999).The criteria are interrelated and reporters who have not enough time can quickly select few of them. Gans

(1999) identifies the five major source considerations. Those are past suitability, productivity, reliability, trustworthiness, and authoritativeness of sources.

**Past Suitability-** If the sources have provided suitable information in the past, they have opportunity to be selected again and use as regular news sources. However, some reports as well as listeners may be bored with the repetition of these sources. But if the sources are prominent like a president, no body may be bored. Listeners and journalists bored when the same source come regularly to a single purpose.

**Productivity-** Sources are judged by their ability to supply a lot of information in a short period of time. Again, productivity also elaborates in line with government plans and new policies in the news. These can be obtained from official sources and need to include of responsible sources in the effort of its implementation.

**Reliability-** Reporters need reliable sources whose information requires much time to check. But, if the issue is controversial or not yet believed, reporters expected to find those who oppose the fact and independent sources.

When journalists attribute information to source, they must not worry about the validity because the listeners can judge the credibility of sources by themselves.

**Trustworthiness-** If reporters cannot check quickly enough. They have to look for other trustworthy sources. They are required to gather accurate and reliable information and they expected to check the honesty of sources.

**Authoritativeness-** Journalists prefer information of officials rather than other sources. They believe that officials are authorized and responsible. Journalists trust them because

they are believed not to lie. Even when the issue is controversial, journalists can defend themselves relying on the authorized sources. However according to Gans, this fact which emphasis more on top officials may undermine the ordinary citizens.

### **2.4.2. Non-Human Sources**

As human sources are valuable to journalists in the work of news gathering, non-human sources also play vital role to media institutions. Journalists can find many additional clues for human and non-human sources from variety of written documents. Telephone directories, city directories, media directories, public and higher educational libraries contain a wealth of source materials that enable journalists to find background information for every story (Rich, 2003).

Potter (2006) acknowledges the importance of document, data and public records in the effort of utilizing news in sources. Documents are classified into various categories. However, it is better to classify into public and non-public.

#### **Public Documents**

In democratic society public documents are open for any one including journalists to refer it. In most countries journalists are granted in law to access public records (White, 1996). Forbes (2005) describes the kinds of public documents. "Public documents can include Judicial or court records, minutes of parliamentary committee meetings, government budgets and expenditure reports, public tender documents and deeds or property files" (2005. p.31).

Reporters who cover city, regional states and country will find much information in the public records (Gibson, 1991). The files of former officials, formal actions of governmental units and minutes and day-to day activities of government agency reports are available. Reporters who establish smooth relation with official and civil workers can easily access such records.

Sometimes governments fail to disclose information to the public because they believe disclosing all information to public may result security problem as Ted White (1996) describes. But they publish volumes of manuals and directories that use journalists. Government officials do not fail to disclose some information only for security purpose; according to White they hide some information for embarrassment of their agencies (Ibid).

### **Non- Public Documents**

Non public documents are many in number among others; individuals' credit history, income tax returns, bank records and medical files (Forbes, 2005). Documents are not limited to those records or people. Books, published reports, government research, individual and academic reports, property records, contacts, video and audio tapes, diaries are other types of documents (Ibid).

Records and reports provided by the private sector are available for public consumption and journalists (Garrison, 1992). Business and private institutions such as schools, hospitals, colleges, foundations, charities and other institutions produce reports for public use (Ibid).

However, most of the time the difficult one for reporters will be the documents, records and reports kept by private organizations. These materials are kept secure unless reporters try to establish good relationship with employees providing these materials. Gibson (1991) also elaborates the difficulty of accessing private business for reporters, but he says that some records are public. Garrison also emphasizes the difficulty of accessing private records. It needs to have permission to access them. It is common that reporters can only get those materials by purchasing them or by oral or written permission to access. Even this is an important step to purchase those materials because most enterprises are in the business of collecting and publishing materials for profit. Therefore, reporters may be forced to buy or copy the most important one (Garrison, 1992).

### **2.4.3. Keeping Sources Lists**

Sources can be listed in two ways in newsroom. Garrison advises that reporters to keep lists of sources in newsroom which all reporters and editors can access it. Many newsrooms keep common lists of information for all journalists to access at any time. These sources are filed in computer by name and specialization and not protected by password. The other way to list sources to reference is personal. Every reporter can create his own list and keep for further usage. It may be telephone and address book or personal directory. Gibson (1991) says that without information available in records, reporters are victims of conflicting ideas and viewpoints. They can't judge until they access all necessary information.

## **2.5. Sources Usage**

### **2.5.1. Criteria Reporters Use in News Reporting**

Unlike a propagandist or public relations officer, journalist find all available information and evaluates how much of it is important to the public before passes it to the audiences (Potter, 2006). News stories, whatever hard or soft news must be accurate, factual, impartial, objective and free of reporter's personal comments. These are principles of the profession and expected to be applied everywhere.

**Accuracy** – a reporter's duty in reporting news is first to get the right fact or accuracy. Any information shouldn't be broadcast without checking facts (Mcleish, 1999). Every fact should be checked double for its accuracy and reliability. Verifying a story is not always easy, especially under the deadline pressure. If it is difficult to check the fact, at least it is better to attribute the source of the fact. This deadline pressure enforces reporters to be careless and sometimes they do not bother to check facts from reliable sources (Newsom and Wollert, 1985).

White and Barnas (2010) elaborate that the best way to ensure the accuracy of sources is finding other sources that will provide the same information using double or triple sources to protect the reporter from inaccuracy of facts.

**Objectivity**- objectivity is a special form of journalism practice and attitude to the task of information collection, processing and broadcasting to the public. The main points of objectivity are, journalists must detach themselves from the source of news and neutralize

themselves from the subject. Avoiding subjectivity and partiality from news story is the element of journalism that every journalist should apply (McQuail, 1994).

Deborah Potter explains that journalists are expected to present news in an objective way without reflecting their personal feeling. But she insists that it is difficult to journalists to be hundred percent objective since they are human beings (2006:9). Kirtley (2010) also agrees with Potter's argument and says that no anyone approaches any news story with complete objectivity. However Potter(2006) acknowledges that through objective, scientific method of verification of information, reporters can report news stories that do not reflect their personal opinions.

Journalist must also avoid editorial comments in news report. Newsom and Wollert (1985) argue that commentary belongs to editorial not in news story. Instead of reporter include his personal comment better to ask other source who reflects this comment.

**Balance and Fairness-** Journalists strive to present fair or impartial report without favoring one side. They have to report news by giving chance for others opposition individuals or groups (Potter, 2006). If the issue is controversial, reporters should include all side of views.

As Potter elaborates, fairness is not balance. Balance is giving equal chance (may be equal duration of time) for two opposite views. Whereas fairness is presenting all significant view points, in complete, objective and honest way.

Ben Bradlees an executive editor of the Washington Post cited in Newsom and Wollert (1985, p.34) offers four major important points in the process of fair reporting.

- No story is fair if it omits facts of major significance
- No story is fair if it includes essentially irrelevant information at the expense of significant facts.
- No story is fair if it consciously or unconsciously misleads or even deceives the audience.
- No story is fair if reporters hide their biases or emotions behind such subtly pejorative words as ‘refuse’, ‘despite’, ‘admit’ and ‘massive’.

**Factuality and Credibility-** Factuality and credibility are similar with accuracy and truth or reality. All news media have to be both factual and credible (Bhatt, 1993). Bhatt says that audiences must believe journalists as they are telling them the truth, not hiding something from them. Government officials sometimes presume their interest and failing to tell the reality, but telling the truth is always better than lying a few and telling lies makes journalists lose their credibility (Ibid).

### **2.5.2. Attribution of Sources**

News story differs from editorial or opinion in the usage of attribution. Potter (2006) says that attribution is the answer of who say? Attribution identifies the source of information in the news report. The importance of attributing the source is that our listeners believe the report that gives important credibility to the news story. Especially another reason for attributing the source is to place responsibility for a controversial issue where it belongs (Potter, 2006 p.28). Even the editor also asks the reporter “Who says that?.” However, not all information in the news items need attribution. According to

Potter information that observed directly by reporter and facts already known by the public do not need for attribution (Ibid).

Attribution has different levels for sources. Many people as Rich (2003) says want to talk to reporters if they promise not to mention their name. This is called anonymous or confidential source.

Garrison (1992) classifies four levels of attribution. These are on the record, background, deep background and off the record.

**On the record-** here source permits or agree with you to use all information provided and attribute them. Reporters only explain the purpose of the interview and record every important information. In addition to Garrison's idea, Rich (2003) advises reporters that if the interviewee is new with media, they need to remind the sources during the interview that they are giving to quote him or her about the material.

**Background-** if a source says the information is "on background" reporter can quote the source, but he cannot identify the name of the source. This needs specific terms to identify the source. Reporter must arrange the way he clarifies the source even though he doesn't mention the source's name. He can say a city official said or an official belongs to the government. Background means in short reporter can use the information but cannot attribute it (Ibid).

**Deep background-** under this condition, reporter can use any information provided by the source, but by any means he cannot identify the source. The information provided by the source must be written on the reporter's own authority without connection with

source. Even the reporter cannot attribute the source in general term like government official (Ibid). This level gives more protection to the source.

**Off the record**- if the source says, it is off the record he is saying that it cannot be used at all. The information provided by journalist is used only for his knowledge. If possible reporter should ask the source to permit him to use as a background or deep background otherwise, it is better to find other sources depending on this information without disclosing the first sources secret.

Sometimes sources fear for their job security or their life to disclose such important information, so journalists should respect and keep the promise (Kirtley, 2010) even through it reduces the credibility of the story.

When the source says 'off the record', reporter should ask why the source wants to unnamed. Some sources who unnamed or even named have their own agenda and wants to manipulate the reporter (Rich, 2003). Therefore, reporter should check from other sources to confirm, deny or provide other points of view (Ibid).

## **2.6. Types of News Reporting**

News reporting is by its nature two kinds, general assignment reporting and beat reporting. General assignment reporting is a report of news story covered by any professional journalist, whereas beat reporting is a report based on specific field (Garrison, 1992).

## **General Assignment Reporting**

Reporters who work on general assignment reporting take general news story (any news story) from assignment desk at a radio station (Garrison, 1992). These reporters take the assignment by their editors based on events of day and week. Most of the assignments (events) are planned or anticipated. Information received from contacts or sources helps to assign reporters. In addition to planned events, general assignment reporters cover accidentals or emergency occurrences as breaking news (Garrison, 1992). They must react on the spots of the event to get the story.

