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A STUDY OF THE VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT MEDIA PROFESSIONALS
ON AGENDA SETTING WITH RESPECT TO WATER, SANITATION AND
HYGIENE ISSUES

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mintesnot Aschalew entitled: *A Study of the Views of Government Media Professionals on Agenda Setting with Respect to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ACRONYMS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
ERTA	Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency
ETV	Ethiopian Television
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Energy
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
WASH	Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

ABSTRACT

In Ethiopia, where development is a big agenda, the mass media intervention is very significant to sustain development and achieve societal quality of life. To shape development needs and to raise community participation in development activities of the government the state-owned media also play an important role. This, in fact, is determined by the capacity of the news media agenda setting practice. The mass media give appropriate prominence to development priorities of the public and transmit the salience concepts and practices of positive development achievements.

Accordingly, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) issues should also be considered as development challenges and media agenda. This is because it is confirmed that 60% of diseases in the country are due to water, sanitation and hygiene related, and the media also have social responsibility to make the situation media agenda to influence the public.

This research focuses on the views of government media professionals on agenda setting with respect to WASH issues. The study focused on Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper practice of agenda setting pertinent to WASH issues.

Through a series of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher analyzed how journalists work with the media agenda setting theory and related literatures. Editorial policies and guidelines were observed in to the analyses and discussion of the study.

The findings of this study indicated that journalists views, both editors and reporters working in Ethiopian government media outlets, perceived as practicing agenda setting

with respect to WASH issues. Journalists from ETV and Addis Zemen recognized their media agenda to be government policies, laws and strategies. The findings also showed that in the government media houses WASH issues as media agenda mostly set by top level media managers; and it was driven by events. In this regard, the participation of reporters in agenda setting process was very limited according to the findings of the study.

The research also indicated that most of the study interviewees and discussants knowledge on WASH issues were very low.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Water, Sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a key factor for development. The existing situation of WASH in a country indicates the health status of a nation. Of the public health challenges in Ethiopia, WASH related diseases are the most prevalent ones.

In the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector, the country stands as one where access to Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene practices are the lowest in the world. It is as a result of the poor status in the sector that about 60-80% disease burden occur in the country. The 10 most common contagious diseases that affect the majority of the population in the country also occur due to low performance in the area of Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. (Global Sanitation Fund; Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, September 2009)

In Ethiopia, to achieve the MDG, about 35 million more people in rural areas will need improved water and sanitation services and 8 million more people in urban areas will need sanitation facilities. The Second Annual Progress Report on MDG indicated access to clean water supply at national level was reached 59.5% (86.2% for urban and 53.9% for rural). Access to excreta disposal accounts only 37% (Ministry of Health, 2007/08).

However; the disease burden caused by poor WASH practice can be alleviated easily through health promotion with a reasonably small investment.

1.2. Statement of the problem

A study commissioned by WASH Ethiopia Movement on 'Media Reports on WASH Issues in Ethiopia' identified that among the 25000 news items and articles, 2.3% reported on WASH issues; 1.8% were on water supply projects; 0.16% on sanitation; and less than 0.1% hygiene (Mengistu, 2008: 5).

The study mentioned above indicated that safe water, sanitation and hygiene issues in Ethiopia are one of the health agenda which get less media coverage.

The Ethiopian mass media allocates space and time to health reporting in general. Perceptions and observations show that most media houses cover health related issues in their routine works.

The engagement of mass media in better health advocacy is also valid, accordingly. In the Federal Government of Ethiopia Health Policy, health development shall be seen as an essential component of the package of social and economic development as well as an instrument of social justice and equity. The role of the mass media is considered as the major actor which disseminates health related messages to the society in order to bring behavioral change.

As a result, the mass media are responsible to give space and time to major societal health problems. So, why WASH issues get less coverage? Is it a media agenda? Who sets agenda to the media in which criterion?

The government of Ethiopia identified that WASH issues are the most public health problems in the country. This implies WASH related health problems are at the forefront of societal development agenda.

Media shall be given appropriate prominence to enhance health awareness and to propagate the important concepts and practices of positive health behaviors. Health education shall be strengthened generally and for specific target populations through the mass media.

According to the normative theories of mass media, media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society. Rivers and Schramm (1969) argued that the basic responsibility of mass media is to turn out the highest quality product it can, which requires that it develop an awareness of the depth and breadth of the public's needs and interests. On top of the public needs to know, McCombs and Merritt (2004) strengthen this view and said "the power of the news media to set the nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well documented influence. In other words, the news media set the agenda for the public's attention to a small group of issues." This is, therefore, the media can set the agenda of public discussion.

In the contemporary approaches, agenda setting role of media is recognized as a part of social responsibility of media profession to the public. Every media house needs to carefully consider what role it is playing in regards to national development.

Media can be a platform for development and change. It is, therefore, making societal problems a media agenda and prominent in the public's attention is one key interventions and social responsibility of the mass media.

Schramm (1964) states that mass media would lead directly to economic improvement across poorer regions of the world. In the service of national development, the mass

media are agents of social change. So, in a developing nation like Ethiopia it is also believed that the role of mass media is valid to better lifestyle and health of the society.

1.3. Objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to examine the views of government media professionals on agenda setting with respect to WASH issues.

Specific objectives:-

- To investigate how the media set Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues as agenda;
- To find out how the government media frame and attribute Water, Sanitation and hygiene issues to be salient in the public's mind;

1.4. Research Questions

Considering this factors and realities this study focuses on the following basic questions:

1. How do the government media journalists (ETV and Addis Zemen Newspaper) set agenda with respect to WASH issues?
2. Is WASH one of the items in the government media agenda?
3. Is WASH a common denominator of government media journalists?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the views of journalists on agenda setting with respect to WASH issues. The researcher was explored how the Ethiopian government media make WASH issues salient to the public's mind. In other words, common denominators of media with respect to WASH issues will be examined. In this regard, it

is difficult to get any research which done before in Ethiopia. This is, therefore, this study is significant and can be taken as a springboard to study the subject further.

Additionally, it helps media houses to evaluate and improve their agenda setting process and to enhance their attention on how to prime and frame agenda in news items and other media forms. Media managers and journalists can also apply the findings of this study to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene reporting and other development media products.

In general, the study gives information for who are interested to know about agenda setting in Ethiopian state media; and in particularly Water, Sanitation and Hygiene issues.

1.6. Limitations of the study

This study focuses only Ethiopian government media: Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen Newspaper. Both media houses selected to this study are geographically limited to Addis Ababa.

The researcher notes that other government, public and private media are not included due to time and resource constraints. All research samples are also taken from Addis Ababa and it is geographically limited. So the result does not tell us the situation in other parts of Ethiopia.

Also Water, Sanitation and Hygiene issues are the center of attention for this research and other media contents are not part of the study. As a result, findings could not be generalized.

Despite its limitations, however, the findings of this study will have importance for media researchers, media houses and governmental and non – governmental actors working on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector.

1.7. Thesis Organization

This research organized in to five chapters. The first chapter presents an overall introduction to the research which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objective of the study, significant of the study and limitations. Chapter two reviews related literatures. It discusses the existing literatures on media agenda setting, development journalism and other related media practices. Also this chapter tried to look at the landscape of Ethiopian mass media to give backgrounds on ETV and Addis Zemen newspaper. Next, the methodology and techniques used in this study were discussed in chapter three of the study. Chapter four analyzed and presents the findings of the study. Finally, conclusion from the research, recommendation and summaries of the study were included in chapter five.

CHAPTER: TWO

2.1 Review of Related Literature

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of literature review that relates to media agenda setting processes. The objective here is to assess the relevant theoretical foundations of media agenda setting practice focusing on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues. This chapter also tries to see media agenda setting, development communication, health communication, and the media landscape in Ethiopia.

2.2 Mass Media Agenda Setting

The role of mass media is becoming crucial in this day. Citizens need to know what is happening in their surrounding. The mass media are in the service of delivering information that individuals need to know to function as citizens. The mass media are the source of information that assists citizens to do their businesses and to be aware of public issues.