According to Garrison, general assignment reporters have to have a wide range of interests and ability to cover in all aspects. They should be ready and able to work on a variety of subjects and contact with very deferent types of people (sources). Today they may cover holiday celebration and tomorrow may report riots or protests on the street. Some general assignment reporters cover both general assignment and beat reporting, and most of them gradually promote or shift from general assignment to a specific field called beat reporting. Because when they work as general assignment, they move in and out of a variety of subjects and gradually they may shift to their interest field. This is happened if no beat reporter on that particular field in the newsroom and when another reporter in the same field leaves the staff.

Even though general assignment reporters have the freedom of covering in every subject, there is disadvantage for them that is the lack of deep knowledge (Ibid).

## **Beat Reporting**

Potter (2006) explains that beat reporting is a report which emphasizes on particular subject in depth. Many news media assign journalists to cover specific issue. These journalists must have in depth knowledge on that particular area.

Gibson (1991) also elaborates that most radio and Television stations establish beats that will be dependable sources of news. In the same way Campbell (2004) also acknowledges that in contemporary journalism covering of beat reporting on a particular subject has become central part of media in all levels. However, Potter (2006) indicates that beat reporting is rare in the smallest newsrooms, each reporters are expected to cover every kind of story whereas in large news organizations in print as well as broadcast beat reporting become regular.

The most common areas of beat reporting are police, fire, government, courts, business, crime, hospitals, education, accidents, demonstrations, disasters, tragedies, war, obituaries, city hall, politics, science and medicine, environment and weather, religious, industry, sport and entertainment (Garrison, 1992; White, 1996 and Potter, 2006).

Beat reporters are responsible to cover news on their special area on its spot. They are also responsible to find and report news that goes beyond the obvious (Potter, 2006). They develop stories through building good relationships with source who will keep them abreast of what is really going on behind the scenes (Ibid). They produce variety of stories including breaking news and feature news. On their beat area they must assume the sole responsibility for their news organization ever thinking that occurs in their specialization, and they do not ignore every event occurring on their beat (Garrison,

1992). Potter also emphasizes that beat reporters must have basic skill and ability to understand the institutions that dominate the beat (2006).

## **2.7. Cultivation of News Sources**

Once reporters discover a helpful source of information for a news item, it's advisable to keep in touch with that person for the long time (Potter, 2006). She advises reporters to make contact with source to get much information. Not only an office address, but also mobile and home telephones and e-mail addresses as well. When reporters contact their sources face to face or by telephone, they can ask them if anything interesting is happening.

Forbes also elaborates the importance of establishing relation with news sources:

It is important to groom established contacts through regular communication or at social activities for example, over meals, at sporting occasions, or relationship to other general interest areas the source may have. When attending social events or news functions, make a note of those you do not know, while nurturing established contacts. (2005, p.29).

Moreover, some reporters cultivate prominent sources that have basic knowledge in a various fields. These sources utilize their story ideas and also they supply background information to reporters then reporters can go to other sources depending on that background information (Gibson, 1991). A beat reporter for the Wichita, McCormick quoted in Rich (2003) says that when reporters start any beat it's always better to write positive story if it is possible enables to establish good relation with sources (Ibid).

Cultivating the sources also enables journalists to produce exclusive news stories (Bhatt, 1993). This establishment with regular sources is also essential in order to secure time

and compete with rivals (McQual, 2000). Sevil Hunter who was a beat reporter for Reno Gazette-Journal cited in Rich (2003) claims that establishing regular contact helps reporters when there is no idea for story. They can call to sources if something new, and she testifies that she was calling when the shortage of story happened to her.

Cultivating sources is more suitable to beat reporting because beat reporters frequently contact their sources. However, it may be difficult for general assignment reporters since they cover a variety of areas including spot events that covered in breaking news. But Garrison (1992) elaborates that cultivating news sources also applies to general assignment reporting. Causal contacts will be developed if reporter starts their contacts in smooth way. It is easy to be friend with regular sources since beat reporters usually deal with the same sources, but Hunter warns that reporters must draw line at socializing with sources because it can cause conflicts of interest (Ibid).

Gibson (1991) emphasizes too much close to sources may create problem. One day those sources may be part of the news and reporter may be obliged to report their misdeeds, or reporter may discover that they have deceived him by holding important information in which they had selfish interests.

Cultivating news sources by any means acceptable for journalists, however, Gibbs and Warhover also acknowledged that it must be kept professionally. It is not ethical for instance to develop romantic relationship with sources and accepting gift from sources; this makes the news report unethical and incredible (2002).

## 2.8. Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping theory is one of the most important theories in mass communication. The term is used to describe the process by which news item passes through. McQuail (1994, p.213) describes the term, "...the process by which selections are made in media work, especially decisions whether or not admit a particular news story to pass through 'gates' of a news medium into the news channels". The concept of gatekeeping was first introduced by social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1947) to describe how a person decides which food will be served on the family's dinner table (Riaz, 2008). Later on the term used to describe how a news item passes through media process. It is developed by White (1964) based on Lewin's study.

McQuail more elaborates in his later edition of 'Mass Communication Theory' that news media have the responsibility to decide what events to admit through the gates of the media on the basis of their news worthiness and other news criteria (McQuail, 2000). The gatekeepers decide what information goes forward to the listeners and what not. They serve to evaluate the content of media in order to test its relevance and values to audiences. Here the main point is that these gatekeepers have the power to cut off or alter the flow of some information (Hiebert et al, 1979). In every mass medium, every worker responsible to reinforces the value system of media institution in which he or she serves for (ibid).

In news media gatekeepers are reporters, news writer, newsroom editorial staff, news editor, news directors or radio station managers, media owners, and sometimes sources

like politicians and government officials become gatekeepers in order to giving information selectively to the reporters (Riaz, 2008; Hiebert et al, 1979).

Over the past half century the main focus of gatekeeping research has been emphasized on the subjectivity of news judgment; White (1950) focused on the decision of the lone journalist (personal and subjective aspects in decision making). But studies conducted by Gieber (1964), Epstein (1973), and Dimmick (1974) and cited in Hiebert et al (1979) found that decision on media content is not determined by single individuals rather media contents are influenced heavily by other factors like media owner, media routines, and official sources including government and corporate officials (Ibid).

David White in Tumber (1999) states the chain of gate keeping process, "Gatekeeping process starts from the journalist who goes to field to report; he selectively use his own source and from that source he may ask question selectively by his own judgment, after he back to station he gives to his editor, and the editor keeps the gate by his own (editorial) judgment" (p.66).

In general description, the reporter who decides which news item is covered and left out and which source is chosen and ignored and the editor who decides which news to be broadcast and which news is left out are gatekeepers. Because the nature of their job is like a gatekeeper that has the power to allow someone to go through the gate or stop him (ibid).

### **2.8.1. Role Players in Gatekeeping Process**

A number of gate keepers play great role in single news item to reach the audiences including the reporter who collects information from the field and the editor who edits (deletes, adds and changes the content). Vivian (2005) elaborates that there are a lot of gatekeepers which are invisible to the news audiences working behind the scenes and making crucial decisions to portray the world in newscast.

#### **The Role of Reporter**

Reporter is assigned by assignment editor to collect every necessary information. He/she relies on sources (most of the time people) who talk to him/her to get the job done. Without willing of sources, it is severely hampered to report the event (Campbell, 2004). Here reporters have their own role in selecting appropriate source of information.

The reporter who talks to news sources decides which facts to pass along the chain. What to write, what shape and color and importance to give to the event (Vivian, 2005). He accepts some sources and ignores others based on the sources abilities to explain or news media's interest.

#### **The Role of Editor**

In any news medium editor play vital role; he decides which information must be included in the news and excluded. After reporter gathers information from news sources and gives to the editor, then the editor analyzes information in different aspects. If the sources that are taken by the reporter are not appropriate to the audiences or to the organization's policy, he can omit those sources from the news item. He also sees the

news in relation to news worthiness including its accuracy of facts. Vivian explains the extent role of news editor “An editor can call a public relations person for additional detail to illuminate a point in a reporter’s story” (2005, p.258).

The way editors keep some news stories (including news sources) and exclude other may bias the public agenda and reinforce hegemony over ideas (Stroubhaar and LaRose, 2006).

Stroubhaar and LaRose (2006) also note that gatekeepers who are in media institutions (especially, managing directors, editors and reporters) get fired if they release too many information that media owners (including government) do not need to broadcast and the same times if they leave out too many stories that their audiences want to hear (Ibid). However, as Joann Byrd (1992) advices, news judgment doesn’t serve any particular group or individuals, but to the broader public. Byrd more acknowledges that, “As long as journalists have no motives other than keeping the public informed, no personal or institutional or political axes to grind, news judgment is fair” (1992, p.106).

### **The Role of Sources**

The most important tool of journalist is his/her news sources. Without sources whatever human or non-human sources, journalists cannot experience events themselves and have to rely on sources for their information (Folkerts & Lacy, 2001).

Gans in Tumber (1999) expresses the relationship between journalists and sources, “...sources gain access to journalists, source considerations and the relationship between reporters and their sources feed into each other to create a cumulative pattern...” (Ibid, p.247). As journalists cannot experience events by themselves without sources, sources

also cannot provide information until they make contact with news organization, and news organization will choose sources it consider suitable for audiences Gans in Tumber (1999). Gans's expression indicates that journalists and sources must have access to each other before the information become news and released to the audience.

Journalists see people mainly as potential source of information, where as sources see themselves as people who have a chance to provide information that promotes their benefits. (ibid)

Depending on this, Gans (1979, in Campbell 2004, p.80) describes as, "the source journalist relationship is therefore a tug of war while sources attempt to manage the news, putting the best light on themselves, journalist concurrently manage the source in order to extract the information they want." Here the sources have the power to influence the media content by providing only the positive side of themselves or their organization.

Riaz (2008) also claims that the importance of sources to media institution is unquestionable. However, he says journalists must consider their hidden agenda. "Journalists usually rely on sources for news but these sources can have their own personal interests and while giving the information to the reporters, they will definitely protect their vested interests" (p.44). Sources often use media for further their own causes or interests when they give speeches or conduct news conference. According to Rich (2003), this is nothing wrong since it is a way to presenting news, but she emphasizes that reporters must ask relevance questions after sources present their speeches and add others point of views from opposing sources. If reporters do not control sources, the power of

sources to control news content can step over the line from manipulation to straight forward corruption (Schudson, 2003).

In general gatekeepers perform a variety of functions and play several roles; they can simply stop a message by refusing to open the gate. They can positively force, create or eliminate media content; they can delete, insert, emphasize or deemphasize messages in news media (Hiebert et al, 1979). For instance, editor can add to messages (which collected by reporter) by combining information from other sources or omit some sources for various reasons.

Hiebert and his colleagues summarize the basic functions of gatekeepers in news media process. First, gatekeepers have the power to delete message; they can increase the amount and importance of certain kind of information and finally they can decrease the amount and importance of a specific kind of information (Ibid).

## **2.9. Using Diversified Sources in News**

News is expected to serve the majority of the public. Majority in a sense, it serves much audiences, not for interests of some individuals or groups. Journalists should work for the broader public unless they have no motives other than keeping the public informed (Byrd, 1992). To serve the public, it needs using different sources in a particular news story.

Potter (2006) argues that a single source cannot provide all necessary information, especially, when the issue is controversial, at least the two opposite viewpoints must be treated. For example, Scanlan (2000) elaborates the obligation of reporters in using different sources in a single story that if an incident occurred somewhere in town and the

reporter interviews only police officer and present as news without containing the experiences of victims , it is not news, but he only rewrites the police report. In the same way, if school coverage is only based the school board's news release and doesn't include anything from students or teachers, it is not news. News release helps journalist as a background information. Public relations specialists report also uses as a clue to the reporter, but it is not news by itself; otherwise the reporter is favoring the interest of the specialist's view.

Reporters assemble a group of people whom they think will help them best tell the story; some reporters choose sources based on the authorized source of information depending on the event's nature. These sources have to have knowledge or expertise about the area of the story (Gibbs and Warhaver, 2002). Most of the time according to Schudson (2003) authorized persons are government officials. However, government officials are not the only satisfiers of media's hunger.

Schudson more emphasizes that the media's reliance on government officials doesn't guarantee to provide favorable news. They always work with press for various reasons, and not always come to media to deliver an official administration message, but sometimes they seek to undermine rivals in the government by transmitting embarrassing information (2003).

One reason that government officials frequently in quoted media according to Campbell (2004, p.86) is, "They have authority within the hierarchies of society and also have the resources to regularly produce information in a form suitable for the news media." Hence,

they expect to be treated in favorable ways in the news story; but good journalist resists this influence by contacting a variety of sources (Folkerts and Lacy, 2001).

Most scholars in the field of mass media advice reporters that they have to find independent sources to back up the original source who comes as an authorized official even from private organizations. “Two or more independent but lesser-known sources are better than only one” (Garrison, 1992 p.75).

Lastly, the main point that unarguable is that in news reporting process, reporters have to collect every important information from possible sources whatever it is from human or non human sources to utilize the presentation of news stories.

## **2.10. Brief Historical Background of Ethiopian Mass Media**

The history of Ethiopian mass media took more than a century. According to PMC (2006), the first newspaper published in 1902 during Menelik II reign called *Aimro*. It was Amharic newspaper. Two popular and official newspapers, Addis Zemen and The Ethiopian Herald started 1941 and 1943 respectively PMC (2006). Later on, the Afan Oromo version, Barisa and Arabic, Al-Alem weeklies newspapers were started publication. Following the fall of Derg regime, a number of private newspapers flourished.

The broadcast media particularly, the radio (Ethiopian Radio) was established in Addis Ababa in 1935. Since Ethiopian Radio serves the public in three international languages (English, French and Arabic) and in 12 local languages including Afan Oromo. In 1994 a private owned radio, Radio Fana was established. The radio station broadcasts in Afan

Oromo, Afar and Amharic. In addition to these, FM radios such as, FM Addis 97.1, Sheger FM 102.1, Afro FM 105.3, Zami FM 90.7, Addis Ababa Municipality FM 96.3 and FM Finfinne 92.3 are currently serving the public by providing news and different programs which entertain and educate the public (PMC, 2006).

Television service was introduced to Ethiopia during the Emperor Haile Selassie. On November 2, 1964 Ethiopian Television started its broadcasting service PMC (2008). Until the 2008 establishment of Oromia Television, Ethiopian Television was the only television station in Ethiopia.

As this study is conducted on news source usage in *Oromia Radio*, it is essential to highlight the background of the station. *Oromia Radio* and Television Organization (ORTVO) was established in 2007. It is financed by Oromia Regional State and accountable to the regional council. The organization has two radio and one television stations namely *Oromia Radio*, FM Finfine 92.3, and Oromia Television. According to the Organization's magazine (DhRTVO, 2002 E.C.), before the establishment of the radio, Oromia Radio Program started its service in 1987 E.C. on Ethiopian Radio National Service. Between 1987 E.C. and 1999 E.C the radio program aired for one hour per week. On October 1, 2000 E.C *Oromia Radio* was established under ORTVO. The station was transmitting news and different program for 42 hours per week until 2002 E.C. After 2002 E.C the station increased the transmission time to 72 hours per week.

Currently, *Oromia Radio* has transmission for 77 hours per week. 447 workers (including free lancers and part timers) are working for ORTVO. Among them 140 journalists report for both radio and television programs because the two sectors were merged in 2002 E.C.

(DhRTVO, 2002 E.C.). According to a research conducted by ERIS (2011), news accounts for 15 % of the total transmission hour of the radio station. In addition to news, it has different programs which concentrate on socio-political, economic and cultural affairs. Since its establishment, *Oromia Radio* is supposed to serve as the vehicle of communication to inform, educate and entertain the society.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Research Methodologies

As indicated in chapter one, this study mainly aimed to explore how news sources were utilized in *Oromia Radio* and this chapter discussed the method employed in carrying out the study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study because using different methods of data gathering strengthens reliability of a research. Mixed/triangulation research method which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods is better than either qualitative or quantitative research method (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell(2009), the problems addressed by social science researchers are complex; and using either qualitative or quantitative approaches by themselves is inadequate to this complexity. So that , mixed method strategy reduces the risk that the researcher's conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitation of a single source, and it enables the researcher to gain a broader understanding of the issue he/she investigates (Maxwell, 2005; Creswell, 2009).

In other words, using triangulation strategy provides and expands the understanding of research problem. Therefore, in order to overcome such limitations, the triangulation (mixed) method was thought to be appropriate to this study.

### 3.1. Data sources

To examine the usage of news sources in *Oromia Radio* news program, the study employed primary data from *Oromia Radio* prime time evening news (16:00 GMT), and key informants who were directly working at the news desk. And secondary data were

gathered from editorial policy of ORTVO. To do so, both primary and secondary data were collected from different sources

### **Prime Time News**

Some of the objectives of the study were how *Oromia Radio* uses different sources in each news item to utilize the news, to explore the dominant news sources, and examine if journalists use their personal comment in the news presentation. And how they attribute sources and cultivate news sources regularly. Therefore, this study looked into the news converge of *Oromia Radio* source usage. According to Gibson (1991), radio reporter should have to use diversified sources to utilize the news items.

### **Document**

Editorial policy of ORTVO which guides the station how news items and sources are selected was reviewed to examine news and news source criteria. The document analysis enables the research to examine in what ways journalists attribute their news sources.

## **3.2. Data Gathering Techniques**

### **Content Analysis**

Content analysis according to Berelson (cited in Stemple, 1989) is defined as a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative analysis of the manifest content of communication. Objective in a sense, if different researchers apply content analysis on a particular content, they get the same result since they use the same procedure. But if the technique is subjective and not systematic, the result becomes different. Content analysis is also an important tool to examine the content of recorded information (Wimmer and

Dominic 1997). This implies that content analysis is appropriate techniques to examine the usage of news sources in news items. Samples of *Oromia Radio* prime time news were taken for the content analysis accordingly.

### **In-depth Interviews**

Intensive or in-depth interview is very important tool that helps in providing detailed background information about the interviewees' opinions. It assists the researcher in digging the respondents' opinions, values, motivations, experiences and their feelings (Wimmer and Dominic, 1997). As Wimmer and Dominic emphasis, in depth interview gives a wealthy of detailed information and provides more accurate responses on sensitive issues. Therefore, this technique preferred to gather essential information that assists to answer the research questions of the study. Accordingly, *Oromia Radio* journalists who are working in the newsroom were interviewed on the basis of purposive sampling.

### **3.3. Sampling**

*Oromia Radio* broadcasts daily news program in three different parts, i.e., in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. In the morning, it transmits news at 4:00 GMT and 5:00 GMT, at noon at 9:00 GMT and 10:00 GMT. In the evening it broadcasts at 16:00 GMT and 17:00 GMT. However, in this study, the researcher selected the evening (16:00 GMT) news program. Because most of the news stories that are collected by staff reporters reach the newsroom in the afternoon, and there is some repetition of mid-day news stories in the evening. Therefore, the evening (16:00 GMT) news program of *Oromia Radio* is considered as a prime time for its target audiences. And the 17:00 GMT

news program is copy of the first evening news hour (16:00 GMT news hours). Because of these, the researcher selected the first news hour of the evening program.

Therefore, the study focused only on six months news bulletin broadcast from September 21, 2011 (Meskerem 10, 2004 E.C) to March 18, 2012 (Megabit 9, 2004 E.C) as a population. To select the size of the sample, the researcher conducted a pilot test. 33 news stories of five days (January 2 to 6, 2012 ) news programs were analyzed. The result of the pilot test showed that out of 33 news stories, 14, 11 and 3 news stories were used single, double and multiple sources, respectively. 26 news items used government officials and nongovernmental sources appeared only in 7 news items. From 33 news stories, in 20 news items, the sources were not attributed appropriately, and 21 news items were presented with journalists personal opinion. Depending on the pilot test, the researcher selected 30 days of samples. News examined for the pilot test were not included in the sample. The researcher believed that if the samples were more than 30 days, it might be difficult to manage and if less than 30 days, it might be small to represent the population.

Foreign news, weather cast, and wire service news were excluded because these news items were prepared by external agents. So, the study only focused on news stories covered by staff reporters. No considerations were made in selecting the period, except the research time.

The researcher used systematic random sampling to select the appropriate sample for the study. According to Wimmer and Dominic (1997), systematic random sampling saves time and resources when compared to simple random sampling. Moreover, the systematic

random sampling is easy in selection, and its selection is accurate than simple random sampling. Its procedure is generally inexpensive. From the population of six months news program, this study analyzed 30 days of news program by using systematic random sampling.