McCombs (2004) stated that not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasized placed on it in the news.

The values and trends of news making in the traditional media, influence the mass media audience to judge the importance of issues in the news item. This is because the priming and placing of topics broadcast and printed. Due to this inescapable influence on the public mind, the principles journalists apply in their decision making process become paramount.

As a result of these, the agenda setting role of mass media is mentioned in many studies. Baran (2011) stated that:

“Many communication scholars have conducted their researches in relation to the mass media agenda setting role and came up with different views. McCombs and Shaw, since the seminal Chapel Hill study during the 1968 US presidential election, the process of agenda setting role of mass media has been analyzed in different circumstances.”

Of all the mass media products, which are broadcast or printed, some issues only turn out to be dominant. Most citizens only view few topics as the most significant issues in the public environment. In other words this is the agenda setting role of mass media.

Agenda setting research dates to the mid 1950s, Lazarsfeld's most famous research efforts, the “American Voter Studies,” actually began as an attempt to document the media's role during election campaigns. Eventually he raised more questions about the influence of media.

Lazarsfeld's work and that of other empirical media researchers had generated an enormous amount of data. Interpretation of these data led Lazarsfeld and his colleagues to conclude that media were not nearly as powerful as had been feared or hoped. Instead, these researchers found that people had numerous ways of resisting media influence, and their attitudes were shaped by many competing factors, such as family, friends, and religious community. Rather than serving as a disruptive social force, media more often seemed to reinforce existing social trends and strengthen rather than threaten the status quo. They found little evidence to support the worst fears of mass society theorists. Though Lazarsfeld and others never labeled this theory, it is now referred to as limited-effects theory. (Baran and Davis, 2011)

Walter Lippmann (1922), in *Public Opinion*, points out that citizens do not in a position to interact with their environments directly as much as they respond to “pictures in their heads”. “For the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with so much subtlety, so much variety, so many permutations and combinations. And although we have to act in that

environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it.” (p. 16) he wrote.

Cohen (1963) by refining Lippmann’s argument came to a conclusion and said the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. ” In other words, he emphasized the limited effect perspective of the mass media.

Cohen’s perspective became a foundation for the notion of agenda setting function of mass media. Thus, many scholars were triggered to work on this issue.

Baran and Davis (2011) dealing with Lippmann argue that average people just can’t be trusted to make important political decisions based on these simplified pictures. Average people have to be protected, and the important decisions have to be made by technocrats who use better models to guide their actions.

Likewise, McCombs also wrote that mass media play an important role in shaping reality. He said in his Chapel Hill study that “in reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may set the “agenda” of the campaign.

However; (Griffin, 2011) by the mid- 1990, Cohen’s argument was not empirically confirmed by research conducted by Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald Shaw. McCombs and Shaw stated that the media do more than that. They revised the limited mass media role and came to the new dimensions of agenda setting as a much more media role: the media may not only tell us what to think about, they also may tell us how and what to think about it, and perhaps even what to do about it.

According to Baran, “this important and straightforward study highlights both the strengths and limitations of agenda-setting as a theory of media effects.”

The research findings clearly show that there is an important relationship between mass media products and people’s ranking of public issues.

McCombs (2004) stated the principal outline of the media’s agenda influence was sketched by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 classic, “Public Opinion”:

“As Lippmann noted, the news media are a primary source of those pictures in our heads about the larger world of public affairs, a world that for most citizens is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind.” What we know about the larger world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us. More specially, the result of this mediated view of the world is that elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind.”

McCombs and Merritt (2004) wrote by quoting Jay Rosen that the news media frequently are agenda setters. Jay Rosen commented in “What Are Journalists For?” that “the point of having journalists around is not to produce attention, but to make our attention more productive.” Rosen contended that journalists practice should have public relevance.

News media need to be creative watchdogs and agenda setters scanning the horizon for the gaps in current public life. According to Rosen (1999) part of this larger watchdog role is functioning as social radar, not just a chronicler of what government and other institutions are doing right now, whether good or bad. This means discovering the concerns of citizens and defining what the public needs to know in very expansive terms.

Social scientists examining this agenda –setting influence of the news media on the public usually have focused on public issues. Merritt (2004) wrote that the agenda of a news organization is its pattern of coverage on public issues over some period of time- a

week a month, an entire year. Over this period of time, whatever it might be, a few issues are emphasized, some received light coverage, and many are seldom or never mentioned.

In other words, our experiences in this world mostly depend on what the media decided to tell us. To be more specifically, the result of this mediated view of the world is that the priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public. As Griffien (2011) argues prominent issues in the media agenda become prominent in the public.

However; criticism is raised with regard to most agenda setting researchers were working their studies focusing on election campaigns and news. It is too conditional to political campaigns. What about other forms of media and other types of public issues? Could the research results done before, applicable to all forms of media formats and public issues?

Perhaps, it is a question about the relationship between media content and audience. The question became crucial due to the heterogeneous mass media audience. Agenda setting research entails the direction of influence from media agenda to public agenda. It involves cause and effect relationship. But sometime the public may set an agenda to the media. In this case agenda setting have limitations.

Baran and Davis (2012) wrote that the argument that the media are simply responding to their audiences can be easily made. Few journalists have not uttered at least once in their careers, "We only give the people what they want." McCombs (1981) himself acknowledged these limitations.

Mass media products are factual evidences. Journalists determine their importance based on the value they have. Information as resource should be managed effectively. All facts and information appear to a news room not to be used by reporters. Journalists select the

important item to be on air or print. Mostly, this can be achieved through journalistic values: news worthy, truthfulness, proximity, impact and etc. However; when we try to go beyond the information a very different challenge can be appeared. It demands additional skill and process.

Merritt (2004) argued that a journalist can no more produce an effective story without a basic framing strategy than artist can paint a picture without one. He explains this more artistically: "The artist is not going to show us the entire world in a picture, only parts of it. So the artist must make decisions about which parts to show and how to arrange them within the dimension of the chosen canvas to accomplish his/her purpose."

Until the 1990 the limited effect of mass media agenda has been dominated and it was stated – the media aren't very successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about.

However; researches in this days has expanded agenda setting theory far beyond its original domain. McCombs (2004) was saying that the media do more than what to think about (Griffin, 381). They do, in fact, influence the way we think. The specific process he cites is one that many media scholars discusses _ framing.

2.2.1 Levels of agenda setting

Lippmann's (1922) famous statement "Pictures in our heads and pictures outside the world" not only dominated the agenda setting research in the past, but also it has been supported the convergence of agenda setting and framing.

The pioneer agenda setting researcher, McCombs wrote that agenda setting has two levels. According to him, the first level is the transfer of salience of an attitude object in the mass media's pictures of the world to a prominent place among the pictures in our heads. The second level of agenda setting is the transfer of salience of a dominant set of attributes that the media associates with an attitude object to the specific features of the image projected on the walls of our mind. (Griffin, 2011, p- 383)

The objects defining an agenda can be political candidates, issues, or events. The media by doing this tell us what to think about. However, the media can tell us how to think about these objects; beyond the agenda of objects, we consider other aspects which complete the picture of each object- attribute salience.

Attributes of each object also vary in salience. As McCombs and Ghanem argued that some attributes have center stage, others are relegated to lesser roles, and many are absent altogether.

Chyi and McCombs examined how the media build a news event's prominence over time- a dynamic process called frame changing in which the news media reframe an event by emphasizing different attributes of the event in order to keep the story alive and fresh.(Doxa, 218-219)

According to Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) a media frame defined as: "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context

and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration.”

The agenda setting of attributes mirrors the process of framing as McCombs argues with Robert Entman description of the concept:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and /or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Griffin, 383)

McCombs observes that second level agenda-setting and framing share common concerns for attribute agendas (frames), the dynamics of the agenda-setting process (framing process), and agenda-setting influence (framing effects).