As stated above, the starting point (day) was 21 September 2011 (Meskerem 10, 2004 E.C), and the ending was 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012 (Megabit 4, 2004 E.C). To know the sampling interval ( $n^{\text{th}}$ ) the researcher divided the population that was six months news (180) to the sample size (30). Therefore the sampling interval was  $\{180/30\} = 6$ . Hence, the samplings were 21, 27 September 2011, 3rd, 9th, 15th, 21st, 27th October 2011,... 13 March, 2012 ( See Appendix A ).

### **3.4. Data Collection**

30 days news stories which were broadcast from September 21, 2011 to March 18, 2012 and selected using systematic random sampling were coded using the coding frames designed. According to Stemple (1989) doing all the coding by self reduces the reliability of the research. So, Stemple advices that if the researcher codes by himself, he has to check in every bit and should have a second person who can check him. Otherwise, it is advisable to use other individuals for the coding. Hence, the researcher decided to give the works of coding for other coders and checked inter-coder reliability by using Holsti's formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2m}{N1 + N2}$$

Where  $M$  is the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree, and  $N1$  and  $N2$  are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010, p.172).

For the coding, the researcher trained two postgraduate students of Addis Ababa University. The number of coders involved in content analysis according to Wimmer and Dominick (1997) are two to six individuals. In this study, the coders were trained and referred the coding sheets which were prepared before the coding days. They coded 196 news stories of 30 days evening (16:00 GMT) news programs. The findings of content analysis and in depth interviews were presented and discussed concurrently.

Qualitatively, the researcher used in-depth interview. For this purpose, six key informants were interviewed from April 17 to 19, 2012. When this research was conducted there were 447 workers (including free lancers and part timers) in ORTVO. Among them 140 workers are journalists who are reporters, anchors, editors, and editors in chief. Reporters working for the organization report for both radio and television programs because the two sectors were merged in 2002 E.C. (DhRTVO, 2002 E.C.).

As Pattern (2004) acknowledges, for qualitative research method purposive sampling is advised. The researcher purposively selected individuals who had experiences in news gathering, editing and production. These informants had 4 to 10 years working experience in news reporting, and editing. From those respondents three of them were working as anchors in addition to reporting and editing news. One of them was a correspondent at zonal level and the other was an editor and coordinator of correspondents. This was intentionally done to examine the works of correspondents who were working in different Oromia zones. The rests of respondents were working at the head quarter of the station, Adama. They were working on news production. Therefore, the researcher believed that those individuals could give detailed information that were needed for the study. Accordingly, three reporters, two editors, and one editor

in chief were interviewed (four males and two females) on the basis of their experiences and gender consideration. Except the editor in chief, all informants were interviewed in Afan Oromo to make the respondents comfortable and express the ideas in better ways. But the editor in chief was interviewed in English because he preferred.

### **3.5. Means of Data Analysis and Interpretation**

As discussed earlier, the researcher employed mixed research method. The data analyzed based on appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Data that were collected through content analysis were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results were presented by using descriptive statistics, percentages and frequencies. In addition, the data gathered through in depth interviews were presented qualitatively. As a result, key findings that include core points of agreement across all interviews and substantial points of disagreement between interviews were presented. Some major points were directly quoted and the others were paraphrased.

#### **Variables and Categories**

The researcher classified news stories into seven categories. These are: news content category, kinds of sources, number of news used in a single report, ways of attribution, objectivity of news presentation, tone and impartiality.

##### **1. News content category**

- a. Politics : These are issues related to democracy and good governance like management, government structure, election, corruption.

- b. Economy: This refers to issues related to economy like agriculture, market, business, and hotel and tourism.
- c. Environment: Issues related to environment.
- d. Social Services: News related with health, education, water and sanitation, transportation, court, police, culture, art, religion, and sport.
- e. Science and Technology: Issues related to science and technology.

## 2. Kinds of news sources

- a. Government Officials: This represents authorities who are posted in different government ranks (from kebele to federal ministry).
- b. Nongovernmental organization and civic societies: This represents nongovernmental organizations who serve for no profit and associations.
- c. Private institutions: It refers to commercial organizations serve for profit.
- d. Individuals: Any citizen who doesn't represent any organization or institution.
- e. Political Parties: This refers to any organized political part including the ruling party.
- f. Experts: These are people who are specialized in specific field and give explanation to journalists on their special fields.
- g. Documents: These are secondary sources/written documents used as sources of news.

3. Number of sources: these are number of sources used in news items.
  - a. Single sources : It refers to news items only used one source.
  - b. Double sources : News stories used two sources.
  - c. Multiple sources : News stories used more than two sources.
  - d. No sources : News that does not have sources.
  
4. Ways of news attribution: the way journalists attribute the sources of information in news report.
  - a. Appropriate : The way journalists attributed the sources of information professionally and properly.
  - b. Inappropriate : This refers to news stories that journalists didn't attribute the sources of information properly.
  - c. No attribution : News that were not attributed at all.
  
5. The objectivity of news presentation: this is the way journalists present information that they got from sources without adding their opinion.
  - a. Raw facts : The way journalists presented news without adding their personal opinion (only presented the raw facts received from the sources).
  - b. Opinion added : News which journalists' opinion and comments were added.
  
6. The tone of news : refers to the general character of news which could be positive neutral or negative.

a. Positive : News story that favors someone without disfavoring anyone.

b. Neutral : News story that doesn't favor or disfavor anybody.

c. Negative : News story that disfavors someone.

7. Impartiality: it refers whether or not the news is free of bias or balanced or not.

a. Balanced : News items which entertains all represented/concerned bodies  
equally.

b. Unbalanced : News stories which doesn't entertain all sides equally.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this study was to examine how news sources were used in *Oromia Radio*. In this chapter, the analysis of the data obtained using content analysis and in-depth interviews were presented. This was done based on the theoretical frameworks presented in chapter two. Specifically, the major criteria of news source selection, the dominant news sources, number of sources used in each news item, ways of source attribution, objectivity of news presentation, the tone of news items and their impartiality, the role of gatekeepers were presented and analyzed in line with the results of content analysis and in depth interviews. In addition to these, the way *Oromia Radio* journalists cultivated news sources and the way they verify information obtained from sources were discussed based on the in-depth interviews.

Content analysis was used as a technique to examine news source usage in *Oromia Radio*. In-depth interviews were also conducted with six key informants in the station. Instead of mentioning their name, the researcher coded the name of informants to avoid redundancy.

The findings of content analysis and in depth interviews were presented and discussed concurrently in the chapter.

## **4.2 The Major Sources of News for Oromia Radio**

The findings of the content analysis showed that more than 80 % of *Oromia Radio* news were collected by staff reporters. According to informant 6 (editor in chief) most of *Oromia Radio* news were gathered by staff reporters. In addition to staff reporters, the station used different local and international news media as sources of news. Such as communication affaires bureaus, Ethiopian News Agency, Walta Information Center, Reuters, BBC, CNN and Aljazeera. According to the informant, the station gave priority to news that were gathered by staff reporters and also used those local and international news agents as supportive. As the informant explained, Reuters was the main sources of news for the station for international news. Therefore, Oromia Radio mostly relied on its own reporters to produces news. This quality enables it to compete with other news media.

Relying on its staff reporters is one of the standards that scholars argue about. For instance, Ted White (1996) assesses that although broadcast stations receive news from different news agents, the main sources of radio or television are their staff reporters, and Garrison (1992) expresses the staff reporters as they are arms, legs, eyes and ears of their news organization. Chanter and Stewart (2003) and Royd (2001) agree with Garrison's argument and underline as reporters are the fire fighters of their newsroom and the biggest sources of radio should be them.

## **4.3. The Major Criteria of News Selection for Oromia Radio**

Data gathered from informants showed that mostly *Oromia Radio* selected news based on national interest and one of the news values, prominence. For instance, one of the

informants explained how the station selects news, "The station selects news in line with the country's interest. We consider that what others learn from that news. If a farmer has a best experience, we give him the chance. Because, other farmers can learn more from him" (Informant 4). As described by the informant, issues related to government policy were given priority in news selection. According to informants, prominence and being government officials were the main criteria to produce news. From the information obtained from the informants, it can be understood that issues related to government policies and strategies were given priority in *Oromia Radio* news gathering and reporting process. According to the editor in chief,

As it is state owned medium, we have to shape things the way the government and the public benefit from. So we are working to build image of the region. We are working to make a kind of agreement between the public and the government. So that democratization, development, security and different things go the way they have to go. (Informant 6).

This indicates that issues conflicting the government policy and strategies might not get coverage. But, Article 29 sub-article five of the Constitution under indicates the way state financed media operates, " Any media financed by or under the control of the state shall be operated in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversified in the expression of opinion" (The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995, p.89).

As many scholars agree up on, unusual, timeliness, proximity, prominence, conflict and impacts are factors that determine news selection. According to the editorial policy of ORTVO Article 1.2.12.1, news is selected based on its significance and impact, timeliness and current, public interest and prominence. However, *Oromia Radio* mostly relies on the 'prominence' than the other news values.

#### 4.4. News Source Selection in *Oromia Radio*

*Table 1: Kinds of sources used in frequency and percentage*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Government officials	138.16	70.4897	70.4897
Nongovernmental organizations and civic societies	4.83	2.4642	72.9539
Private institutions	1.83	0.9336	73.8875
Individuals	25.93	13.2295	87.117
Political parties	8.66	4.4183	91.5353
Experts	8.42	4.2959	95.8312
Documents	6.17	3.1474	98.9786
None	2	1.0204	100.0
Total	196	100.0	

The researcher examined 196 news items which were broadcast in *Oromia Radio* by staff reporters. As it can be seen from the above table, the station used different kinds of sources: government, NGO and civic societies, individuals, private institutions, political parties, experts and documents. Except the document (secondary sources), all of the rests are primary (human) sources. Out of 196 news stories, government official sources came more than 138 times (70.4897 %), and individuals came near to 26 times (13.2295 %).

This indicates that government officials are the dominant sources of news in *Oromia Radio*. The highest percentage in the society, typical citizens only received 13.22 %.

David White quoted in Tumber (1999) identifies five major consideration for source selection: the past suitability, productivity, reliability, newsworthiness, and authoritativeness. As can be observed from Table 1, *Oromia Radio* station more considered news sources based on their authoritativeness and gave less credit and ignored the other criteria. Experts who are professionals on their particular field were given only 4.29 %. As mentioned in chapter two, Garrison emphasizes the importance of experts in news reporting, "These are individuals who have specialized in the specific fields and have more professional knowledge than any other." (Garrison, 1992 p.72). With this regard respondents said: "Most of the time our news is timely. Hence, it is difficult to find the most appropriate sources like expert" (Informant 1). The other respondent also mentioned, "The case why experts are not frequently used as a source depend upon the rarity of the specialized field. In most cases communication officers who represent government give briefings to media, so we mostly contact them"(Informant 2).

Schudson(2003) emphasizes that the media's reliance on government officials doesn't guarantee to provide favorable news. They always work with press for various reasons, and not always come to media to deliver an official administration message, but sometimes they seek to undermine rivals in the government by transmitting embarrassing information.

As can be understood from the information above, the station gave less attention to experts who are authorized and experienced in their subject area. Out of 196 news

items, government officials were used in 162 news stories whereas experts attributed only in 11 news items.

Document which is called secondary source and gives background information for story offered only 3.14 % ; the rest of 95.86 were human sources (excluding 1.02 % of un attributed news stories).

The political parties that were treated in the news have taken 4.41 %. All of those political parties were members of the ruling party. Out of the examined sample news stories, there was no single news story that represent the opposition political parties. The interview question about whether the station give equal chances to all parts of the society also elicited the response that the station used government officials as the major source of news. Informant 4 for example said, "Most of the time our sources are more inclined to government sources".

The researcher also asked the respondents to reason out their responses to the previous question. They said, "From the beginning, this station was established based on the government policy. The editorial policy of the station says that the station serves as a bridge between government and the public, but in the reality, the medium is more inclined to government" (Informant 4). Similarly Informant 3 stated, "First when the person appointed as official, he/she will be credible source for the news".

Similarly, informant 1 and 5 acknowledged as government officials were given priority and come frequently in news, "Our sources are related with government officials. We mostly contact government officials. These sources are believed as credible sources" (Informant 1). Informant 5 said:

Most of the time, I use government officials as news source to mobilize the public in the implementation of government policies and strategies. Government officials have better understanding than other individuals on government development packages. So, the station mostly relies on those government officials.

Even among the society who were used as information source, the station did not give equal opportunity for all members of the society; it gave more chance to individuals who were in better economic status. In relation to this, one of the editors said:

In principle, it is said that all members of the society without difference of age and economic status, has to be equally treated. This is the station's position. However, when we see the reality, there is a great problem. Practically, we use individuals who are in the better economic status, talkative, and who well know about the current government political scenario. So, there is a limitation in participating the ordinary people as source of news. (Informant 4).

According to Potter (2006) news are produced to the mass audience. If there is mass audience, there is a probability to find different viewpoints in the news story. For this reason, to produce news it needs diversified sources. Potter acknowledges the importance using different sources in particular news story. She notes that using diversified sources enables to report an accurate, objective and faire report.

As illustrated in table 1, *Oromia Radio* attributed sources in 194 (of 196) news stories. But it didn't attribute sources in two news items by directly quoting or in the way of anonymity. Newsom and Wollert (1985) underline that journalists should attribute the source of information in order to be trusted.

Almost all of the informants said that they attribute the sources of information when they present news. For example, Informant 1 stated, " I do not remember a time that I report without attributing the source of information". The other informant also expressed

as she did not report news without attributing its source, "I never experienced. I am an anchor even when such kind of news happened, I never read it without source".

But, respondent 4 (an editor) explained a case the station might not attribute the source of information. She says, "Sometimes this happens, for instance, when there is notice to inform, about meeting to be held tomorrow, we do not mention sources in these cases because we only give information to the targets".

Rudin and Ibbotson (2002) urge media practitioners to mention the sources of information in any case in order to be trusted by listeners. However, in the case of anonymity, journalists can keep the sources of news, but they are expected to tell the audience as the information is not their opinion or comment (Rich, 2003; Potter, 2006).

Regarding anonymous sources, the informants said that the station does not use anonymous sources. The editorial policy of the organization also insists journalists to attribute the sources of information. However, according to informant 5, the station sometimes uses anonymous sources. He said, "We sometimes use anonymous source, but it is rare case".

#### **4.5. Types of news content**

This part was only designed to categorize news in specific title or theme when all news stories were transcribed. To classify numbers of different issues into certain major categories, the researcher brought issues related to democracy and good governances like management, government structure, election and corruption under the umbrella of politics. Those issues like agriculture, market, business and hotel and tourism were put

under economy. Issues related to health, education, water and sanitation, transportation, culture, religion, art, sport, court and police were put under the umbrella of social services. Environment and science and technology were put as separate categories.

**Table 2: News content category in frequency and percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Politics	37	18.9	18.9	18.9
Economy	81	41.3	41.3	60.2
Environment	25	12.8	12.8	73.0
Social service	46	23.5	23.5	96.4
Science and Technology	7	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

According to the findings, economic issues were given more attention in *Oromia Radio* and received 41.3 % followed by social services which offered 23.5 %. Politics, environment, science and technology received 18.9 %, 12.8 % and 3.6 % respectively as indicated in table 2.

#### **4.6. Number of Sources used in News Stories of *Oromia Radio***

**Table 3: Number of sources used in frequency and percentage**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single sources	106	54.1	54.1	54.1
Double sources	65	33.2	33.2	87.2
Multiple sources	23	11.7	11.7	99.0
No sources	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

*Table 3* indicates that out of 196 news items, 106 (54.1 %) news were reported in single sources whereas, 65 (33.2 %) and 23 (11.7%) news stories were used double and multiple sources respectively.

When the respondents were asked whether they use a single source or not, they pointed out that it could not be reasonable to depend on a single source. Informant 6, an editor in chief, for example, said, "It is impossible to produce a complete news story using only one source because it is not a balanced story. If you ask me "why?" Except you are doing some kinds of promotion, it is too difficult to make news by a single source". He further stated:

If you are cross checking, we do have multiple sources. one from the public (in the public, there are lots of people or individuals speaking on behalf of the public) and the other from the government officials. In this case, we do have double or multiple sources. The news you get from the analysis may not need of balance.

However, contrary to this information, the findings indicated that more than half (54.1 %) of the news used single sources. Almost all of the informants stated that they use single sources when they report news. For instance, informant 1 and 2 explained as they produce news with only one source. When an official gives press conference, journalists record what the official says and raise some questions after the brief, then they report the official's report without contacting other bodies. However, according to Informant 5 (an editor), when reporters come up with only one source, they cross check if it needs balancing. But if it does not need of balancing, it can be aired. In addition to this, most of the time as informants said, news those are produced timely have no full of sources. They were produced by single sources. One of the informants highlighted on what issues the station focuses and reporters contact, "It depends on the type of the news. We usually

focus in meetings and workshops. We report what officials say in the meeting. This is the reality of what we are doing" (Informant 4).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the probability that *Oromia Radio* used single source in news reporting was high as almost all respondents and the findings of content analysis revealed that the station used more single sources in news than applying diversified sources. This makes the station to upon the only single news sources standard. This can be conflicted with Potter's (2006) argument discussed earlier. She acknowledges that using diversified sources enables journalists to report accurate, objective and fair report

#### 4.7. Ways of News Source Attribution and its Objectivity

*Table 4: Ways of news source attribution in frequency and percentage*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Appropriate	116	59.2	59.2	59.2
	Inappropriate	78	39.8	39.8	99.0
	No attribution	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	196	100.0	100.0	

The findings of content analysis of *Oromia Radio* (Table 4) show that out of 196 news stories, 116 (59.5 %) news are appropriately attributed in all necessary place. Whereas 78 (39.8 %) of news items are not appropriately attributed. And two of 196 (1.0 %) news stories are completely not attributed.

Similarly, most of the respondents said that there was lack of attributing sources in clear way. Sometimes they attributed the source of information in all necessary place,

however, it was observed that as the station's news lacked appropriate attribution in some news. According to the informants, the sources of the news were mostly government officials and single sources. So, if they attribute single sources in most of the news parts, they believed that it might be boring to listeners. For example, Informant 1 said:

There is a time that we use appropriately, but most of the time not only me, we do not attribute the source appropriately. As we discussed earlier, our sources are government officials and single sources. Therefore, if we attribute one by one, we believe it may be boring. So, we usually do not attribute appropriately. Instead, we mention the source in general.

However, the lack of attributing sources appropriately does not related to government officials or using single sources. As most of the informants acknowledged, it is the problem of journalists treating the source of information. One of the reporter discussed:

When I say no need of attribution in everywhere, I am not saying that it must not be attributed. But instead of mentioning the official name and title again and again, I have to say, 'It is said.' or 'He/she said.' Otherwise, it is difficult to differentiate the journalist's view or fact. If it is not attributed in this way, it is journalist's mistake. (Informant 2).

Missing attribution in some parts of news leads journalists to add their personal views. Attributing sources in a clear way helps the listeners to identify the sources of information. One of the respondents described how she observed the lack of attributing sources and as some journalists reflected their opinion in news, "When I myself listen to the radio as an audience, some of our reporters add their views. Even they tell us about five paragraphs without mentioning the source. This is the reality" (Informant 3).

Scholars emphasize the important of attribution in news. According to Hewitt (1995, p.35) , "Attribution is a phrase or sentence that reveals the source of information for a news story. Attribution helps establish credibility". Scanlan (2000) also acknowledges that the identification of sources by name and title enables listeners to know precisely where the material came from. However, not all information in the news need attribution. Information that are observed by reporter and facts known in the general public do not need attribution (Potter, 2006). Except in these two cases, according to the above scholars, journalists should attribute the sources of information appropriately. In print media, it is simple to the readers to refer back where the source is. However, in radio, listeners can never refer back. So, it is better to remind our listeners in appropriate way and place (Boyd, 2001). Chanter and Stewart argue, "Each sentence has to be true in itself"(2003, p.81).

#### **4.8. The Objectivity of *Oromia Radio* News**

*Table 5: Objectivity of news presentation in frequency and percentage*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Raw facts	115	58.7	58.7	58.7
	Opinion added	81	41.3	41.3	100.0
	Total	196	100.0	100.0	

In the case of objectivity, 115 (58.7 %) news stories were presented in full of raw facts.