He noted that agenda-setting theory helps to understand clearly some framing theory concepts and researchers should focus to work on integration of both theories. He stated “explication of a more general theoretical structure describing the frames and attributes that are important to the communication process” (McCombs and Ghanem, 2001, p. 79).

Dietram Scheufele (Baran and Davis, 2012, 296) also argued that agenda-setting and priming are well-matched theories. However, framing is quite different in his overview of agenda setting theory. He believes that framing involves activation of entire interpretive schemas—not merely prioritization of individual objects or attributes.

2.3 Communication for Development

Communication for development sometime called development communication is a concept which combines two notions: Communication and development. Many researchers try to define this school of thought by mixing both words - which have various theoretical underpinnings.

Despite the interpretation of key words are very broad, it is very difficult to define communication for development in vivid, short, dynamic and attractive terms.

Since, no concrete definition of the concept comes into view, most scholars and development actors define and look at the conceptions in verity ways of visualization. Scholars and practitioners may differ in the wording they use to define the subject, but their intent is constant (Servaes, 2003).

Colin Fraser and Jonathan Villet (1994) defined as “The planned use of communication techniques, activities and media gives people powerful tools both to experience change and actually to guide it. An intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of people in a common cause. This is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development.” (Servas, 2008, p-14)

The World Congress on Communication for Development, in 2006, also defined communication for development as: “A social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change.”

In other words, both definitions are most likely congruent regards to consider communication as a process and exchange of ideas to bring sustainable development focusing societal quality of life.

Mcphail (2009) also wrote “development communication is the process of intervening in a systematic or strategic manner with either media (print, radio, telephony, video, and the internet), or education (training, literacy, schooling) for the purpose of positive social change.” For Mcphail, positive social change could be economic, personal, as in spiritual, social, cultural, or political.

World Bank (2006) stated that development communication involves creating mechanisms to broaden public access to information on reforms; strengthening clients’ ability to listen to their constituencies and negotiate with stakeholders; empowering grassroots organizations to achieve a more participatory process; and undertaking communication activities that are grounded in research.

Moemeka (1994) noted that even though first and foremost development communication was designed to the Third World Countries, specifically rural communities, it is also significant to urban dwellers and the developed world in relation to its orientation towards the human aspects of development. He stressed physical and economic growth to improve the human condition. Moemeka states that:

The first is the transmission role through which it seeks social change or development in the direction of higher quality of life and social justices. The second is the socialization role through it strives to maintain some of the established values of society that are consonant with development and social change. In playing these roles, development communication tries to create an enhancing atmosphere for exchange of ideas that produces a happy balance in social and economic advancement between physical output and human interrelationships. (Momeka, 1994)

Perceptions and observations show that different countries used communication to facilitate economic growth and development in the past. Far East Asia countries, like India benefited much from this during 70s (Servas, 2007).

Economic growth, in the past was the center of attention for communication for development. For decades different paradigms took this notion as center of their arguments.

Diffusion of innovations or modernization approach was evolved as significant tool to guide communication planning for modernization paradigm. Within this paradigm, the conception of development is a linear one based on trust in science, reason, technology, and the free market (World Bank, 2008).

The well known communication scholar, Everett Rogers identified the following elements in any analysis of diffusion of an idea or innovation: (a) the innovation, which is any idea considered new by the recipient, (b) its communication through certain channels, (c) among members of social systems, and (d) over time (Melkote, 2001).

Modernization paradigm believed that ‘modernization’ can be achieved when a person changed from traditional to a modern person as a result of acceptance of new ideas from sources outside. Servas (2008) noted that “modernization is here conceived as a process of diffusion whereby individuals move from a traditional way of life to a more complex, more technically developed and more rapidly changing way of life.” This approach is therefore concerned with the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations in a more systematic and planned way.

Lerner (1958) identified development with modernization and social change. He wrote the four indicators of development as: industrialization, literacy, media exposure, and political participation. “People have to be mobile, empathic, and participatory for development. When people are mobile they are ready to look for something new and the empathy makes them search for something new.(Narula, 1994)”

Over time, the diffusion of innovations approach did not bring change as promised. In the 1980s, things got even worse as large numbers of people in many developing countries experienced a significant decline in their living standards (World Bank, 2008). Hence, there was many critiquing the diffusions of innovations model of the dominant paradigm.

A. G. Frank (1969), reflected critically on the assumptions of modernization, which placed full responsibility and blame on developing countries for their conditions of underdevelopment (World Bank, 2008). Frank stressed in dependency perspective that the cause of underdevelopment is the advantage taken by the developed countries during colonization. He argued that this caused unbalanced trade system which benefited the developed world in the expense of underdeveloped. Servas (2008) wrote that dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others.

Likewise, modernization paradigm also was criticized in ‘cultural imperialism’. Mcephail (2009) stated: there was no reciprocity in terms of information or media flows. It was a structural imbalance that suited the foreign policy needs and communications corporations of the industrialized nations.

In relation to address this constraints dependency suggests two levels – national and international. Developing countries on the periphery were to become economically self-

reliant and less dependent on foreign imports. Internationally, they would form alliances among themselves to create a stronger political presence (World Bank, 2008).

As a result of this, the impact of dependency approach moved developing countries to adoption of import substitution and export lead production policies. Also the New International Economic Order is one example of attempts towards achieving the international goals (Mcphail, 2009).

McAnany (1983:4) in his critics characterized dependency theory as "... good on diagnosis of the problem ... but poor on prescription of the cure." Dependency addressed the causes of underdevelopment, but did not provide ways of addressing that underdevelopment (Servas, 2008, p 163).

According to dependency approach the cause of underdevelopment is that not internal situations of the Third World, but external. The impact in shortage of capital and management not considered as limitation of development process as highlighted in modernization.

In many instances, dependency is the contrast of modernization. Modernization argues that the cause of underdevelopment is within internal situation; where as the external situation is the impediment of Third World countries in dependency.

Beside main differences amid modernization and dependency approaches, communications was basically the same. Both argue in a one way communication strategy; however, who was controlling and sending the message and for what purpose was the main difference.

The practical constraints and the critics of modernization and dependency strengthen researching for better approaches. Consequently, another development or participatory model emerged. Nowadays, most development programs seem to carry the participatory mark, as a sign of purification from the mistakes of the past (World Bank, 2008).

Thus, UNDP (2011) noted that communication for development is one of the most important ways to achieve development and it is a social process that promotes dialogue between communities and decision makers at local, national and regional levels. Its goal is to promote, develop and implement policies and programs that enhance the quality of life for all. (UNDP, 2011, p-V)

And contemporary interpretations of communication for development mounted a new lens that focuses on practices.

2.3.1 Health Communication

Health communication is one of the developmental communication focus areas which considered as essential component in order to achieve social change in a community.

One of the key objectives of health communication is to influence individuals and communities (Renata Schiavo, 2007). Better health in the population enables workers to put forward greater effort and maintain their efficiency for longer periods. It is a process of sharing and exchanging information on health issues that assists individuals to bring positive behaviors.

Scholars in the area of communication and health have been given several definitions to health communication. However, most are similar in their approaches.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) define health communication as “the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health” (2001; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). The word influence is also included in the Healthy People 2010 definition of health communication as “the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005, p. 11-2).

Health communication interventions have been part of development efforts since the 1960s, especially in the area of family planning programs. The importance of health communication rose on the international public health agenda in the 1990s, mainly as a result of important conceptual changes in the 70s and 80s.” (Frehiwot, 2008, p- 12)

Servas (2008) wrote that the best representative of the Health Communication approach is the World Health Organization (WHO). In the past WHO tended to employ development communication strategies based on the social marketing approach and diffusion theory. Current projects are more centered on bottom-up, grass-roots, and participatory models of communication in a mixed media approach. The strategy emphasizes the role of the community members in planning and managing their own health care. Additionally, WHO organizes activities to train media professionals in health and in health education by running health promotion campaigns in all regions, and workshops at all levels and intensive courses to improve the planning and production of mass media programmes on priority health development subjects. Servas also noted the WHO advocacy approaches as follows:

Advocacy aims to foster public policies that are supportive of health such as the provision of biomedical care for treating illness, and prevention

such as immunization, safe water and sanitation, maternal and child health and promoting of healthy lifestyles. Mass media and traditional media can play a strong advocacy role in creating public awareness and in bringing about action for health, and often target decision-makers as well as interest groups who in turn press for suitable policies. The effectiveness of their advocacy role, however, depends on the freedom the media enjoy and the influence they carry with the national political system and the public.

2.4 The Ethiopian Media Landscape

The Ethiopian media environment is characterized by polarization between private and state-owned media enterprises. After the proclamation number 34/1992, private media evolved largely in Ethiopia since 1992. According to Population Media Center (2006), there were many private newspapers and magazines, that emerged, but most of them were short lived.

Most papers often started the newspaper business without conducting research to know the overall atmosphere of readership and other market needs. Also inadequate finance, lack of skilled manpower and poor media management and leadership disadvantaged the survival of many private newspapers. Some continues today with small number of copies and circulated in limited geography.

Population Media Center (2006) stated that this is significantly below the standards of what many countries have achieved; and, as a result, it is impossible to say that this sector of the media industry has been discharging its responsibility.

State owned newspapers also another platform of the print media industry in Ethiopia. Of three daily newspapers, the two (Addis Zemen and Ethiopian Herald) are published by the state owned Ethiopian Press Agency. Addis Zemen is also the only daily newspaper

in Amharic language (Federal Government working language) circulated 15000 to 20000 in Ethiopia.

Skjerdal (2011) argued that the main portion of the media sector remains state-controlled. The government broadcast media also dominated the flow of information nationally. The electronic media did not expand like that of the print after freedom of the press proclaimed since 1992. Population Media Center (2006) noted that press ownership was permitted to private citizens excluding radio and television in the 1991 press proclamation. In other words, electronic media was banned for private sector ownership. As a result of this, the development of private broadcasting media was hindered. Lately, however the Ethiopian Broadcast Agency has announced the official issuance of two FM radio waves for commercial or private sectors (Population Media Center, 2006). Currently, (Skjerdal, 2011) the largest media institution in Ethiopia is the state-owned Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA), which employs around 700 journalists. Together with eight community broadcasters operated by regional states, ERTA stands for a substantial amount of the media content produced within the borders of the country.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

As it has been stated earlier, the main objective of this research was to explore the views of government media professionals on agenda setting regarding water, sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues. This chapter discusses the research methodology, data sources, sampling techniques, and data presentation and analysis used for the study.

3.1. Methodology

As a methodology paradigm this study employs qualitative methodology. According to Dominick (2011: 48), this methodology is significant for the following:

The method allows a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research. In addition, qualitative techniques can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. Finally, qualitative methods are flexible and allow the researcher to pursue new areas of interest. A questionnaire is unlikely to provide data about questions that were not asked, but a person conducting a field observation or focus group might discover facets of a subject that were not considered before the study began.

Qualitative data assist to explore the views of Ethiopian Television (ETV) and Addis Zemen newspaper journalist's agenda setting role with respect to water, sanitation and hygiene issues through in-depth interviews. It allows the researcher to value the agenda setting process in the selected media houses. The researcher can also understand clearly how and why media professionals set WASH issues as an agenda to the public.

Furthermore, the method creates an opportunity to assess the views of the selected mass media professionals on the subject of the study by organizing focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

The researcher also examined editorial policies, guidelines and useful documents for the study.

The qualitative researcher develops many flexible, ongoing processes to measure that leaves the data in various shapes, sizes, and forms.

As mass media setting is a complex process, the researcher conducted in- depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

Qualitative method is widely favored to assess how media practitioners make sense of agenda setting. Moreover, it helps to examine how their understanding influences their decision in agenda setting process.

Media managers, editors and reporters make stories in their daily activities based on some selection criterion. All information that arrived in a news room could not broadcast or printed. Journalists together with their editors, based on ground rules like editorial policies and guidelines select the most important to reach the audience. Of all these processes only few stories will be aired or printed. So that there are a lot of interests that influence the most salience in media agenda. As a result of this, the researcher looked for views of what makes of the most important issue in the selected media houses.

Thus the understanding and knowledge of agenda setting process and role of media can be better examined through qualitative method. Consequently, intensive interview, focus group discussion, personal observation and investigating secondary sources of documents were central to this thesis.

3.2. Sampling Techniques

Samples were taken purposively from Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper media houses. Despite the fact that both news media are government owned in their ownership, different strategies and processes may evolve to set media agenda because of their nature of audience, circulation or transmission, and other factors.

In this case, informants were better familiarized to the issue being investigated. Selected informants of media managers, editors and journalists experience, exposure, and skill in agenda setting process become significant to get valuable information

Consequently, the sampling technique employed to the study also permits the researcher to consider essential elements to generate samples. Samples tend to be seen as illustrative or broader social and cultural process, rather than strictly and generally representative (Kvale, 1999,43). In qualitative study there is no serious claim of representativeness of any population or generalization of the research findings.

Hence, ten journalists each from ETV and Addis Zemen newspaper selected for individual in-depth interviews. To do this journalists educational background, sex, experience, and working status were considered.

Likewise, focus group discussions conducted in ETV and in Addis Zemen newspaper.

3.3. Data Gathering Techniques

Primary and secondary data were collected from several sources. Purposely selected key informants for in – depth interview and focus group discussion together with the researcher observation in the natural settings of Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper news rooms were major sources of primary data.

Additionally, written documents which can influence the process of agenda setting role of a media has been examined. In this regards, Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper editorial policies, guidelines, and other regulations and media laws considered as sources of secondary data. Also, selected copies of Addis Zemen and ETV audiovisual documents were used as data sources for the study.

Furthermore, selected media professionals of ETV and Addis Zemen newspaper, were key informants for the in – depth interview and focus group discussion to generate primary data in relation to understand the views and other phenomena.

3.3.1. In- depth Interview

In- depth interview is the most common technique in qualitative research. In this study, it is also a primary tool of data gathering in relation to answer the research questions. This technique was applied to this study due to the wealth of details that it provides. In- depth interview creates an opportunity to have detailed background about the reasons the interviewee responds. Furthermore, it assists to elaborate issues by referring the respondents' attitude, behavior, opinion, values, experiences, and feelings (Mass Media Research, 2011, 139).

In this type of interview, the researcher is able to maintain flexibility and to add human elements of different respondents in the study. Here usually the interviews are structured.

The researcher uses a prepared schedule of questions, which are presented in a planned and predetermined order. Hence, the interviews, therefore, flexible to demonstrate follow up questions and to probe reasons for responses and behaviors when necessary (Rubin, 2010, 221).

Considering the space that the in-depth interview provides to gather evidences to this study, the researcher used the technique primarily to explore views of journalists on agenda setting in Ethiopian government media, specifically ETV and Addis Zemen newspaper. The researcher also believed the intensive interviews helped to describe the experiences and self understandings of media managers and journalists regarding to media agenda setting process with respect to WASH issues. Moreover, the technique that media managers used to make an issue a media agenda can be investigated well. As a tool it was also important to get personal point of view on several issues that the research tried to examine and this assisted to find out how necessary news stories have been perceived as relevant by the media practitioners. As a result of this, intensive interview became the primary solution to gather data to the thesis.

Regardless of the many advantages of in-depth interview, it is not free of complication. Interviewer should have some experiences on managing interview sessions. During in – depth interview some respondents may give different outlooks for the same question. A particular respondent may face a question not asked for any interviewee; and also it is sensitive to interviewer bias. The interviewer tone of voice, facial expressions, gesturing and ordering of questions affects the validity of respondents answer (Mass Media Research , 2011,139).My experience in the field of journalism in the past assisted me to manage the challenges in relation to gather effective and valid data using the technique .