In contrast, 41.3 % of news stories had journalists' comments and opinions. Journalists

presented those news with subjectivity. When they fail to attribute sources in a clear manner, it can be mixed with their comments. According to the findings of the content analysis which can be seen from the above table, reporters added their opinions in 81 news stories. These practice can reduce the credibility of the radio station and objectivity of journalists. "They cannot comment, interpret or evaluate. If an issue is controversial, journalists interview representative for the opposing sides." (Fedler, 1993, p.119). Fedler significantly argues that journalists shouldn't comment on news. Instead, they have support their facts by contacting relating source. Otherwise, the objectivity of journalists is questioned.

#### **4.9. The Tone and Impartiality of Oromia Radio News**

*Table 6: The tone of news stories in frequency and percentage*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Positive	45	23.0	23.0	23.0
Neutral	148	75.5	75.5	98.5
Negative	3	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the tone of the news stories as shown in the above table, 75.5 % (148) of news were neutral. They did not favor or disfavor anybody. The facts were collected from different sources presented as they were. In contrast, 45 news (23%) were reported in favoring government and the work of government as an end. Out of the examined sample news three news stories (1.5%) were presented in disfavoring individuals whose views had to be included in the stories.

As pointed out in chapter two (Newsom and Wollert , 1985), four major important points are essential in the process of fair reporting. These are, no story is fair if it omits facts of major significance , no story is fair if it includes essentially irrelevant information at the expense of significant facts, no story is fair if it consciously or unconsciously misleads or even deceives the audience, no story is fair if reporters hide their biases or emotions behind. Therefore, when they report news, reporters should present making themselves neutral.

From 196 news stories reported on *Oromia Radio* and examined, 47 (24%) of the news items were not balanced. 149 news stories were found to be balanced. However, most scholars advice reporters to balance news by contacting the opposite view or they have to find independent sources to back up the original source (Garrison, 1992). Potter (2006) argues that a single source cannot provide all necessary information, especially, when the issue is controversial, at least the two opposite viewpoints must be treated equally.

***Table 7: The impartiality of news stories in frequency and percentage***

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid    Balanced	149	76.0	76.0	76.0
Unbalanced	47	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	196	100.0	100.0	

The researcher asked all respondents whether they tried to balance their news stories or not. All of the informants responded that they try to balance news when the report needs balancing. They contact all concerned parts, but sometimes they fail to balance. As these respondents said, in the case of project (planned) report, they include the sources of news

in their plan before they leave the station and try to interview all concerned people. However, in the case of event reporting when they are assigned to cover news, they simply contact officials or experts and back to the station. If the sources of the event is government official and the issue is related to government interest, they do not have the chance to balance the information from other sources because any information that conflicts government or government officials' interest is not treated in the news.

Although most of the respondents acknowledged the problem with balancing news stories, informant 6 (editor in chief) claimed that without crosschecking of information from all sides, news that have contradictory ideas are not broadcast. He further explained, "In the case of contradictory ideas, if our reporters come up with one sided report, we try to verify from concerned body. After we cross check the information, we broadcast it. Otherwise, we do not put on air unbalanced information. The journalist has given time to crosscheck".

As it can be generally understood from the responses of informants, except respondent 6, journalists who were working in *Oromia Radio* feared to add views of individuals who express their opinion or complain against government views. David Park and his colleagues (undated) insist that if news media do not care about alternative news source like citizens' voices and other diverse viewpoints, the role of media becomes questioned especially, if the majority of information inclined to one perspective. These scholars further acknowledge that if information is not checked to be accurate, then the media have failed their role in the process of building democracy. In addition, when the media rely on official sources and leave out the perspective of the society from diverse source in their news gathering process, then again the media failed to see public interests.

This kind of reporting is contradict with the ethical principles. Reporters should use reliable sources who can give the reality and who can be trusted in the society. And these journalists are expected or obligated to be neutral. Their reports do not reflect the journalists' idea and not biased to anyone. Fedler comments that news stories must be objective and free of bias. He says journalists are expected to gather information from all necessary bodies and report the factual information. News report need more than contacting two or three sources. According to Hadland (2005) , even if triple sources stories may sound like a lot of work, they need to be balanced as well.

The cases of balancing and tone are related with the role of gatekeepers in news media. In the next portion, the issue of gatekeeping were discussed in line with the theoretical framework and informants responses.

#### **4.10. Pressure on Journalists in the Process of News Reporting and Source Selection**

All informants explained that there were pressures on journalists in the process of news gathering and reporting. Gatekeepers who were in different ranks influenced reporters unprofessionally. Editors influenced reporters when their bosses pushed them, and bosses who were in the highest rank pushed their editor in chief when they were influenced by external sources (government officials). For example, informant 1 elaborated:

Once up on a time, when I reported news on one factory, I used different sources including the factory's managers. I also included all sources directly related to the issue. After the news was aired, the owner of the factory called to the station. Then my boss criticized me even if I did professionally and according to the editorial policy of the station. This indicates that our editors failed to apply the editorial policy. If I only used the manager of the factory, I might not be criticized. If my report had

discovered the wrong doing of officials, our bosses would have favored him instead of serving the public.

Almost all of the respondents acknowledged that gatekeepers such as editors, newsroom head, editor in chief, and the general manager influenced reporters to include or exclude information obtained from sources. These gatekeepers sometimes ordered reporters which sources must be interviewed or not. Relying on bosses' order, reporters interview the selected sources and report the news on the basis of angles given them. For instance, one of the editor explained:

Regarding to source, the head of news desk decides who must be interviewed. When the issue is serious like government or national issue, gatekeepers who are on the highest rank decide. They say, 'If it is not covered in this direction, it may be worse.' It is believed that it may be cause for conflict among the society. So, sometimes, there is a case that our bosses interfere and order us, and journalists are told sources who they must interview. (Informant 4).

According to the above informant, when sources need to manipulate editors and reporters, they indirectly contact newsroom head or editor in chief, then these heads order editor to change the angle of news. This informant insisted that journalists have the right to contact anyone when they are in field even though they are told to contact particular sources. However, the information will be with held after it reaches newsroom. In doing so, gatekeepers change the direction of news and sometimes they block the news.

The other respondent (informant 6) said that in selecting news sources, he (editor in chief or the head of newsroom and current affairs) assigns journalists who are trusted to accomplish the task. He explained as follow:

Orientation will be given before they go out for that given assignment. We also orient them which issues must be included. Remember, we do not

urge them not to do, but we tell them to take care off. If it is sensitive, we orient them to include who to be interviewed, what kinds of sources must be asked for including what they think in their mind.

As the above informant explained, in the case of project news (news that is gathered based on the journalists' treatment plan) all concerned bodies discuss up on it and add some points what are missed. In the case of event report, except sensitive issue like political or religious case, journalists have the full right what they want based on information they get. According to this informant, the gatekeepers who were his bosses rare to influence him. He said that these heads play their role after the news are aired. If some problem happens, these gatekeepers discuss with him. If mistake is made, the editor in chief (informant 6) order to broadcast on the next news program. If this respondent believes as the reported news is correct he tries to defend himself as he described.

Regarding external influence, the informant insisted that sources cannot order the station to include or exclude information. However, they want to be on air for a long time in media. He further explained, "Some officials sources also want you to post their images 24 hours on Television and listen to their voices for long time on the radio. This is impossible. There is a rule to take how much long actuality/sound bite must run".

Gatekeepers have important advantages in order to filter the very crucial information from unnecessary things. For instance, news editors see news in professional angles, and they do not overlook inaccurate, unverified, and unbalanced information. They edit unnecessary information and add the important information which may left out by reporters. However, these gatekeepers can also influence the process of news gathering

up to its final reaches. They have the power to change, modify and correct or block content of news information.

As it is expressed by informants, except the informant 6, gatekeepers had great power to influence the news gathering, editing, and reporting process in *Oromia Radio*. Most of the time except some insensitive issues, reporters were influenced by their bosses to interview only the expected government officials and report news stories that might not reflect the public interests. Even though sources do not influence journalists directly, they influence them indirectly. Editors were also enforced by their heads and official sources to exclude/include information from news stories. All of them responded that as much as possible they try to overcome the gatekeepers influence by defending themselves showing the content of the news.

This is similar with the argument of Campbell (2004). He warns that unless journalists seriously see, sources have the power to manipulate media content; whatever in individual or institutional level, sources try to divert the media attention into their (political or personal) interests.

Although respondent 6 denied as sources influence them, it is understood from the five respondents discussion proved that sources indirectly influence the process of news gathering and reporting in *Oromia Radio*.

#### **4.11. Verification of Information in *Oromia Radio***

All of the informants were asked whether they verify information obtained from sources. Except informant 6, all of the informants said that when the sources are government

officials, they do not bother to check the information from other parts. In one hand, they believe the officials and in the other hand, they fear to verify the information from other body. For example, informant 3 elaborated the trend of *Oromia Radio* in verifying information, "If it is press release, I do not try to verify it. I am telling you the norms of our station. When the officials give press conference, we do not need of verification. As I have told you, we trust government officials as the reliable source. Anyone does not suspect them that they tell the public wrong information".

Specifically, according to informant 5, when the sources are senior officials, journalists believe them as those officials give them trustworthy information. The informant further explained, "If the reports are from ministers, senior officials or heads of different bureaus, we do not verify because we believe them.

Woolever (2002, p.44) who advises journalists to verify information they get from one source says, "Once you have the information in front of you, the next step is to decide if source is an appropriate". He also urges journalists must directly go to the people who are the subject matter like experts, and he emphasizes that one sided nature of news which do not add the opposite, neutral views is poor argument or report.

According to the above informants except informant 6, it is really a great problem with *Oromia Radio* to verify information accessed from sources. Almost all informants revealed how information collected from government officials are not verified from other body as well as challenging the officials by raising relevant questions.

In one hand, journalists believe officials as they give them the reliable information. This is related to one of major source considerations raised by David White. According to him,

journalists prefer information of officials than other sources because journalists trust them and they believe that those officials are authorized and responsible White in Tumber (1999). But he also notes that past suitability, productivity, reliability, and truth worthiness are the main important in source consideration. If the source is an official and unproductive and unreliable, it is disaster to use only this official without crosschecking. In other hand, journalists fear the official to check information from the counter part or from the officials themselves. For instance, one of the respondents said, "When I went to *Shashemene*, one government official wrote 'news' script and gave me to report as it is, but I rejected. Then he called to my boss, and my boss ordered me to come up with that script. However, we didn't broadcast it" (Informant 1).