On top of this, the researcher has conducted an in- depth interview with thirty selected individuals for the study: ten from ETV, ten from Addis Zemen newspaper, and ten from the audience. Beside, personal observation has carried out in editorial meeting, daily working processes, and discussions of journalists in the news room environment to supplement the in –depth interview.

3.3.2. Focus Group Discussion

As the name indicates, focus group has a focus discussion. Focus group discussion involves bringing small groups of people together to discuss issues identified by researchers (Deacon, 1999, 54). It helped to explore views of target respondents on agenda setting process with respect to WASH issues of selected news media. Also the technique assisted to gather the primary data on the study.

The researcher interpreted focus group discussion data by finding out how the people being studied see the world. Deacon (1999, 54) stated that ‘the method is essentially exploratory,

Providing insight into the character, range and components of views of a given set of issues on which the group’s attention is focused.’ Researchers also likes focus groups because of the flexibility in question design and follow up (Mass Media Research, 2011, 134). Thus, focus group discussion has been taken as a means of getting detailed supplementary data on the research topic.

Consequently, the researcher selected journalists for the FGD based on their will and interest. Their knowledge on the topic which the researcher tried to find out was also paramount. This method avail the researcher to collect evidence on how group of

journalists think and apply agenda setting process of WASH issues in their media houses. Five each FGD in ETV and Addis Zemen were undertaken. The number of participants in a group was five to six.

Additionally, the method allowed the researcher to examine the views of journalists with respect to answer the research questions. Age, sex, and educational background considered during group formation.

The researcher used the FGD data together with the in – depth interview and personal observation in the news room to discuss and analyze the outcome in chapter four.

3.4. The interview questions

The aim of this study is to explore views of media professionals on agenda setting in Ethiopian government media focusing on water, sanitation, and hygiene issues. The interview questions designed in order to answer the research questions. Hence, media managers, journalists, and other actors should freely express their feelings, opinions, and experiences during interview session and focus group discussion. So that, the researcher found semi- structured questions suitable to this study. Semi- structured interview creates conversation with a purpose that helps to promote open ended dialogue (Deacon, 1999, 54). This makes possible the researcher to get valid responses for the inquiries.

The interviewer developed interview guide to meet the interview goal. The researcher was handled the discussion referring the guide which separated in to different parts. The first part of the interview mainly focused on personal details. This assisted the interviewer to have respondents' demographic profile.

Next, the interview guide organized with general questions that focused on news making process. In this part the interviewer tried to know how journalists put issues in the news in their work routines. Journalists in this part told the interviewer that how they select, prioritize and ordering news items in their respected media houses. The procedures happened in the news room, to make an issue the most important also probed by the interviewer.

In the final part of the interview guide, key and tough questions were presented to media managers and reporters. This part focused on investigating the patterns which govern a media agenda setting process in the selected media houses 'How?' and 'Why?' issues became salient in the perception of media managers and journalists examined. In general, the research questions of the study incorporated and addressed in the final part of the interview guide.

To demonstrate the maximum output of the guide, the researcher tried to reduce barriers that influence respondents not to participate actively in the interview. In relation to avoid language limitations, the researcher translated the research questions and conducted the interview in Amharic. However, for the analysis purpose of the study, all interview data are transcribed and translated into English language.

3.5. Conclusions

As it has been discussed before, data were gathered through the in- depth interviews, focus group discussions, personal observations and official documents. The in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and short notes were taken. Also the recorded discussions transcribed and translated from Amharic into English. To be able to analyze the data the researcher has produced interview and focus group summary

form. The researcher completed the form/format after in- depth interview or focus group discussion taken place. It was a transcript from in – depth interviews and focus group discussions, and personal observations. The form assisted the researcher to remind useful contends and sessions when he faced data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

The mass media practice contributes a great effort in informing the public and also it has enormous impact in shaping the opinion of community and of policy makers. Developing countries mass media also are responsible in creating an enabling situation to mobilize the public to achieve development and better life style. On top of this, it is believed that the media engagement on health issues helps to foster the public health status of a country. In a case of where Water, Sanitation and hygiene is in a lower circumstances the mass media interference become paramount in creating awareness and saving lives.

With this in mind, the main objective of this study is to find out the views of media professionals on agenda setting in Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper focusing on water, sanitation and hygiene issues. Along with this, the study tries to address the research questions that were stated in chapter one.

In investigating these issues an in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with intended media practitioners from April 02 to June 05, 2012. Hence, four senior editors, two health program producers, and three reporters were interviewed from each media houses. Also five focus group discussions were conducted each in ETV and Addis Zemen. In addition to this informal interviews and observations were undertaken during WASH Media Forum meetings, workshops and at filed visit at the media houses. Due to protecting respondents from any form of harm I have given code numbers for the direct quotes of the research respondents when it is necessary. Therefore, this chapter presents the discussion and analysis of the result found from

qualitative research in light of the arguments raised in the literature review part of the study.

4.2. Ethiopian Television Editorial Policy and the views of journalists

Many articles of Ethiopian Television Editorial policy stated about the Social, economical and political role of the media that serves the public. Article 3.2 states that the objectives of government media are to promote policies, proclamation and activities of the government. Hence, it tells us that the media agenda comes from the government side and the interpretations of policies and other government documents. The concept revealed what the audience needs to know that the government agenda.

Also the 2005 code of conduct which is included in to the editorial policy of ETV stated that journalists shall have no other aims and duties than striving and reporting truth and serving the public interest. Similarly, this notion of ETV reflected in the agenda setting theory discussed in chapter two. The theory emphasized that the point of having journalists around is not to produce attention, but to make our attention more productive and journalists practice should have public relevance (McCombs and Merritt, 2004).

Many respondents of ETV expressed their purpose when reacting to the question that asks do you think the media you are working for purposely put an agenda to the public and why?

Our station principle is development journalism. We always put development as our agenda and try to communicate development activities undertaken in different parts of the country. We do this because we are working in a state media. Our government agenda are eradicating poverty and development. So, we are responsible to do this, and also it is stated in the editorial policy of ETV that the objective of government media are to promote government agenda. Thus, the government purposely put its

agenda to the public; we promote it through our station. (ETV Informant - 5)

Informants from ETV argued that the media agenda has already designed and its key role is facilitating democratization and development for the better life of its audience. Journalists also thinking that the editorial policy is the source of all news items which are about government activities. Hence, it gives the impression that the editorial policy influences journalists and editors perception on what the audience needs to know.

Thus, ETV is trying to address its large audiences considering government strategies and policies as important news items for the well being of the society. As discussed in chapter two, it is also argued that communication for development aims to promote, develop and implement policies and programs that enhance the quality of life for all.

4.3. Addis Zemen Newspaper Editorial Policy

The Addis Zemen newspaper editorial policy also states that the media agenda is derived from its obligation that was authorized by proclamation. The policy of Ethiopian Press Agency discusses agenda setting related issues in different parts of its contents. In the objective part of the document it is stated that the Press agency is working to serve the public effectively. Article two of the editorial policy of the organization said that the duties of the newspaper are promoting the government activities regards to democratization and development. Selection of contents for the newspaper of Addis Zemen and the decision making process should follow four basic corner stones: national ideals, proclamation of the Establishment of the Ethiopian Press Agency, press law and national consensus. In other words the government policies and strategies are the main sources of news of Addis Zemen. This is also reflected during interviews conducted with journalists and reporters.

Our news items are mostly focuses on government activities. We report this because of the editorial policy that we have. I think the policy directs all reporting to be about the government agenda. So, that's why development becomes our priority and reflects in every copy of the newspaper (Addis Zemen Informant - 2).

The media agenda has already fixed in to the editorial policy. I think, our role is interpreting and communicating the public in line with the policy. As it is indicated in different guidelines of the organization the priority we give to report is poverty eradication activities. As you know, we are a state owned media and responsible to promote development and democracy which are already prioritized by the government as well as by Ethiopian Press Agency editorial policy. (Addis Zemen informant - 7).

Also, National Ideals are the major cornerstones of the editorial policy. In article 2.1 wrote that building democracy, achieving national development, enhancing democratic unity and defending national sovereignty and loyalty are the main responsibilities of the editorial policy. These replicate that the Addis Zemen agenda are much congruent with the ideals of the government.

Journalists during focus group discussion also mentioned similar opinion when they are facing a question related to the editorial policy and agenda setting process. Most discussant believed that the media agenda should be development and democracy related activities of the government. It seems that the editorial policy influences journalists perception regards to what the public need to know.

The objective of Addis Zemen Newspaper as it is reflected in the editorial policy of Ethiopian Press Agency of 3.2, it is explaining proclamations and policies set by the government. It is also stated that the objectives of news, articles, and picture should meet the need of national objectives, policies, and strategies. From these it is possible to understand that government documents and information are significant sources of news agenda to Addis Zemen newspaper.

These arguments reveal that Addis Zemen is the government instrument which addresses the government agenda to the large readership. As discussed in chapter two under agenda setting, the intention of this mediated view of the world is that the priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public (McCombs and Merritt, 2004).

Consequently, governments use the mass media to shape and inform the public about their policies and strategies. Here indicates that the editorial policy of Ethiopian Press agency has already placed the media agenda in the form of objects as discussed in chapter two of this study.

As professional ethics the editorial policy also explains what to be expected from the media house practitioners in chapter eight of the policy. Serving the public is the top priority of journalists when they engage to their work; likewise journalists should give respect for national public benefit and interest.

The editorial policy of Addis zemen clearly state that the public need to know is about development and democracy. As well, it doesn't state directly how the public agenda form the media agenda bottom to up. However, the policy incorporated indirectly about the public agenda in article 4.3. It stated that the interest of the agency should fit the interest of the country. Here the interest of the country seems to refer the public, so that public agenda sometimes can be media agenda.

4.4. Media Agenda in ETV and Addis Zemen

4.4.1. Media Agenda

Journalists tried to define agenda setting according to their experience and backgrounds.

It was noticed that some journalists and editors have indistinct awareness about media agenda.

For more journalists mass media agenda setting means planning. Journalists associated the role of agenda setting limited to content planning activities in some discussions of FGDs.

We set agenda in every three months. Discuss with our editors and put it into the news. If the issue is current affair, it becomes agenda even it does not include in quarterly plan (ETV informant - 1).

Even sometimes I and my workmates do not know what is going to put in the evening news casting. As audience we get it from the window at home. Right now, it is very difficult to me to tell you what my station agenda is. And you can imagine the picture when it goes to the audience (ETV informant - 5).

According to my all best knowledge, our media messages are mostly event oriented. We cannot say that we design messages strategically to bring considered effects. Our reports are mostly inconsistent (Birtukan Hregeweyne, Deputy-editor in-Chief-ETV).

Most informants of interviews and focus group discussants in ETV and Addis Zemen respond that the media agenda are the government agenda. The roles of media houses are communicating the large public with government interests and programs. Journalists argued that reporting government development projects are their duties and responsibilities. As a result of this journalists plan of activities focus on government ministries and other organizations activities.

Moreover, some respondents of in-depth interviews in ETV told that journalists plan of activities do not make news and programs in most times, this is because the station give priority to cover government ministries and organizations events.

For some of Addis Zemen journalists agenda setting is about the editorial page. They think that their media agenda always emphasize in op-ed, rather in all pages of the newspaper.

Alongside these some respondents of the study said that agenda setting role of a media is systematic and well organized. Few informants said a media agenda do not put simply in news items, it is not like covering an issue today and stopping tomorrow.

I can say it is a media agenda when the issue becomes the public debate. Otherwise it is not an issue in my table. As I am reporting in ETV and working in developing country, I feel I am responsible to inform the society about development and change. To do this I and my colleagues should put it as media agenda. This achieved when the agenda strategically planned and get air time into the news items consistently and having continuity. In this regards we should improve the way we make agenda in the station (Tewodros Kasaye, Senior Editor - ETV).

Agenda setting process is one of the important tasks for any media to serve its audiences. The current trend we are working should be changed in the future. We have to give spaces to our readership for that need to know. This can be happened when my organization work based on research. Research findings can show us how to influence the public, and engaged with public agenda (Lemlem Mengistu, editor – Addis Zemen).

The argument here is mostly similar with the agenda setting role of the mass media in review of literature of this study. The notion is the media agenda set intentionally and with purpose.

4.4.2. Who Set the Media Agenda?

According to the respondents the media agenda set in different ways. Some journalists in the two media organizations believe that the media agenda set by Government Communication Office. Many journalists reflect that the purpose of Government Communication Office is to filter government information that is going to appear in state media news casting. In other words respondents feel that their respective media houses agenda created and set by the Government Communication Office.

Agenda came from the government side through our editors. And we are here in ETV to be a mouth piece of the government. Let me give you an example, when Addis Ababa Taxi Zoning system implemented, transportation irregularity was happened. However, the news was far from the reality, and when I asked the editor, replayed to me that it is because it wants to be like that by the government officials. So, this and other experiences show me that agenda setters of ETV are out of the media complex (ETV informant - 9).

To the contrary, among respondents of interview some also argued that the media managers are putting the agenda for day to day reporting. Likewise ETV and Addis Zemen journalists believed that they set media agenda during planning and other related media activities.

These arguments reflect that media managers and journalists are discovering the concerns of citizens and defining what the public needs to know in their journalistic roles. For instance, if they observe some societal issues that can be placed in to their news reporting there is a space to them makes it. Thus, it seems that journalists can set media agenda based on their audience needs. This is also similar to public agenda as discussed in chapter two under mass media agenda setting.

However, most discussants of FGD replied that public agenda have not considered as means of media agenda.

When we come to Addis Zemen the situation become reversed. I do not remember times that we were bothering to search public issues going to the grass root level community and brought it to the media agenda. Sometimes we work against public issue and interest if our media managers thought it opposite to EPRDF interest. The chance is very limited to make a public issue a media agenda in Zemen. I can say that we could not make media agenda considering public agenda as a springboard (Addis Tsege –Addis Zemen, Editor).

We have limitation to bring public agenda in to media agenda. Our media research department should be conducted surveys and brings to the editorial. If we get concrete evidence we can make it because we serve the public. So we need strong research department and other mechanisms to gather the public issues. Due to this I cannot dare to speak that we are working our best in this regards. However, we always try to bring and prioritize public issues into our reporting's as much as possible (Birtukan Hregeweyne, -ETV).

Almost all the two state media respondents argued that public issues as a source of media agenda are paramount. This notion is also similar to mass media agenda setting theory discussed in chapter two which argued that the agenda of a news organization should give coverage on public issues over some period of time- a week a month, an entire year (Merritt, 2004).

Most respondents admitted that the public could not set media agenda due to the media poor attention and other economical limitations. This is also mismatches with the participatory development media perspective discussed in review of literature which noted that communication for development is one of the most important ways to achieve development and it is a social process that promotes dialogue between communities and decision makers at local, national and regional levels (UNDP, 2011).

4.5. WASH as a Media Agenda in ETV

One of the objectives of this study is to examine how journalists relate WASH issues in their agenda setting process. Most discussants of ETV believed that Water, Sanitation and Hygiene issues are packages in the country health extension program. However, discussants have no clear understanding on the relation in between Water and the sanitation and hygiene component. Journalists have limited knowledge on these issues. Almost all discussants undermine the link in between water, sanitation and hygiene.

I have no idea how water issues interrelated with sanitation, I think it might be work for personal hygiene. If I assigned to report a water project, to tell you frankly I do not know how sanitation comes to my report (ETV Informant - 2).

There are some opportunists that water can be related to sanitation and hygiene. But, to me it is not critical that much, the priority which I give when I am reporting is that whether access to water achieved that community or not (ETV Informant - 3).

These arguments indicate that journalists have knowledge gap on the issue. Contrary, two journalists in ETV argued that the relations between WASH issues are crucial when they engaged to news reporting.

Water, sanitation and hygiene are much related and intertwined each other. Access to water can affect household's sanitation and hygiene status. An individual can wash his hands after using toilet only if water is accessible at the spot. This helps the person to keep his health safe. So that healthy person can spend his time in his work. This awards a positive impact to his family. So, to me reporting about a water project doesn't mean only focusing access to potable water, it is beyond that (ETV informant - 7).

I can give you a simple example to understand the relation, in my village safe water is accessible. I used water jags to fetch it from the water tap, whatever the water is safe if my jag is unsanitized the water will be contaminated. And I become sick. So that we can learn from this example that access to safe water is not the only issue when we make a media agenda about water projects (ETV informant - 4).

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Among respondents of interviews and focus group discussants much argued that WASH issues are media agenda. They believe water, sanitation and hygiene issues are development issues that get priority in the health policy of the government. As ETV is one of the state media it is responsible to do this. Health reporters of ETV in news and program departments also told that they work on WASH because it is a package of national health extension program and they feel that they are responsible to communicate the large public in relation to influence and reinforce WASH messages.

Based on these arguments journalists reflect that WASH issues get media coverage in most news programs. This tendency is similar to what Merritt (2004) argued in review of literature part of this study that a media agenda should report for some period of time.

Nevertheless, some discussants showed a different view from the argument above. One of the interviewee of this study, Birtukan Haregeweyne, Deputy Director of News Department in ETV said the following.

WASH is our issue, and we try to report it many times. Because it is the public health problem, the media work on it to influence positive behavior. But the way we perform is not convenient and it is difficult to say we are on the right track of media agenda setting process. And I do not feel that we make WASH as our media agenda.

Tewoderos Kassaye, senior Editor in ETV also argued with Birtukan's view:

We report WASH issues for the sake of reporting, rather than influencing the public. To make it a media agenda we should design messages strategically, allocate air time continuously, monitor and evaluate, conducting effect analysis. So without doing half of this how we dare to say WASH is our media agenda? I think it is not possible.

Other journalists also gave such responses during FGD discussion:

I think our media focuses on politics rather than health issues. We do not engaged mostly on public issues like WASH. Sometimes, programs and news items cancelled from the schedule if any political issue appeared in the news room. I don't remember in the past that WASH or other health

issues come into the first row of a news casting. I feel we are not serving the public, but politics talking heads (ETV informant - 5).

I cannot say this issue is among one of the items for tomorrow morning news program. But my editor may send me to report one of WASH programs. You cannot push any work if your editor assigns you to report, it is not a business for them whether you have knowledge on the issue or not. You go and report. As a result our news and programs lack depth and creativity that holds the audience. I think these cause the station operates without purposive media agenda (ETV informant - 9).

Discussants also rose that ETV products on WASH are mostly similar and one sided. Most argued this happened due to several reasons. Among the reasons indicated during the discussion it is limited reporting skill. Also lack of in-depth knowledge on issues forced most WASH reports monotonous and boring. As a result of this most WASH media reports have less effect and influence to the public.

In this respect it is similar to Robert Entman (Griffin, 383) description of framing theory that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and /or treatment recommendation for the item described."

Respondents of interviews from Federal Ministry of Health, Education and Water and Energy also believed that the role of ETV in promoting WASH issues to the public is paramount. As ETV a state owned broadcasting media it has also responsibilities to work in partnership with government ministries to address social problems like WASH. In this way respondents are trying to work with ETV to bring societal changes in common interests. Based on these common grounds, the contributions of the station in the past

WASH achievements are significant. However most considered that WASH issues are not ETV media agenda.

According to Petros W/giorgis, MoE Communication Directorate Director, the ETV engagements on school WASH activities are very limited despite the fact that it is one of the key elements of government Quality Education Assurance Package.

I don't think that school WASH issues are in ETV journalists table as agenda. Unless we invite them to make a report, they do not cover issues with their initiative. Mostly we pay ETV aplenty of many to get coverage and air time. We need them to assist us in communicating and mobilizing the large public to better life. They should identify societal problems and plan to reach the audience on behalf of their organizational social responsibility.

For a question that presented to Ato Bizuneh Tolcha, PR and Communication Directorate Director in MoWE, on WASH issues coverage in ETV, replied that few news items appeared in the news casting and reporters try to cover issues some time. However the problem is continuity and depth. Water and sanitation issues are taken as a onetime activity in most journalists and also reporters mostly forget the most important in their coverage due to lack of critical investigation.

4.6. WASH as a Media Agenda in Addis Zemen

In Addis Zemen most discussants and respondents argued that water, sanitation and hygiene issues are development agendas that are getting their media attention mostly. As a result, respondents of Zemen assumed that WASH is their media agenda. The development media principle was repeatedly raised by the journalists during FGD and in-depth interviews. And most respondents believed that their current media agenda is development.

The principle in Addis Zemen is communicating development. Our messages reach targeting our audience to raise awareness about development. As you know health issues are also our focus area. As the editorial policy clearly states, we have to interpret the health policy. So, we consider sanitation as our agenda (Addis Zemen Informant - 8).

When we plan media messages, always consider policies. Messages should fit into government strategies and guidelines, nothing should be against these documents. And when we come to sanitation issues they are stated in many government documents as development challenges. So I can argue based on the editorial policy of Zemen that clearly it is a big issue. However, I do not mean that we better work to make the issue a media agenda. I feel the gap is very wide between practice and theory (Addis Zemen Informant- 10).

Yes we can say it is a media agenda based on the editorial policy. However, the editorial policy itself cannot mean anything, unless journalists practice it and change it into reality. To me the reality is different, our media managers including editors always run to make unplanned events that arrived in news room accidentally from some politicians and party officials. And also I do not remember a WASH issue planned and investigated in order to make it Zemen agenda (Addis Zemen Informant - 1).

The argument here reflects that though WASH issues are development agenda and Zemen's responsibility to communicate it to the large audience; it is very difficult to say media agenda.

Journalists think also water and sanitation are two separate agenda that have loose connection in terms of development which is totally opposite to the WHO explanation discussed in chapter two. As a result of this water and sanitation issues are reported separately. In most cases as discussant's of Zemen said water gets large coverage than sanitation related issues. The reason for this was mostly water projects cost in millions which is one determinant of news in their perspective. This showed that sanitation and hygiene issues are not news worthy for some journalists.

Also some FGD discussants replayed that WASH issues are not interesting and attractive in reporting. Consequentially, they have little interest to plan and report on the issue.

Additionally, it is observed during discussions that most journalists in Addis Zemen believed the quality of productions on WASH issues were poor. As per their argument this happened because of inefficient skill and planning of journalists and editors.

We have a column sponsored by MoH, printed once a week. Health Extension related activities are posted in this page. If you look at the printed issues most are similar in their framing and styles, rather change the household family name, region or kebele. This does not invite the readership to read (Addis Zemen Informant- 1).

This argument clearly gives a picture about how levels of agenda setting treated in Zemen. Merritt (2004) argued that a journalist can no more produce an effective story without a basic framing strategy than artist can paint a picture without one. We can understand here that the experience and practice of framing WASH issues in very attractive ways to influence the public are limited.

Likewise ETV journalist here also interview informants asked to point up what sort of health issues audiences need to know. Few respondents said WASH related issues. Here, most journalists believed that WASH is not a public health problem.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has been conducted to explore the views of journalists on agenda setting in Ethiopian state owned media (Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper) focusing on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene issues. To do this the researcher tries to find out the practice of agenda setting process in general and WASH issues in particular. The study also attempted to investigate the agenda setting process implied in editorial policies of Ethiopian Television and Addis Zemen newspaper. This chapter presents the findings and conclusions of the research in summary.

5.1. Summary of findings

To achieve the objectives of this study the researcher tried to revise various literatures related to media agenda setting theory. Alongside to this, since the study also gives attention to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene issues and it is one of the development and health agenda, the researcher incorporates necessary and related concepts in to the literature. Hence, levels of agenda setting, communication for development, and health communication theoretical frameworks that influences media managers and journalist's agenda setting behavior are prioritized and included to the study. As the study focused only on a limited number of journalists who are working in the state-owned media (ETV and Addis Zemen), the results cannot be anticipated to generalize directly to the practice of agenda setting to all government journalists, and indeed not for the private media.

As a method of study qualitative research approach has been applied in to this research. Individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with media

managers and reporters to gather data. The media houses and their media practitioners were purposively selected to the study. The data collected from respondents and discussants of interviews and FGDs assisted the researcher to understand about agenda setting process and practice of each media (ETV and Addis Zemen) specifically in WASH.

The findings reveal that agenda setting is practiced in the Ethiopian state media for development and democratization process of the country. Besides, journalists also practice it in reaction to editorial policies, government laws and strategies. Journalists also try to make a media agenda based on their own understanding and experience. However the findings indicate that there is no systematic way of media agenda setting process with respect to WASH issues in the respected media houses. Journalists make agenda for the public knowingly and unknowingly.

Furthermore, the findings noticed that many journalists have a very unclear idea about what media agenda setting is. They instead try to define it as a form of planning activities. Media agenda should be planned, but in systematic way; this ignored by most journalists. The findings show that many journalists in ETV and Addis Zemen understand issues compiled in their annual and quarterly plan as media agenda.

It is also found that many WASH issues appear in reporting as event driven. The perception of media agenda framing is also examined by journalists and member of the audience as a weak side of state media; frequently media reports are boring, not attractive and dull.

Another finding from this study is that the media agenda set by top media managers and government communication office. The journalist's argument show that the probabilities

the WASH issues become a media agenda is limited. The participation of journalists in setting a media agenda is also not clearly known and identified in ETV and Zemen.

The study finding in ETV and Zemen reveal that the journalist's skill and knowledge regards to media agenda setting theory and knowledge on WASH issues influences the practice.

Also findings show that editorial policies and guidelines of state media houses indirectly put WASH issues as media agenda. The argument here is that WASH is a priority in most government documents. The country health policy published during the transitional government clearly states WASH as public health priority. On top of this it is arguable that WASH is also considered as a priority in state media houses.

Contrary to these, journalists in the state owned media have little knowledge on WASH issues. This influences many journalists to consider the issue irrelevant and insignificant to the public. More over journalists thought WASH issues are boring to report. In relation to this, WASH issues are not frequently reported and do not make front page news stories most times.

The in-depth interview question that dealt with what sort of health issues do you think your audiences need to know reveled that WASH is not a priority for the two media houses. However the study findings show some efforts.

5.2. Conclusion and recommendations

McCombs (2004) wrote that mass media play an important role in shaping reality. Making societal problems a media agenda and influencing the public is significant. In this regard, journalists understanding of the power of media and their perception on social problems are also factors that govern the media role in the society. Journalist's products can be affected by their existed knowledge and experience on social realities. They play a key role to produce attention, but most important presence of media professionals is to make our attention more useful and practical. So that their agenda setting process become paramount in the news rooms and their practice should have public relevance.

Journalists observed in this study had recognized their media houses as agenda setters. However they have limited participation on agenda setting process in the respected media houses. Journalist's level of understanding on water, sanitation and hygiene issues also observed in the study that affects its prominence in the media agenda. The findings of this study also showed ETV and Addis Zemen did not conduct research to know the public agenda.

Finally, the researcher believed that this study can be taken as a spring board to further investigation on Ethiopian state media agenda setting process. Based on such studies one can better understand the power of Ethiopian media in shaping and influencing public realities.

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Appendix

Note: The appendices of this thesis consist of anonymous informants. The list of informants is removed from this thesis for confidentiality reasons.

Appendix - 1

Interview Guides

These interview questions aim to study agenda setting in Ethiopian state media regarding water, sanitation and hygiene issues. Your cooperation to deliver genuine and valid responses to these questions will significantly help this study to come up with tangible and genuine results. Hence, you are kindly requested to response to the questions below. I assure you that the responses you give will only be used for the purposes of this study.

Thank you

Part One: interview details

- 1.1. Full name -----
1.2. Sex ----- 1.3 Age -----

Part Two: Demographic

- 2.1. Educational level ----- 2.2 Field of study -----

2.3. work status ----- 2.4 Experience (media) ---

Part Three: General

- 2.1. How do you describe agenda setting process in your media?
2.2 Do you think the media you are working for purposely put an agenda to the public?
2.3. Could you please tell me how news items are selected and prioritized in your station?
2.4. Who sets the agenda?

Part Four: WASH

- 3.1 What are the major issues and public health problems of the country that get media coverage regularly in your media?
- 3.2. What sort of health issues do you think your audiences need to know?
- 3.3. What principles and guidelines do you follow to make a health issue a media agenda?
- 3.4. Do you think Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) a public health problem of the country?
- 3.5. To what extent do you think are your media report WASH? How do you evaluate the current coverage on WASH?
- 3.6. Does the editorial policy of your media state about how to cover health issues?
What about WASH reporting?

Appendix - 2

Discussion Guide for Focus Group Discussions

Greet the people as follows:

Thank you for joining this discussion.

My name is Mintesenot Aschalew and this is my colleague-----

-----, We are working with a research in title called ‘Agenda setting in Ethiopian State Media: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene as Issues’. The objective of the study is to Ethiopian state media in the relationship between media and public’s agenda with respect to WASH. We would like your help to make the study successful. The discussion will take 30 minutes. We are going to ask a few more questions and please, feel free to ask any question in your mind.

In this discussion, I will be in charge of facilitating and ----- will take notes .if you agree to participate in the study; we will have discussions with you covering questions about agenda setting process of your media. Your opinion is very important to us. We want to hear all of the different views that people might have. So please tell us your opinion even if you disagree with what others have said.

Notes will be taken during the focus group discussions. We will do this to make sure the information you provide us is correctly taken. Moreover, this discussion will be tape recorded so that we can have an accurate description of what was said. All in all the recordings and note takings are confidential and anonymous. There is no risk involved with focus group. You don’t have to answer any questions(s), if you don’t want to.

Your participation is completely voluntary. Any information that you provide will be considered private and confidential. Your opinions and experiences are important to us.

Discussion Protocol

This is what we will do: I will ask the group questions related to agenda setting process. Everyone will have a chance to give their own opinion before we move on to the next question. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer, so we want you to be honest and truthful in answering questions. We want to hear all of the different views that people might have, so please tell us your opinion even if you disagree with what others have said. There are a few rules for our discussion:

1. One person talking at a time
2. Avoid side conversations, so that the person who is speaking can be heard,
3. Do not share information during this discussion with people outside of this group.

Do you have any questions before we proceed to the next step?

Questions

General

- i. Describe the agenda setting process and how news item selected and prioritized in your station?
- ii. Who sets the agenda in the media you are working?

Related to WASH

1. Is there any regular health coverage in your area?
2. What are the public health problems in your area that you think; it needs media coverage?
3. What principles and guidelines are you follow to make a health issue a media agenda?
4. Have you participated on any agenda setting process in your media house?
5. What do you know about water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)?
6. Do you think these are a public health problem of the country?
7. How often do your media report about WASH?
8. Do you think WASH has got enough coverage in your media?
9. Does the editorial policy of your media state about how to cover health issues?
10. What about wash reporting?

Thank the participants for volunteering their time and providing their honest understanding and inputs for the study.

Basic Information and Attendance List

Full name ----- Occupation-----

City/Town -----

Respondents Category-----

Name of Moderator -----

Name of note Taker -----

Date of focus Group Discussion ----- Time, from-----
-----to -----

S.No	Name	Sex	Consent to Participate
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			