Even if journalists suspect as officials may give untrustworthy information, they fear to crosscheck from other bodies. Hadland (2005) recommends journalists to check every facts, "If you are unsure of facts, don't run the story, or else make sure you qualify it to hell and gone. Every fact, every allegation has to be checked, double checked and checked again." (Hadland, 2005 p.30).

Hadland not only insists journalists to use double or triple sources but also he notes that to check the reliability and factuality of information. "Triple source stories may sound like a lot of work" (Ibid).

Depending on the finding, it can be concluded that *Oromia Radio* journalists do not verify information as per the standard of the profession. This may lead the station to report one sided news stories, and it also may lead to violate others right to express their idea on issues concerning them.

#### **4.12. Norms of Source Cultivation in *Oromia Radio***

As briefly indicated in the review of literature, cultivating source is more suitable to beat reporting than general assignment reporting since beat reporters frequently contact with typical sources. Most of the informants responded that beat reporting was not given much attention in *Oromia Radio*. There were only some reporters which work on specific fields like sport, marketing and sometimes on agriculture. Most of the respondents said that they cultivate sources rarely. Whereas others responded that they did not cultivate news sources.

Out of the six informants, four of them said that they tried to cultivate news sources when they reported like on agriculture, sport, and environmental issues. For instance, informant 2 said that he sometimes cultivated a particular source and the source facilitated to him even if it was not suitable to him (the source). When he reported on agriculture reporting, he contacted an expert on the issue and cultivated. Similarly, informant 1 explained as he attempted to cultivate sources when he worked on beat reporting:

In the case of beat reporting, most of the time, I worked on different research like agricultural research. This research is in different parts of Oromia region. When I worked on that beat report, I used one person for many times based on the establishment customer ship. Because, I was getting different information about the issue from the person. Most of the time I contacted him.

However, the other informants replied that they did not cultivate sources in their news reporting experiences. They worked mostly on general assignment reporting and had not get the chance to work on beat reporting. Hence, they did not cultivate sources on particular issues.

According to the majority of the informants, there is an attempting to cultivate sources in *Oromia Radio* when journalists were assigned to report on some specific fields.

Regarding influence of regular contacts (sources), most of the respondents replied that they didn't establish closer relationship with sources and rare to be influenced in the case of beat reporting. However, most of them replied that most of the time sources who are cultivated by reporters try to tell them only their positive.

According to Bhatt (1993), cultivating sources enables journalists to produce exclusive news stories. These exclusive news stories are also essential to secure time and compete with rivals (McQuail, 2000). As most scholars argue for, after sources and journalists access to each other, information become news (Gans, 2004), and establishing regular contact with knowledgeable sources is too essential in producing news and compete with other news media.

Although establishing contact with sources has its own advantages, according to Hunter in Garrison (1992) and Gibson (1991), too much close to sources may create conflict of interest or other problem. If regular contacts did wrong doing, they might be the part of news and try to deceive reporters by telling them only their positive side unless journalists have courage to reveal the wrong deeds.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

This study mainly aimed to explore the usages of news sources in *Oromia Radio*. In doing so, the study attempted to investigate number of news sources were used in each news story in order to utilize news. Which kinds of news sources dominated the station's news program was also the other point of the research. The way journalists presented news they obtained from source was presented and analyzed based on journalistic profession which included the impartiality of the journalists, the tone of the news and how they presented news with/without adding their personal opinion in the news content was also another concern of the research. The category of news evaluated in order to categorize news in different kinds of issues, news and news source criteria of the station were also the focus of this study. In addition to these, the role and influence of gatekeepers who were in different ranks were discussed and analyzed based on the theoretical framework. Finally, the way journalists cultivated and verified news sources were explored and analyzed. This chapter presented conclusion and recommendations.

The research consisted of a content analysis of randomly selected news stories as well as in-depth interviews with reporters, editors and editor in chief in *Oromia Radio*. To select the representatives of news stories which were broadcast from September 21, 2011 to March 18, 2012, systematic random sampling was used. 196 news stories were coded

altogether. Qualitatively, six journalists from the station were selected by using purposive sampling technique and interviewed.

- The finding of the study showed that being government official was the major criteria to select news source in *Oromia Radio*.
- The result of the study indicated that from 196 news stories examined, government officials accounted 70.48 %. Out of the 196, government officials were presented in 162 news stories.
- The results of the study also indicated that gatekeepers who determine which news stories have to be aired or not, and which sources must be contacted, influenced journalists to give more priority to government sources. According to the findings, these gatekeepers were news desk head, editors, editor in chief, deputy general manager, and general manager. These gatekeepers who played their roles in selecting news and news sources had the power to change the content of the news. These all were internal factors. External factors were mostly government officials who came as news sources. These government officials had the power to manipulate media content by influencing directly newsroom editors, editor in chief, and the general manager of the station and sometimes they influenced reporters indirectly. They also wanted to enforce newsroom staff to appear frequently in the news, and these government officials wanted to hear their voices on the radio for a long time. The government officials appeared in the news came to media to express government policies and strategies. Based on this, they told society as the government was doing its best, but they did not want to be exposed by any journalists for their wrong doing. Only they expressed what good

they did. For these all reasons, government officials dominated Oromia Radio news.

- The findings of the study also indicated that primary or human sources were extensively used in *Oromia Radio*. Nearly 96% of the sources were human. Whereas, secondary sources like documents which give background information were given less attention that is 3.14 % only. Nongovernmental organizations and civic societies, private institutions and experts who have deep knowledge in their specific fields were also given less consideration 2.46%, 0.93% and 4.29 % respectively. In the case of typical citizens (individuals) appeared 13.22 %. Even from individuals, the station gave more priority to those who understand the current government policy and strategies and support the government.
- In the case of number of sources used in each news, *Oromia Radio* used single sources in more than half of the news stories. 106 news items (54.1 %) were reported only by single sources. In 65 news items (33.2 %) the station used double and it only used multiple sources in 23 (11.7 %) news stories. These implied that the station was not aware of the usage of multiple sources.
- In news source attribution the findings showed that nearly 3/5 (59.2 %) of news were professionally attributed. Whereas, about 2/5 (40 %) were not attributed professionally. Journalists attributed sources in the news at somewhere and ignored in other places. This implied that the importance of source attribution in different news parts was given less consideration.

- Similarly, the way journalists presented information that were obtained from sources indicated limitation of the radio station. Out of 196 news stories, 115 (58.7 %) of news were presented without journalists' opinion. In those news, journalists presented raw data (information) as they were obtained from sources. However, 81 (41.3 %) of news items were presented with certain comments of journalists even though the editorial policy of the station doesn't allow.
- The tone of news presented in those news stories showed that more than three quarters of news (75.5 %) were presented in neutral way without favoring or disfavoring anybody. But 23 % of news favored government without being entertain (crosschecking) the information from other bodies.
- Regarding impartiality, 149 (76 %) of news stories were presented impartially. In contrast, 24 % of news those broadcast by the station were not balanced.
- The findings also showed that the trend of cultivating news sources in *Oromia Radio* was given less attention. This might be connected with the relying of the station mostly on event reports.

The research data affirmed that government officials were the main sources of news in *Oromia Radio*. As Campbell (2004) argues news media which is controlled by government (the ruling party) has great chance to be manipulated by government officials and restricts the practice of journalism to public interest. Even though David White in Tumber (1999) puts five major news sources considerations (past suitability, productivity, reliability, truth worthiness and authoritativeness), *Oromia Radio* only

focused on the fifth one, authoritativeness. Similarly, Garrison (1992) points out five common news sources treated in news reporting (public sector officials, experts, typical citizens (individuals), private sectors officials, and eyewitnesses). *Oromia Radio* mainly focused on public sector officials and gave too less attention to the rests of the news sources. Schudson (2003) also emphasizes that media's reliance on government officials doesn't guarantee to provide favorable news for the audience.

In doing these, *Oromia Radio* seemed that it was undermining the right of citizens to participate or express their feelings and opinion in the news which the constitution of the country guaranteed them (The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995). In other words, the role of journalists as a bridge between government and the public was failed by only favoring government policy and government officials. Similarly, ignoring the majority of the public leads to unfair of information flow in the station. When government officials were presented only as they do 'the best', the right of the public to criticize the government officials wrong doing was left out, the watchdog role of journalism is unthinkable. Therefore, the objectivity of journalism in collecting, processing and broadcasting news to the public was questioned since journalists were influenced by their gatekeepers. Ted White (2010) expresses the ethics of journalism such as accuracy, fairness and objectivity are the cornerstones of good journalism or the pillars of journalism. But in the case of the findings, these cornerstones of journalism were not achieved in *Oromia Radio*. It is possible to conclude that journalists in *Oromia Radio* made news in line with government interests and no courage to expose the failures of government officials.

According to Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) cited in Park et al (n.d.) using diversity of sources in media may be one of the most important indicators linked with democratic communications. Collecting information from diversified sources enables news media to serve the majority of the public (Byrd, 1992), and it helps to use different sources in a single news story. Potter (2006) argues that making news only by using single sources doesn't provide all necessary information for listeners.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Depending on the findings of the study, the following major points were recommended to effectively use news sources by *Oromia Radio*.

- *Oromia Radio* dominantly used government officials as the major sources of information in the news. Therefore, it needs to entertain diversified views in the news.
- The station needs to use at least two sources in news story instead of reporting news only by single source in order to balancing and verifying information offered from sources.
- Journalists were influenced by gatekeepers to portray as government only doing its best and left out the wrong doing of government and its officials. Hence, gatekeepers who are in different levels need to play their professional roles than influencing their junior staff depending on government officials interests.
- As human sources are valuable , non human sources also play vital role in the process of news gathering and reporting. So it is advisable to refer to documents and reports related to issues treated in the news.

- The ethics of journalism like accuracy, balance, fairness and objectivity are the cornerstones of good journalism. Adding personal opinion in news is professionally unethical. Therefore, *Oromia Radio* may be advised to look in to its problems and produce news by maintaining professional ethics.
- Sources who are specialized in specific fields need to be cultivated by journalists. It is advisable to keep in touch with these sources for a long period because they supply information on their typical fields.

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## Appendix A

### Coding Sheets and Categories of news stories that were broadcast by *Oromia Radio* between September 21, 2011 and March 13, 2012

**N.B** To use the space effectively in the table, the researcher used abbreviations and acronyms. Hence, B refers to (Balanced), D (Documents), Ex (Expert), F (favored), G (Government), GO (Government Officials), I (Individuals), N (Neutral), NGO & CS (Nongovernmental Organization and Civic Society), P (Positive), PP (Political Parties), Pvt In (Private institutions), UB (Unbalanced), and numbers listed under the category "Number of sources used" refer to, 0 (no source was used), 1 (single source was used), 2 (two sources were used), 3 (three sources were used), 4 (four sources were used).

No.	Date	News Category	Kinds of sources used	No. of sources used	Ways of Attribution	Objectivity of news presentation	Tone	Impartiality
1	21.9.2011	Politics	Ex	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	P to G	UB
2	21.9.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	P to G	UB
3	21.9.2011	Economy	I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
4	21.9.2011	Politics	NGO & CS	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	P to G	B
5	21.9.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
6	21.9.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
7	21.9.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
8	27.9.2011	Social Service	NGO & CS, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	P to G	UB
9	27.9.2011	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion	P to G	UB

						added		
10	27.9.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
11	27.9.2011	Social Service	NGO & CS, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
12	27.9.2011	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
13	27.9.2011	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
14	27.9.2011	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
15	27.9.2011	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
16	27.9.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
17	<b>03.10.2011</b>	Economy	I , I, GO	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
18	03.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
19	03.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
20	03.10.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
21	03.10.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
22	03.10.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
23	03.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
24	<b>9.10.2011</b>	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
25	9.10.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
26	9.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
27	9.10.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
28	9.10.2011	Social Service	GO, GO, GO	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
29	<b>15.10.2011</b>	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
30	15.10.2011	Social Service	GO, GO, D	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
31	15.10.2011	Science & Technology	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
32	15.10.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
33	<b>21.10.2011</b>	Economy	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
34	21.10.2011	Economy	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
35	21.10.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
36	21.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
37	21.10.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
38	21.10.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
39	<b>27.10.2011</b>	Economy	GO	1	appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B

40	27.10.2011	Economy	GO, Pvt In	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
41	27.10.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
42	27.10.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
43	<b>02.11.2011</b>	Economy	GO, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
44	02.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
45	02.11.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
46	02.11.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
47	<b>08.11.2011</b>	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
48	08.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
49	08.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
50	08.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
51	08.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
52	08.11.2011	Environment	GO, NGO & CS	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
53	08.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
54	08.11.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
55	<b>14.11.2011</b>	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
56	14.11.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
57	14.11.2011	Economy	I, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
58	14.11.2011	Economy	GO, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
59	14.11.2011	Economy	GO,I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
60	14.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
61	<b>20.11.2011</b>	Politics	PP, PP	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
62	20.11.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
63	<b>26.11.2011</b>	Economy	GO, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
64	26.11.2011	Social Service	NGO & CS, D	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	0	B
65	26.11.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	0	B
66	<b>02.12.2011</b>	Politics	GO, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion	<i>P to G</i>	UB

						added		
67	02.12.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
68	02.12.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
69	02.12.2011	Social Service	GO, D	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
70	02.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
71	<b>08.12.2011</b>	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
72	08.12.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
73	08.12.2011	Science & Technology	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
74	08.12.2011	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
75	08.12.2011	Politics	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
76	08.12.2011	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
77	08.12.2011	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
78	08.12.2011	Economy	GO, D	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
79	<b>14.12.2011</b>	Environment	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
80	14.12.2011	Economy	GO, GO, GO	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
81	14.12.2011	Environment	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
82	14.12.2011	Economy	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
83	14.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
84	14.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
85	14.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
86	<b>20.12.2011</b>	Politics	None	0	Not Attributed	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
87	20.12.2011	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
88	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
89	20.12.2011	Environment	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
90	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
91	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	
92	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
93	20.12.2011	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
94	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
95	20.12.2011	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B

96	<b>26.12.2011</b>	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
97	26.12.2011	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
98	26.12.2011	Science & Technology	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
99	26.12.2011	Environment	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
100	26.12.2011	Environment	GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
101	26.12.2011	Social Service	GO, I, I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
102	<b>01.01.2012</b>	Politics	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
103	01.01.2012	Science & Technology	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
104	01.01.2012	Social Service	GO, GO, GO	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
105	01.01.2012	Environment	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
106	01.01.2012	Social Service	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
107	01.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
108	01.01.2012	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
109	01.01.2012	Politics	PP	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
110	01.01.2012	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
111	<b>07.01.2012</b>	Social Service	NGO & CS	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
112	07.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
113	07.01.2012	Economy	D	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
114	07.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
115	07.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
116	07.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
117	13.01.2012	Politics	PP, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
118	13.01.2012	Politics	PP, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
119	13.01.2012	Politics	PP	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
120	13.01.2012	Politics	PP	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
121	13.01.2012	Politics	PP, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
122	13.01.2012	Politics	PP, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB

123	13.01.2012	Politics	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
124	13.01.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
125	<b>19.01.2012</b>	Politics	PP	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
126	19.01.2012	Social Service	None	0	No Attribution	Opinion added	N	B
127	19.01.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
128	19.01.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
129	25.01.2012	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
130	25.01.2012	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
131	25.01.2012	Environment	I	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
132	25.01.2012	Environment	I	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
133	25.01.2012	Environment	GO, GO, I, I	4	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
134	25.01.2012	Environment	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
135	25.01.2012	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
136	<b>31.01.2012</b>	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
137	31.01.2012	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
138	31.01.2012	Environment	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
139	31.01.2012	Environment	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
140	31.01.2012	Environment	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
141	31.01.2012	Environment	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
142	31.01.2012	Economy	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
143	31.01.2012	Environment	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
144	31.01.2012	Social Service	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
145	31.01.2012	Economy	GO, GO, Ex, I	4	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
146	31.01.2012	Social Service	I, I, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
147	<b>06.02.2012</b>	Environment	GO, I, I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
148	06.02.2012	Politics	GO, GO, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
149	06.02.2012	Economy	I, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
150	06.02.2012	Economy	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
151	06.02.2012	Economy	I	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
152	06.02.2012	Economy	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
153	06.02.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
154	06.02.2012	Economy	GO, I, I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
155	06.02.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
156	06.02.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B

157	06.02.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
158	06.02.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
159	<b>12.02.2012</b>	Environment	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
160	12.02.2012	Environment	I	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
161	12.02.2012	Environment	Ex	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
162	12.02.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
163	12.02.2012	Economy	GO, Ex, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
164	12.02.2012	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
165	12.02.2012	Economy	Pvt In	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
166	<b>18.02.2012</b>	Economy	GO, PP, D	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
167	18.02.2012	Politics	GO, D	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
168	18.02.2012	Politics	PP	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	<i>P to G</i>	UB
169	18.02.2012	Social Service	GO,NG O&CS, I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
170	18.02.2012	Science & Technology	GO, Ex	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
171	<b>24.02.2012</b>	Politics	GO, D	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
172	24.02.2012	Politics	D	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
173	24.02.2012	Politics	GO, D	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
174	24.02.2012	Economy	GO, GO, Pvt In	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
175	24.02.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
176	<b>01.03.2012</b>	Politics	GO, I, I	3	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
177	01.03.2012	Social Service	NGO& CS, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
178	01.03.2012	Economy	Ex, GO, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
179	01.03.2012	Economy	GO, I	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
180	<b>09.03.2012</b>	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
181	09.03.2012	Economy	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
182	09.03.2012	Economy	GO, I, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
183	09.03.2012	Economy	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
184	09.03.2012	Economy	GO, I	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
185	09.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
186	09.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B

187	09.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
188	09.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
189	09.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
190	<b>13.03.2012</b>	Science & Technology	GO, GO	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
191	13.03.2012	Politics	GO	1	Inappropriate	Opinion added	<i>P to G</i>	UB
192	13.03.2012	Economy	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
193	13.03.2012	Environment	GO, I, I	3	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
194	13.03.2012	Science & Technology	GO, GO	2	Inappropriate	Opinion added	N	B
195	13.03.2012	Social Service	GO, D	2	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B
196	13.03.2012	Social Service	GO	1	Appropriate	Raw Fact	N	B

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Guide for Individuals In-depth interviews**

#### **I. Interview questions for reporters**

1. What kind of sources do you usually use (primary or secondary)?
2. Do you use a single source to provide you all information that is needed for a news item? Why ?
3. What consideration do you make to choose your news sources?
4. What are the criteria for news source selection?
5. Are you influenced by news sources to include or exclude information from the news stories? If so, how do you challenge them?
6. Do you cultivate sources when you work on beat reporting?
7. How do you use your news sources in your news presentation? Do you attribute them properly?
8. Do you add your comment/opinion on your news report? If yes, Why?
9. Did your editor or editor in chief ever refuse to broadcast news that has anonymous source? If yes, Why?
10. Do gate keepers who are in different levels (including news sources) influence on Oromia Radio news gathering and reporting process? How?
11. How do you verify information for your report?

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

1. Which news sources are frequently used by your organization (government, nongovernmental organizations or members of the public)?
2. Do you frequently rely on government sources? If yes, why? If no, how?
3. Do you believe that you give equal opportunities to all sections of the society to express their views on your news coverage?
4. What consideration do you make to choose your news sources?
5. What are the criteria for news selection?
6. What are the criteria for news source selection?
7. Who makes the final decisions in selecting news and news sources? How?
8. Do gate keepers who are in different levels (including news sources) influence Oromia Radio news gathering and reporting process? How?
9. How do you verify information for your report?
10. Do you practice beat reporting? If yes, how do you cultivate sources? If no, why?

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

1. Who are the main sources of news for your station (staff reporters or other media)?
2. Who makes the final decisions in selecting news and news sources? How?
3. Who decides the news content in particular reference to news sources to be quoted? And how is it decided?
4. Do gate keepers who are in different levels (including news sources) influence *Oromia Radio* news gathering and reporting process? How?

## Appendix C

### Code and Titles of the Interviewees

The interviews conducted took place between April 17 and 19, 2012

Code	Title
Informant 1	Reporter
Informant 2	Reporter
Informant 3	Reporter
Informant 4	Editor
Informant 5	Editor
Informant 6	Editor in chief

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all sources of materials used for this study have been appropriately acknowledged.

Name: Hallelujah Adane Daba

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

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

Place of Submission: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia