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***A Study of Audience Research by Broadcasters: the Case of  
Radio Fana.***

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# **A Study of Audience Research by Broadcasters: the Case of Radio Fana.**

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***A Study of Audience Research by Broadcasters: the Case of Radio Fana.***

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## **List of Acronyms**

CIMA: Center for International Development Cooperation Agency

EPRDF: Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

SIDA: Swedish International Media Assistance

TPLF: Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

EPLF: Eritrean People Liberation Front

## Abstract

*Although audience information and feedback are essential for improvements of media working trends, the values of them have been less appreciated by broadcasters. This is because the broadcasters and their audiences have asymmetric relationship; i.e., often there is one-way communication that has been existed between them. Especially, broadcasters in developing countries have less interested in conducting and processing audience research and least integrated it in the organization structures. Mainly, journalists in the broadcasting media have accomplished their work on the basis of personal hunch by thinking that “what interests them would interest the audience.” Carrying out persistent audience research by broadcasting organizations can significantly undertake the above problems, and using audience data for their activities have paramount importance for the improvements of the media as well as in practicing journalism. Therefore, this study, under the title of “**A study of Audience Research by Broadcasters: the case of Radio Fana**”, is interested in examining the process and conduct of audience research that are made by Radio Fana.*

*In achieving the above aim, individual in-depth interviews are made with three senior reporters, three chief-in-editors, five-producers and three audience researchers, and document analysis is also employed. Purposive sampling is applied to select documents for analysis and informants for interview. The focus of the study is on the quality of audience research, the appropriateness of the tools, the effectiveness of Radio Fana in practicing audience research and the extent of the application of audience research results. In relation to its quality, measurements are the level of qualification of audience researchers, the support and acceptance of the audience research, the involvement of the journalists and the development of high-quality research environment. In relation to the appropriateness of the tools, there are measurements; such as, the precision of data gathering tools, the chance of producing apparent data for each programme and the acceptability of evidences. In relation to its effectiveness and the extent of the application of the results, the measurements are the contribution of audience research in decision making process, format development, audience development and organizational planning.*

*The results of the study show that processing and conducting audience research has become the culture of Radio Fana. It is also true that the findings and recommendations of audience research have been implemented averagely. The study finds some indicators of the medium improvement which have brought through audience research; such as, the signal quality of the station, the style of programme presentation, the different formats of the programmes, the number of advertisers, sponsors and partners, and the size of staff.*

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

### ***1.1 Background***

The media are the engines of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century information society, shaping the world we live in and how we interact with one another. We choose to spend more of our free time consuming media than any other activity. The media – radio, television, newspapers and magazines, billboards, mail and interactive digital media – are our constant companions, offering us a never-ending flow of information and entertainment.

On the one hand, the media are proliferating and evolving, and no medium is untouched by the impact of digital technologies. The digitization of information is uprooting content from its previous forms of distribution, producing a multiplicity of new and convergent ways to access media, creating new patterns of consumption (Kelly, 2006). This process causes shifts in control between content producer and consumer, challenging existing business models, and driving the transformation of the media markets that creates audience fragmentation.

New technologies also change audience behavior: more of their media consumption is on demand; more is on the move; and more is concurrent, as more services compete for their time. These changes create threats and opportunities beyond each service's established competitive niche, increasing the pressure on each of the media to prove it accountable and to maximize its audience (*ibid.*). The need for accountability and maximization of mass media audience need to have or understanding of audience profile, such as; media availability, audience life style, audience need, audience composition and audience-media credibility.

On the other hand, practicing journalism means communicating effectively with potential audience. In other words, journalists must be aware of their audience if they wish to give them what they want and want to be profitable from knowing who they are. Audience is vital in mass communication. It is the audience that the media are constructing and conveying information, and if it does not serve the audience, the media cannot exist (Hanes, 2000). However,

mainstream media (radio, TV and newspapers) often involves one-directional or a straightforward transmission of messages between few senders and many passive receivers (Gillespie, 2005). In this regard, the significance of seeking audience research is paramount. Thus, to understand the size, behavior and other traits of their audience, mass media often involve processing audience research. Audience research can be described as collection of data to provide feedback to broadcasting organizations. This feedback helps to shape their programmes, policy and quality of the contents that are going to aired (Mytton, 1992). It is a process that shapes the preparation, delivery, and evaluation of any well-thought out programme. It is important to consider your audience before, during, and after the act of the programme. It is also plausible to suppose that media need their audience more than audiences need their media for the reason that mass media organizations has to improve themselves (McQuail, 2003:364). Moreover, there is the reason to view audience research as “the primary tool for the close control and management of media audiences” (ibid.).

Audience research can be conducted in different forms and can have different forms across mass media. Mytton explained this understanding, for example, as follows:

Newspapers and other print media automatically receive some feedback from their audience in the number of copies they sell. This is not the case with radio and television, and programmes are sometimes produced and transmitted at high cost, and often to wide areas, merely in the belief that there is an audience for them (Mytton, 1992).

McQuail (2003: 365) also stated audience has always been a contested category. Hence, it is not surprising that the purpose and ways of doing research into audiences are varied and often inconsistent.

According to Kelly, audience research has been practiced in museums since the early 1900s. Gilman’s work (1916) uses similar skills and techniques in today’s mass media audience research, is noted as example (Kelly, 2006). The need to get to know and quantify audiences arose in the specific context of the United States where radio, the first electronic medium, was quickly inserted in the logic of capitalism as a private sphere, a medium financed by advertising

and basically regulated by market conditions (Webster, 1998). In similar manner, audience research is conducted by the first commercial radio (Radio Fana) in Ethiopia. However, it may have different approaches of audience research.

To draw the historical context of research in Radio Fana, the researcher requires putting Radio Fana in general context. Because when the researcher talks to the historical background of Radio Fana, it is also easy to recognize the historical conditions of audience research particularly. Thus, the researcher notes some general historical contexts from Fana Broadcast Corporate exclusive edition of first year bulletin called Radio Fana. When the researcher talks about Radio Fana establishment, its historical context goes back to the civil war of Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) with the Derg regime that has also shown its history attached with the movement of TPLF. TPLF established this radio in October 10, 1979 (September 30, 1972 E.C) by name called “This is the Voice of Tigray Revolution” at the hill of ‘Sahil’ the place where it is found in Tigray. The objectives were to announce and to give information for the people within the Tigray and the people out of Tigray about the causes, inceptions and objectives of TPLF struggle and movement, the oppressive and brutal behavior of the Derg regime and its achievements and its futurity and directions of the TPLF’s struggle.

The programme primarily broadcasted in Tigrigna. After a year, it started its transmission in Amharic. It ceased its broadcasting in 1981 because of the parties’ conflict that arose between TPLF and Eritrean People Liberation Front (EPLF). However, it restarted its broadcasting after five years in July 16, 1986 at ‘Maymessie’ the place which is also found in Tigray, and it transmitted its programmes for an hour in both languages (30 minutes in Tigrigna and 30 minutes in Amharic). It also expanded its programmes by including Afan Oromo as transmission language in 1990. It often changed the place where the station located for military purpose; for instance, it was at ‘Tsegede’, ‘Hay’ (Tip of Ras Dashen hill), ‘Tenbien’, and ‘Mekele, in 1989, 1989, 1990 and 1991-93 respectively.

In 1993, after the Derg collapsed and the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came into power, transitional government of Ethiopia has passed in its proclamation of press freedom ‘all media which have already being aired shall continue their broadcasting’. Following this proclamation, on October 22, 1994, the radio was reestablished in a new form of

private commercial medium by name 'Radio Fana' and started its broadcasting in Amharic and Afan Oromo at Addis Ababa (N.B. its Tigrigna broadcasting had covered areas around Tigray since 1992). When Radio Fana reestablished as commercial medium, it faced two major challenges; these were: management and economic problem, and disabilities of maximizing and attracting audiences. These were the turning points that initiated the medium to conduct and process audience research.

Today, Radio Fana is a commercial radio station and broadcasts programmes in four languages: Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Afar and Somali. The broadcasts are aired for 18 hours per a day, for a total of 126 hours per week on, FM (98.1 MH), medium wave (1080 kHz) and on short wave (6210 KHZ, 44 MB and 6940 KHZ 49 MB). The majority of the programmes are devoted to discussion of socio-economic issues. These pertain to health, education, women and children's issues and market price analysis. There are also programmes dealing with investment, agriculture and industrial activities in the country. Radio Fana's entertainment programmes are popular that have earned wide listeners support (SIDA, 2003:38). As the researcher mentioned, it has an in-house department that processes and conducts audience research. As it is a growing station, its programmes and exposure are also expanded. Therefore, the need to analyze the ways this radio audience research method is employed and conducted in the media is important. Whether audience research is more than a tool for the media or not needs to be analyzed. The researcher believes it would become the lesson for other media of the country, too. The assumption further extends that the greater incentives for rigorous audience data in ad-supported broadcasting meant that the rationalization of audience understanding in this sector advanced more rapidly than in other sector.

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

Currently journalism or communication in general and media organizations in particular are the subjects of intense exploration due to two major reasons: the fragmentation of audiences, and the trivialization of the contents (Schudson, 2003:12). In this regard, continuous audience research can have paramount importance to undertake such criticisms, which are likely to be the concern of Ethiopian media as well. Radio is a mature, highly competitive, and highly segmented enterprise to improve their programmes so as to necessitating persistent effort to maximize

audience numbers by broadcasters. Even, the most successful commercial stations aspire to reach only a portion of the listeners in their community (Giovannoni, 1988).

The importance of audience research has been increasingly recognized by the electronic media in the developed countries. In developing countries like Ethiopia, lacks of resources and expertise together with logistical difficulties have often been proven obstacles to carry out audience research. From the view point that audience research cannot save money by identifying those programmes which are not cost-effective which, in turn, loses the media responsibility (the media have to give prior concern to audience than programme cost-effectiveness). It is regrettable not to do audience research efficiently as it has a key role in improving the media performance.

Journalists also operate on the basis of their own intuitive judgment about their audience. Gans found that the editors and reporters “had little knowledge about the actual audience and rejected feedback from it” that they often assumed that “what interested them would interest the audience” (Schudson, 2003:172).

Moreover, as McQuail ( 2003:364) alluding Ang (1991) stated “the media have no real interest in knowing their audiences “, in order to do audience research, the broadcasters merely use a certain system that satisfies their clients (advertisers, sponsors, partners, etc) rather than knowing the true essence of what the actual and the potential listeners mean. However, broadcasters have also used and accepted the practice of audience research as widely media activity with established research approaches in diverse area of application.

Reusser (2004:17) emphasized that media organization use audience research as an instrument for determining the effectiveness of programmes, for media performance measurement and management as well as organizational learning. On the other hand, he also stated that audience research practices in media organizations have rarely been examined in terms of effectiveness and learning outcomes (*ibid.*).

Likewise, nature of audience research practice in Radio Fana has not been adequately examined. So far examination of the process and conduct of audience research in line with its principles and

the purposes has not been done with Ethiopian media, to the researchers' knowledge, although the medium has been working it by organizing the activity at a department level.

In addition, the researcher's curiosity is based on the notion which might influence the general activity of audience research. McQuail (2003:365) citing Eastman (1998) argues that scholarly research on audience has made no impact on the media industry. This argument may or may not be true for all contexts. However, the researcher's motivation is to know the impact of industries' audience research for their work improvements.

Audience research plays an imperative role of feedback in programme evaluation. Radio Fana has practiced it since the station has started its broadcasting. The objectives of news organizations and journalists are also tested through research on the news audience which makes an understanding of audience research methods and interpretations central to evaluating the performance of news media. Therefore, this study delves into the analysis of much needed but not less scrutinized areas dealing with the quality and effectiveness of audience research of Radio Fana in a manner that provides lessons for other media.

### ***1.3 Research Questions***

- How well the process of audience research is carried out?
- To what extent the broadcasters use the findings of audience research to improve their medium?
- Is Radio Fana effective in practicing audience research?
- What are the challenges of broadcasters to conduct audience research?

### ***1.4 Scope of the Study***

The focus of the study is to examine the use of audience research as a media management tool and how well Radio Fana processes and conducts audience research, its effectiveness and appropriateness, and the extent that results are applied by producers and media managers, in general broadcasters, to improve the activities of the their medium.

## ***1.5 Objectives of the Study***

This research has the following general and specific objectives respectively.

### **1.5.1 General Objectives**

The general objective of the study is to examine the process and conduct of audience research in Radio Fana as well as to understand whether findings are contributing for the improvement of programmes, formats, and other attributes of media development.

### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

- To evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of how the broadcasters have carried out audience research.
- To analyze the qualities of processing audience research.
- To examine how far the broadcasters used findings for the improvement of the medium.
- To identify major challenges in conducting audience research.

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

The results of the study may not be generalizable since the study is focused on a single case, some research documents are not filed by the broadcasters, and hence the researcher does not avail them and in turn it might have some detrimental effect on sampling procedure, and time and resource are other constraints.

## ***1.7 Applications of the Results***

The study results will be used by media broadcasters in any media of the country, especially for radio and television industries to improve their work by considering the results of the qualities of persistent audience research. It may be used by communication policy makers to design policies that best fits in broadcasting industries. The results can be used by other researchers and media practitioners to accomplish further research in the area of the study.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher tries to review some basic concepts and related literatures in the study area to define the area of the problem more manifestly, to show the link of the study with other previous studies in the study area, and to know more about what needs to be done in the study. Generally, the chapter tells theoretical frameworks on the concept and process of audience research and reviews some literatures from previous studies.

#### 2.1 *Review of Related Literature*

##### 2.1.1 Historical Perspective and Concept of Audience Research

Before the researcher deals with what audience research is and its functions, it is important to discuss how and when the concept of audience research had been evolved and developed. According to Moores, “broadcasters faced the twin problems of how to address and gather knowledge about their dispersed and distant audiences in the early years of radio broadcasting” (2000:18). The first was that in the day-to-day production of programmes and the organization of schedules, they had to constantly ask themselves what was an appropriate way of speaking to their listeners at particular times and in particular domestic places. The second was that they were in a position of knowing very little about the habits and size of their new listening public (*ibid.* 19).

In the intervening period, radio and later television have gradually come to develop their own distinctive voice or communicative styles for addressing the ‘consumer’ in the private sphere,

and have found specific ways of inquiring into audience behavior – most notably through the manufacture of ‘ratings’ figures (*ibid.* 20). Bermejo has shown the effort as follows:

In the early 1900s advertiser-supported communication media became a fundamental tool for managing mass consumption (Beniger, 1986). The cycle of control set in motion to achieve this required the implementation of a whole series of feedback mechanisms to collect information from consumers and audiences. In the early days of radio, listeners’ letters had been used to ‘support the broadcasters’ contention that radio constituted a perfect advertising medium’ (Smulyan, 1994:7). These letters demonstrated that radio was catching people’s attention, and ‘verifying the presence of human attention to media generally requires entering people’s living rooms, bedrooms and cars, and monitoring their behaviour’ (Napoli, 2001: 66). Thus, as radio’s business model began to shift clearly towards advertising, a ratings system was set in place in order to monitor audience behavior (2009: 139).

From the above efforts, the researcher can understand that the kind of research particularly rating figures compiled by market research agencies became the industry’s primary measure of performance. This is because in the context of a commercial broadcasting system; it is necessary to demonstrate the existence of an audience to potential advertisers and sponsors. Smythe (1997) as cited from Bermejo (2009) sparked ‘blindspot debate’ called the consideration of audience as the main commodity produced by advertisers-supported media. In this understanding, information, education and entertainment materials transmitted to the audience is on inducement to recruitment potential member of the audience and to maintain their loyal attention. Mytton (1992:3) also supported the idea that in such system, in United States, Latin America and increasingly in Europe, research is essential if the main source of funds for broadcasting is advertising and sponsorship. In general, rating researches provide estimates of audience size and composition (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

As the researcher stated in the previous chapter, for some media, audience is self – evident, for instance how many seats are taken in cinema or theater. Broadcasters, however, do not have such easily obtained evidence of consumption or use, and terrestrial radio and TV stations do not know that they are actually being listened to or watched. So broadcasting organizations through time became necessarily find out if the audience did exist and who they were (Lacey, 2002).

Thus, to ensure its economic survival and prosperity, “industry has to fill spots within and between programmes, and programmes are simply the attempt to attract consumers to the advertisements” (*ibid.*). However, radio’s rating listening public clearly was larger and more diverse than the commodity audience reported in the ratings (Morely, 1990:200). This diversity of audience was not reflected in the ratings; therefore, broadcasters tried to develop different varieties of researching their audience in addition to ratings (*ibid.*). Jhally & Livent (1986) cited from Bermejo (2009) tried to refine ‘blindspot debate’ is the issue of audience which is the process of communication rather than the process of consumption of goods. Audience measurement, personality (talent) studies, account analysis, format studies, station image studies, and audience evaluation are some other forms of audience research besides rating research. These non-rating researches provide information about what the audience likes and dislikes, analyses of different types of programming, demographic and lifestyle information about the audience, and much more (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

In regarding to broadcasters’ ways of speaking to listeners, scholars (Horton and Wohl, 1956; Williams, 1974; Scannell, 1989; Fairclough, 1994 as cited from Moores, 2000) characterized the industry’s relationship to its audiences as para -social interaction, i.e., an interaction which takes place at a distance between public performers and their unknown audiences, but which stimulates many aspect of face-to-face communication among friends or acquaintances. In other words, they adopt interactive style which has traditionally been associated with more private interpersonal encounters.

From the above understandings, the researcher recognizes that broadcasters use the direct mode of address, talks as if they are conversing personally or privately. Even though they adopt such style of addressing audience, it is also becoming difficult to know their audience feedback in the mass media like interpersonal phenomena. Moores supports the idea that para-social interaction is one-sided, as there is no possibility for the performer to determine if communication is successful (*ibid.*). This implies that audience research has always become a primary need to media organizations activities to collect feedback from their audience.

The principle of audience measurement is central to the kind of research conducted and commissioned on behalf of the industry – either by agencies or broadcasters (*ibid*: 23). Therefore, these long search to find suitable ways of addressing and forms of talk as well as a parallel quest on the part of broadcasting organizations to diverse particular ways of searching and ‘knowing’ their audiences, as scholars supposed, have created the ways for the development of audience research concept.

Bermejo explained the early studies of audience research made apparent some of the industry dynamics that would shape broadcasting audience manufacture in the following decades (Bermejo, 2009: 140). In particular, three main dynamics stand out: the need for independent third parties to carry out the measurement; the prevalence of syndicated studies; and the difficulty of sustaining competing services measuring the same audience (*ibid.*). In this understanding, the study might show some hints whether these dynamics in Ethiopian media industry are managed or not.

A number of scholars (Wheeler, 1976; Auleta, 1991; Eaman, 1994; Hoy, 1999, as cited from Savage, 2006) had also investigated professional institutions of the audience researches. Weeler examined the methodological shortcomings and commercial rhetorical arising from TV ratings of Nielsen ratings. One of the main methodological challenges was related to sampling. The reach of broadcasting achieved such magnitude that it was impossible for measurement operations to gather information from every audience member, or even from a substantial portion of them. This meant that measurement had to be based on samples. Auletta re-investigated further the Weeler’s examination and demonstrated how Nielsen ratings and rhetorical misuse and misinterpretations of audience ratings were central to vain struggle by three dominant American networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) to retain share, commercial and cultural hegemony (*ibid.*). Hoy also investigated the use and misuse of public opinion polling in Canadian politics (*ibid.*). Eaman examined the institution of broadcasting audience research, particularly the value of broadcasters in struggle to wrest citizen rather than consumer language out of ratings (*ibid.*). Eaman thus raised the question of centrality of a new type of audience research not just as programming or commercial feedback but in fact at the heart of the broadcasters’ role in the

society. That is why answering the question of how well audience research is carried out, from what intention it is carried out, and whether it is audiencehood or not in broadcasting organization are always pertinent.

In Ethiopian context, there is no syndicated institution or independent agency which conducts audience research; even if, broadcasters of radio Fana has practiced it. Study on media audience research is limited. The news media are still at the embryonic stage and the activity of audience research is taken place within the organizations. In strengthening broadcasters' practice of audience research, the investigation should also focus on the effectiveness and quality of audience research in the organization.

The researcher understands the mentioned attempts of broadcasters were not the mere issues of media audience research although they have got position in day-to-day activities of the mass media. The researcher reviews other issues which have been appeared through time when the methods of audience research are dealt with.

Now, it is important to refer one or two inclusive definition/s of audience research so as to clarify the concept and what is going to talk throughout the study. Audience research primarily implies (Mytton, 1992) "ascertaining the research, exposure, composition and environmental context of various mass media in relation to potential audience." As Ede (1984: 5) also defines, it is "those methods designed to enable speakers and writers to draw inferences about the experiences, beliefs and the attitudes of an audience."

### **2.1.2 Audience Research as Source of Information for Media Managers**

Managers have roughly four sources of information; such as, their own experiences, the experiences of others, their research, and the research of others, for the decision making (Lacy, S., Sohn, B. A, & Wicks, L. J., 1993:17). However, the media manager should care of the quality of the information which often basis for their decision-making process because it relates to the skills of the person producing the information, and hence, managers should be able to evaluate both the information and the people providing the information (*ibid.*). Managers should recognize the value of all forms of information and seek many diverse sources of information.

Among many other alternative sources of information, audience research is the lifeblood of the broadcasting industry (Lacy & et al, 1993). Audience information provides decision makers with information they can use to eliminate some of the guess-work involved in giving the audience what it wants (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Alternatively, they tell what the main broadcasters' roles in the society are and their organizations' and journalists' performance (Savage, 2006).

Managers in all types of media companies need to obtain a statistical profile of listeners for various reasons (Lacy & et al, 1993). In each media institutions, audience research has also different purposes. For instance, a broadcast manager in a station might use research to determine whether listeners like and trust local newscasters. In most cases, there are two main things that audience research can do: estimate audience sizes, and discover audience preferences (List, 2002). Primarily, however, audience data provide the stations' audience profile and feedbacks to the programmes. From the public standpoint, it is important to the stations' decisions as what programs will survive and when and where they should be scheduled (Beville, 1998). Many other scholars give attention to many other details.

Lacy & et al have mentioned the following functions of audience research for media managers:

Audience data are used by the radio to aid in programming decision making. Broadcast managers must to know which programmes attract the highest number of listeners, and the characteristics of those attracted, in order to make programming decisions. They are also very important to radio to assist in planning and changing programme contents and schedules. Radio programming research is developed to discover the audience's favorite music, formats and on-air personalities (1993:267).

Broadcast managers must keep abreast of audience demographics, psychographics, and media usage habits in order to sell the stations time to advertisers (Beville, 1998). Broadcast managers determine the price that will be paid for programs and the pay that performers/journalists will receive if the broadcasters need to maximize the value of shares (Lacy and et al, 1993).

Beville (1998) also stated knowing about the audience are crucial to the activities of broadcasting management, sales representatives, program producers, advertisers and their agencies,

performers and journalists. According to Beville (1988), programs are the heart of broadcasting, while sales provide the muscle. It implies that the primary objective should be to redefine their programme obligations as the researcher stated above and service commitment to meet audience expectations. Another reason doing audience research is to use results as programme content.

On the other hand, media managers expect that competition for broadcast audiences will intensify. Media managers who have a broad perspective on the relative strengths and weaknesses of all of the competing media in a market can explain intelligently why his/her media vehicle is the appropriate buy (Lacy and et al, 1993). Thus, advertisers are interested in information regarding audience size and composition. Advertisers might use the vehicles that reach the largest appropriate audience segment at the lowest unit cost. Media managers must understand the advantages and disadvantages of their own, as well as other, media vehicles in order to select the programme listeners' preference, and thus remain attractive to advertisers (*ibid.*).

Audience research may become even more important in the future because of the continued segmentation of broadcast audience.

Media managers also must be able to understand and interpret findings in order to use the results effectively. Results may be used to determine from whether the local newscasters should be replaced to more other pertinent managerial issues. Research can normally provide information about the kinds of people who form the audience for different programmes at various times in the day. It can show whether new programmes have increased or decreased audience size, whether new services have achieved their audience target objectives or whether there are any significant long term trends (Mytton:21).

Even though scholars mentioned the above basic purposes of audience research; there are some other scholars who have an argument which is in line with the researcher's assumptions that the researcher expected to seek in the study. For instance, Napoli says "it is difficult how much of the new demand for data stems from a rational need for exact information to improve organizational performance and how much comes from the symbolic values of numbers in the competition for influence within the organization" (2008: 33). He also describes reliance on

more audience research data is to understanding less about the formulation of decisions and more about the justification of decisions. Bogart (1969) also argues that more complex aspects of audiences' interaction with content have been neglected due largely to the fact that they are "difficult, expensive and time-consuming to distangle from other forces" (Napoli, 2008:33). In these regard, the study might have been sought further explanation for the gap by looking for the case of radio Fana's application of results for the improvement of radio programmes.

### **2.1.3 Models / Theories of Audience**

Scholars of communication have advised that before taking about audience profile, it should be important to aware the elements of communication, i.e., communicator (source), message (content), channel (medium), and receiver (audience) effects and feedback, and the meaning of audience. In the study, the researcher's primary focus is receiver (audience) feedback/information of communication. Consecutively, audience researcher should understand the meaning and the nature of audience before conducting the research on audience. The researcher tries to revisit the previous attempt to conceptualize what audience means and forms of audience to understand the audience experience in contemporary society and the interaction between media institution with its audience. These also help to recognize to which kind of models important to understand the nature of Ethiopian media audience, and what kind of audience research could better address to them.

According to McQuail (2003), in the continual flux of media audience formation and change, the sharp distinction of the form and type of audience made at the outset is not easy to demonstrate. The researcher, however, points out Webster's models of audience to clarify the definitions and the concept in a better way, even to understand the nature of Ethiopian media audience. These are audience – as- mass, audience – as – outcome, audience – as- agents and mixed models (Webster, 1998:192).

According to Webster, seeing audience – as – mass, and this way of thinking has rooted in the industrial revolution, and it became necessary because modern audiences were dispersed and essentially invisible (*ibid.*). As McQuail noted Herbert Blumer (1939) first provided the

theoretical formulation of media audience, and he explained audience – as - mass formation stemmed from a wider consideration of changing nature of social life in modern society (2003:362).

In this model, the audience is seen as a large collection of people scattered across time and space who act autonomously and have little common exposure to media (Webster, 1998). It also implies that its composition was always shifting, and it lacked sense of self-identity, because of its dispersion and heterogeneity (McQuail, 2003). The central questions of the model are what media do people and how individuals make sense of the material they encounter. Therefore, such audience cannot easily ‘talk back’ to the producers and senders of mass – media messages. McQuail stated the communicative relationship involved is typically calculative and non-moral, with no real commitment or attachment on either side (*ibid.*). Thus, the researcher understands for the broadcasters which conceive audience as mass would a paramount importance to minimize such drawback when they conduct audience research and to address these dispersed and scattered audience.

Here, it is also important to note the argument of scholars who sees audience – as- a group. The researcher will bring McQuail’s explanation in particular to understand the idea more clearly. He explained it by social/ cultural characteristics of the audience share, i.e., they share space and membership of residential community and stability of composition that indicate group - like qualities (*ibid.*). McQuail also cited Ennis’s (1961) explanation which is the qualities of audience – as – a group or the conditions to perceive audience – as - a group are having a boundaries, self-awareness, internal interaction and system of normative control among them (*ibid.*). The researcher also believes the nature of radio audience, that the study focuses, is not considered as group rather looking them as mass. These ways of understanding will probably helpful to see the listener as group in the case of a community radio station.

Webster stated seeing audience- as- outcome has originated between 1940s and 1960s and the way of thinking about audience-as-outcomes sees people as being acted upon by media. It reflects a concern about the power of media to produce detrimental effects on individuals, and by

implication on society as a whole (Webster, 1998:193). Webster further categories scholars who studied the audience- as - outcome model into two; such as, theorists who see audience – as-public and audience – as- consumer models (*ibid.*). The central question of this model is what media do to people.

The third model of Webster is audience – as- agent, and it has rooted since 1970s. The model sees people are conceived as free agents choosing what media they will consume, bringing their own interpretive skills to the text they encounter, making their own meanings, and generally using media to suit themselves rather than seeing people as acted upon the media (*ibid.* 194). The central question for this model is what people do with the media.

The fourth model of Webster is mixed models. According to Webster, the combination of audience conception is rich with both applied and theoretical construction audience (*ibid.* 195). The researcher also adopts this theoretical conception to understand the study and having these conceptions make the theoretical framework more understandable.

In general, as McQuail stated, audience can originate both in society and in media and their contents: either people stimulate an appropriate supply of content, or the media attract people to the content they offer (McQuail, 2003:369). One should also understand that media are constitutive of everyday life, and people spend a lot of time in media consumption. Being a member of audience is no longer an exceptional event (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 2003), and it is the essential feature of audience in the contemporary society in whatever model the nature of their audience falls among.

#### **2.1.4 Audience Profile and Audience Research**

Broadcasters, as they are media planners, need complete and latest information about the audience profile to guide in designing and producing programmes and also in attaining the objectives of programmes or general objectives of the stations. They also need to know them in order to attract their sponsors and advertisers and to convince the policy makers by stating them to what roles they are performing in the society. As scholars (Suchon, 1993; Giovannoni, 1988)

spelled out, broadcasters need to know and understand adequately: what does the audience know about the messages they design, in what measures and in what format would be address suitability for effective projection of a theme for different segments of audience, what type of people and how many of them are likely to listen the programme, and whether the programme was effective or not.

Audience research, therefore, aims at seeking reliable answers to these kinds of questions for producing effective programmes. When the researcher talks about audience profile; it includes audience composition, geodemographics, media availability, audience needs/ psychographics, audience lifestyle, audience – media credibility and utiligraphics. Here, the researcher discusses all these concepts so that audience profile will be more understandable.

Audience composition means detailed information about demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Understanding the composition of audience helps in planning for variety and formats of the programmes. In media audience studies, “it was apparent that media use was closely correlated with other social – demographic characteristics especially age, income, gender, education, occupation (and the combination of these)” (McQuail, 1997: 54). As a result, many media tend to show strong and stable patterns in the societal profile of their audience, and specific tastes and preferences are influenced by age, gender, education and other factors (*ibid*).

Media availability means the coverage area of a station or the ‘reach’ / extent of availability of different mass media in the defined coverage area. According to McQuail, media providers need to know a great deal about the extent of media reach which is at the time a measure of audience attention, for the reasons of finance or policy or for organization and planning (McQuail, 2003:377). It helps to know the reception quality or clarity of signals.

The listening habits of the people are influenced by a number of audience needs, such as; educational, informational, emotional, commercial, cultural, etc. or measures of what listeners think; interests, opinions, values, attitudes, beliefs, lifestyles, personality traits, etc. ; based on psychological, as distinguished from demographic, dimensions. These, in turn, help the

broadcasters to understand the relevance and the topicality of the subject. Schudson also stated one might imagine it would greatly improve journalism if journalists knew what audience wanted (2003:172).

In a multi-media situation, when people have varied media choices, audience lifestyle is essential for any media planner to have detailed information about programme timings and people's conveniences. It helps in planning and type of programme.

The researcher understands audience – media credibility in to two major questions that any broadcasters shall respond in regarding their media credibility, i.e., who controls the media and how much freedom do the programme producers enjoy in planning and presenting programmes. As they influence the audience perceptions/ attitudes and shape listening behaviors, audience researchers should investigate the autonomous and freedom of the performers when they conduct audience research. From these, the researcher understands that audience researcher should not only seek the audiences' attitudes or behaviors but also the objectives or the intentions of the producers or broadcasters in general.

Utiligraphics measure how listeners listen to radio; are they listening in associated with other individual activities or other exclusive ways which based upon the above elements of audience profile in a given society. McQuail explained there is always the question of listening or viewing as primary or secondary activity of audience, since both can and do accompany other activities, radio more so than television (McQuail, 2003).

In general, audience research could become audiencehood when it includes all these elements, and broadcasters should consider them so as to improve their programme and to strengthen their roles in the society.

### **2.1.5 Programme Evaluation and Audience Research**

The main activity for any broadcasters is a regular evaluation of what they are doing or programmes in general. Programmes have to be justified. MacLeish spell out that conscientious producers striving for better and more effective communication will want to know how to improve their work and achieve greater results (2005: 300). In doing these, broadcasters can evaluate programmes from different viewpoints, as MacLeish mentioned there are three, such as; production and quality evaluation, audience evaluation and cost evaluation (ibid.). The researcher can understand the first two viewpoints rely on audience, and in turn producers better take place it through audience research. The evaluator, for example, may ask what is the target audience, what is the programme intending to do for that audience, and how well does it set about doing it; all these questions are attempted to evaluate the production. Therefore, programme evaluation has a direct relationship with audience research even though each of them can't replace each other.

### **2.1.6 Goals of Audience Research**

As the study focuses and the purposes of audience research that the scholars suggested above, and leaving aside the purpose of theory – building, the researcher adopts the McQuail's research goals in terms of the main uses to which information about the audience can be put in (2003:365).

- Accounting for sale
- Measuring actual and potential reach for the purpose
- Manipulating and channeling audience choice behavior
- Working for audience market opportunities
- Product – testing and improving communication effectiveness
- Meeting responsibilities to serve an audience
- Evaluating media performance

List (2002) also suggests the most common goals are:

- To help in making a decision.

- To understand the audience (the type of people who tune in, their interest, how do they spend their time, etc).
- To demonstrate facts to outsiders (for example, to convince manufacturers and retailers to advertise on the station by showing the size, demographics, and interests of their audience).
- To provide material for programme development.

From these scholars' views, the researcher understands that searching audience can have several goals, and seeking their objectives/ goals of the broadcasters will further help to understand whether they are effective or not.

### **2.1.7 Methods of Audience Research**

Broadcasters in the early days of radio in Europe and United States know remarkably little about their listeners. There was no systematic audience research. What they thought they knew was based on very unreliable and misleading methods (Mytton, 1992). Very often it was the personal likes and dislikes of prospective commercial sponsor which determined what went on air or an advertiser might sponsor because of its own tastes and preferences, or it was obtained by counting numbers of letters elicited by programmes (ibid.). Napoli also illustrated the situation further that "...often instinctive judgments of the content producers and distributors regarding audience tastes, preferences, and reactions were the primary mechanisms via which organizational decisions were made" (2008:11). The result of such approaches was frequent information vacuums in terms of the nature of the interaction between content and audience (ibid.). Some analysts (Austin, 1989; Bakker, 20003 as cited from Napoli, 2008:11) have suggested that the fact that the economic conditions for these early mass media were relatively favorable created little demand for more rigorous empirical analyses to guide strategic decision making. Scholars understand that these are not intended to suggest that early media organizations were completely lacking in information about their audiences, or that the relationship between media organizations and their audience has ever been a pure one-way, one-to-many model. Other feedback mechanisms, such as audience correspondence with the content provider, have a long tradition (Lenthall, 2007; Newman, 2004; Razlogova, 1995; Turow, 1978 are some credited by

Napoli, 2008). Consequently, in early days of radio, stations utilized a variety of approaches to providing advertisers with audience estimates. For instance, mapping the station's coverage area against the area's population size and demographic data and gathering data on the number of radios sold in a listening area were some employed methods. But through time audience research increasingly utilized systematic and scientific approaches.

Research into audience has been also troubled by a fundamental conflict of view between practitioners of quantitative, survey or experimental, research and advocates of more qualitative and intensive research (McQuail, 2003). It was originally a purely social science affair dominated by effect – research and uses and gratification studies, and more applied research conducted at broadcasting corporations and marketing companies in collaboration with universities (Hojjer, 2008: 275). Virtually any social science research methods can be applied to the study of mass media audiences. For example, surveys may assess which programmes interest listeners and effects studies using experiments and quasi-experiments measure changes in attitudes or opinions based on the content or format of news or programs in general. Interviews with news listeners (focus groups) determine which elements of news programs or other “work” attracts or interests them and which do not. Audience studies may provide anything from relatively straightforward estimates of the number and demographic characteristics of audience members, to measures of psychological, behavioral, and geo-demographic patterns used to predict economic or political choices (*ibid.*). “But they all have one thing in common: they describe the audience for some type of news media content so the ‘success’ of that content can be evaluated” (Bermejo, 2009).

A solution to the conflict to use approaches for audience research was provided by survey researchers (Wheeler, 1976; Auleta, 1991; Eaman, 1994; Hoy, 1999 cited from Savage, 2006) using techniques of quantitative research. They could design representative samples of radio listeners, ask them about their media consumption habits, and use this information not only to estimate the total potential radio audience, but also to further define the groups who listened to programmes. Although stations could employ researchers to conduct their own audience studies, they faced the same problem as the publishers who provided circulation numbers (Beville, 1998).

Starkey spelled out the existence of a dispute between radio broadcasters as to the validity of their audience figures undermined their credibility (Starkey, 2002: 43). According to him, advertisers were wary of information generated by the seller of advertising time because radio stations had a strong economic motive to inflate the audience numbers (*ibid.*). Savage explained the situation has shown us the result of audience research commonly have more to do with the primary interest of the person or group funding the research than with the “objective” public interest of audience as a whole (Savage, 2006). The answer was to hire third party research organizations that served the entire industry—or at least any player in the industry that paid to subscribe to the research service (*ibid.*). Savage explained the situations as further as follows:

within the institutional order of the state, general reliance on policy rhetoric of public interest is insufficient for policy makers who seek empirical data with which to justify their actions because the bulk of such data is currently produced as industrial audience research measuring a market demand, policy legitimating is skewed toward measures which conceptualize public interest as ‘what the public is interested in; i.e., what people are prepared to consume’ (*ibid.*: 2).

From these perspectives, the researcher understands the practical problem for broadcasters being able to know audience lies in getting agreement over the means of producing data that involve, in essence, measuring the invisible. And policy makers may interpret their audience research as the only way of feedback mechanism to obtain tangible benefits for them in both financial and political issues by proving who is listening to the radio and when. Therefore, in this regard, the researcher understands doing research often times on the efficacy of broadcasters’ audience research in all dimensions will have a paramount importance.

Early radio audience measurement relied on surveys conducted by letter response, telephone, in-person/ street interview, questionnaires, or via paper survey instruments called diaries (McLeish, 2005). As technology developed, researchers used electronic methods, specifically a recording meter inside the receiver, to capture when the radio was in use and what stations were tuned. According to Starkey, that moment called ‘gold standard’ that is the new technology is offering empirical certainties (Starkey, 2002). Set meter could not keep up with the diminishing size and increased portability of radio receptors, and radio audience measurement had to resort to the use

of diaries. However, the technology used in set meter could easily be adapted to the new rising medium, television (McLeish, 2005). As advertisers' interest in more detailed demographics and personal viewing patterns grew, a shift was due from the family or household to the individual as the basic unit of audience measurement (Buzzard, 1990; Gandy, 1990 cited from Bermejo, 2009). While previous set meter collected information at the household level, peplemeters provided viewing data at the individual level by requesting selected members of listeners wear a small personal programme meter that records what stations the wearer has been in the audible presence (McLeish, 2005).

Recently, researchers working in the field have adopted what can be described as an ethnographic approach to social world of actual audiences – usually involving conversational interviews with listeners and observations of their routine reception contexts – to produce rich and detailed accounts of media consumption or audience interaction to the content (Moore, 2000:26). Morley, however, stated that “any form of ‘essentialism’ which reduces individuals to the status of mere members of social category is great danger in audience studies” (Morley, 2006:4). Napoli described that employing audience panel and programme analyzer types of devices to measure not only the size of the audience reactions to individual radio programmes are significance to complement other tools (2008:27).

Besides the mentioned tools, there are efforts and contexts to think about and analyze the audience in the ways that extend beyond basic media exposures. For instance, in order to measure systematically the quality of programmes Canadian Broadcasting Corporation involved the creation of an Enjoyment Index which enables the listeners to rate their level of enjoyment of the programmes they listen to on a five-point scale. BBC also developed an Appreciation Index, which was derived from questions gauging the extent to which audiences enjoyed individual broadcasts.

As to quality audience ratings, McQuail (1997:57) also stated different dimensions that could be considered as follows:

- a) The degree of affinity with, or attachment to, a given medium.

- b) The act of conscious selection of specific contents based on the anticipated satisfaction from audience experience.
- c) The degree of attention paid, or involvement with the media experience.

These all reflect degrees of audience “activity” that are not normally captured by ratings. Therefore, it is common to supplement ratings with some measures of audience satisfaction, liking or appreciation. These ways of measuring is more valid and informative than ratings because they have a predictable function of scheduling decisions (*ibid*).

In case of audience reach, broadcasters would also measure the reach of their broadcasting in two ways (McQuail, 1997:47):

- a) By looking the potential audiences consisting of all who own or have access to a receiving set though multiple-ownership could be exist obviously.
- b) By looking regular audiences of all who use the facility with some regularity. Within this regular audience, there are important distinctions according to degree of use and subjective affinity with medium. Of course, this leads to the question of listening primary and secondary activity.

In general, choosing a certain method is the core activity of any broadcasting audience research, and measuring the audience is the one who puts much effort. When audience research is carried out according to certain principles it is usually possible to make reasonably accurate estimates of the numbers of listeners. These principles of audience research are not complex or difficult to understand because these are the widely used approach in any social or market research. For example, what the researchers can do is select a sample of the population and can ask appropriate questions about radio listening.

### **2.1.8 Resistances to Process Audience Research**

The process of knowing audience understanding has not proceeded smoothly. At various points and media contexts in the process of audience research, resistance has been intense. Studies across a variety of organizational context including news rooms, publishing houses and

advertising agencies have identified a tendency amongst some stakeholders to be towards efforts to further rationalize the process of audience understanding (Napoli, 2008). This study could be a part of this activity, and some more challenges might be sought and identified in the research.

Questions related to the utilization of audience research have designed onto the persistent tension in the way that journalists and editors often have expressed concern that reliance upon audience research in the production of news inevitably undermines established news values, as well as the subjective news judgments of journalists (*ibid.*). A study found by Gans (2005) posited that journalists' resistance to audience research has rooted from four factors:

- a) The liberal arts education background (and associated discomfort with statistics) that typifies most journalists;
- b) Insufficient evidence, from journalists' perspective, that such data are useful;
- c) The doubts that such research may cast on journalists' news judgments and professional autonomy;
- d) The fact that audience research frequently is conducted by non-journalists.

Another study of Australian newsrooms also found that a “defensive culture challenges to readership and audience research” (Green, 2002). As Napoli stated the other challenge is associated with the division between commercial and public media. Accordingly, a number of accounts of the operation of public service media have highlighted the extent to which professionals within such organizations have resisted to the pressures to conduct and rely upon sophisticated audience research.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework is drawn from the McQuail's alternative traditions of audience research, such as; behavioral, structural and cultural theorists. The section deals with the assumption that audience research is related to the objectives of the study.

The behaviorists' current trend of audience research focuses on the reaction of audience – audience needs and lifestyle. Their approach describes the origin, nature and the degree of motives for choice of media and media content. McQuail stated “the primary object of interest for behaviorists is individual human behavior, especially in matters to do with choosing, processing and responding to communication messages” (2003:12). He explained that media use is generally treated as of rational, motivated action that has a certain function or use for the individual and also some objective consequence (*ibid.*). The main type of ‘behavioral audience’ research is in many ways a reaction of the model of direct effect (*ibid.*) because “research based on direct effect debate works on the premise that audiences uncritically absorb media messages and act upon them” (Lacey, 2002:200). Audience is seen as a more or less active and motivated set of media users, who are in charge of their media experience, rather than passive ‘victim’. Uses and gratifications are the main approach of their research. These researches have posited individual needs as the driving force behind people’s consumption of media (Webster, 1998). The idea that media use depends on the perceived satisfactions, needs, wishes or motives of prospective audience member (McQuail, 2003). The behaviorists assumed that active audiences are often formed on the basis of similarities of individual need, interest and taste.

In Ethiopian context, the researcher understands such kind of active audience may live in the urban area of the country, as majority is supposed to be literate and exposed to other alternative foreign media, whereas the rest majority of the listeners may not have the inclination to be active in sense of choosing a shared goal and participating in its pursuit. However, the approach helps the researcher to look whether the broadcasters’ research might give explanation of appeal of certain media contents. The behaviorists’ methods of audience research are survey, experiment and mental measurement (McQuail, 2003). Therefore, broadcasters can confirm needs and audience lifestyle through audience research whether these elements are considered in their decision making process for programme development, in turn, it helps to conclude Radio Fana’s audience research is audiencehood.

The structural tradition is designed to obtain reliable estimates of audience, i.e., the size and reach of radio audiences, as these data are essential to management, especially for gaining paid

advertising. In addition to size, it is important to know social composition of audiences (who and where of audience). According to McQuail, the primary object of attention for structuralist is likely to be media systems and organizations and their relationship to the wider society. Their focus is likely to be on the effect of social structure and media systems on the patterns of content. According to him, media system (structure) refers to relatively constant array of channels, choices and content that is available in a given place and time (*ibid.*). He spelled out that the approach emphasizes the consequences of mass communication for other social institutions. The media system responds to pressures and to feedback from audiences, so as to maintain a stable self-regulating balance between supply and demand, and in turn it does have an advantage of showing the connection between media system and an individual audience member's social position, i.e., it reflects the given facts of the society, for example, economic, cultural and geographic conditions. Their methods of audience research are survey and statistical analysis (*ibid.*). From structuralist's view, the study will confirm whether audience and organizational demand can be maintained equally; as the researcher's assumption is broadcasters might be influenced by sponsors and advertisers which is market thinking, and deemphasize the needs and interests of audience though financial support will sustain the organization development.

The cultural tradition emphasizes media use as a reflection of a particular socio-cultural context, and as a process of giving meaning to cultural products and experiences in everyday life. McQuail also stated that the culturalist is more likely to be media-centric, sensitive to differences between media and settings of media making and reception (*ibid.*). According to Abercombie and Longhurst, culturalists believed that media represent part of an effort to impose a set of values on a society (Abercombie & Longhurst, 2003:10). It also involves a view of media use as in itself a significant aspect of 'everyday life' (Moore, 2000). Reception analysis effectively addresses the audience research aim of modern cultural studies. Their methods of audience research are ethnography and qualitative approaches (McQuail, 2003). Even though implementing these methods in the context of Ethiopia is difficult, the broadcasters' research should be done to confirm whether programmes are effective or not.

The positive parts of these three audience research traditions guide the study to analyze their research as it is really audiencehood and effective in the working tradition of audience research in Radio Fana. The study is not aimed to prove neither of these approaches is right or wrong, but 'they are simply different ways to know audience and neither approaches exists alone in audience research' (Nightingale and Ross, 2003).

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The literature review above discussed the meaning, concept and historical development of audience research. It reviews different scholars' works on the professional institutions of audience research. The theories and forms of audience are discussed. Elements and approaches of audience research are also dealt with. Finally, the theoretical frameworks of the study are discussed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This study focuses on the process and conduct of audience research by broadcasters and its effectiveness and significance for the improvements of medium. It also examines whether audience research is relevance in understanding of broadcaster's role to the society at large.

This chapter deals with the main methodological approach, data gathering techniques and sources that are employed in the study. Furthermore, it shows the research design and data analyses. All these are discussed in tune with the objectives, the literatures and theoretical frameworks discussed in the preceding chapters.

#### ***3.1 Sampling, Data Gathering Techniques and Sources***

##### ***3.1.1 Main methodological approach***

The methodological approach of the study is qualitative one. Qualitative research is a research approach that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. This approach is interpretive and the researcher uses as it is an appropriate for such kind of study. Mason (2004:56) stated that interpretation given by the social actors to the social institutions and their products are helpful to understand their activities more meaningfully. From this point of view, the researcher focuses on the actors of the media and their products to examine the process, quality and effectiveness of audience research.

Many qualitative researchers also express a commitment to viewing events and social world through the eyes of people who are being studied (Bryman, 2004:287). Qualitative approach is also useful when the researcher aims at providing detailed descriptions of the social setting he/she investigates. Analyzing the manifest meanings of the broadcasters' research and its

quality in comparison with the views of the practitioners, who are directly responsible in working the findings and recommendations, are qualitative data that can prove the effectiveness of broadcaster's audience research and in turn the data has implications for the improvement of the medium. Therefore, the researcher takes Radio Fana as the case. The process and conduct of audience research from the perspective of the actors of the medium and the principles of audience research are also interpreted. In addition, the case is also important to examine the contextual understanding and use of audience research in Ethiopian media.

### **3.1.2 Document Analysis**

Document analysis is the main source of data to examine the processes and ways of conducting audience research. Using document analysis helps to identify the nature of Radio Fana's methods based on the initial points which are mentioned earlier. It is common source of data when the study is focused on the re-analysis of materials previously generated by other researchers. Within five years (2005 - 2009), six audience researches have been conducted for Radio Fana. Five audience researches are purposively selected that have been conducted only by broadcasters themselves. Choosing the data within this time interval are to make the source of data more recent and to seek improvements of the medium with respect to the application of audience research results and recommendations. Besides, the researcher cannot manage if all products before this time frame are involved. Among these, four of them are targeted at the listeners of national radio programmes, and one is targeted at FM radio listeners. Among those that focus on national radio listeners, two of them are emphasized on the general listeners of national radio programmes which broadcast in all languages, and the other three are classified and addressed listeners of each language programmes (Amharic, Afan Oromo and Afar). However, the one which is focused on the national radio listeners that is done in collaboration with a consultant is excluded as it is not the focus of the study objective.

### **3.1.3 Interview**

Individual in-depth interviews are also conducted with three senior reporters, five producers, three audience researchers and three media managers to substantiate the analysis to draw data from the documents as well as they are the key actors of the medium who are able to give their

witness whether audience research implemented effectively or not. Bryman also supports the idea as qualitative researchers sense the culture of the organizations in terms of process, and “it can be achieved through semi-structured and unstructured interviewing, by asking actors to reflect on the process” (*ibid*: 291). Hence, the researcher makes interviews with them by selecting purposively based on the assumption that their experience and position have relevance to the objectives of the study, as audience research can also have a direct and indirect influence in their work. Number of interviewees is determined by the saturation of data.

### ***3.2 Data Presentation and Interpretation***

Thematic analysis is the most prevalent approach to interpreting documents and interviews. It comprises a searching – out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed (Bryman, 2004). According to scholars’ (Bryman, 2004; Mason, 2004) explanation, thematic analysis is based upon the data that are drawn from the documents shall be categorized based on the themes. This type of data analysis is highly inductive, that is, the themes emerge from the data that are not imposed upon it by the researcher and the approach (*ibid.*). The procedure also allows the researcher to present the research results in comparison with other studies in the sense of triangulation and to check out reliability and validity of the study (Mayring, 2000:3).

The individual in-depth interviews are also recorded and notes are taken during the discussions to further strengthen the recorded materials. The data are then transcribed to capture the main idea into words of the interviewees. And then, the data are also classified into concepts and themes based on the aim and the objectives of the study. The researcher, therefore, presents results based on the most widely used framework of the qualitative data analysis called thematic analysis.

### ***3.3 Criteria to Measure Audience Research Quality, Effectiveness and Appropriateness***

From the documents and the interviews, the primary data for the study that need measurement on the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of processing audience research and its methods. The research effectiveness and quality are measured based on the Reussner’s and Nielsen’s

research quality and effectiveness criteria that the researcher adopts with some modification (Reussner, 2004; Nielsen, 2004). These are explained respectively as follows:

The research quality is examined based on the level of qualification and experience of the researchers, the acceptance and support of audience research by journalists, the involvement of staff during the development and conduct of audience research, communication and dissemination of audience research findings, development of the high-quality research environment, the pro-action and responsibility to implement findings by journalists, and integration of audience research into the system.

*Effectiveness and its criteria:* defining effectiveness is challenging which is considered to be related with goal attainment. Some scholars (Gilbert & Parhizgari, 2000; Herman & Renz, 1999; Ames, 1990 as cited by Reussner, 2004) suggested that a comparative model has to be used in a manner that either to assess outcomes of the pre-specified organization's objectives, or to measure outcomes within norms and standard of the organization, or to measure outcomes with other organizations. However, it is important to make some modification on the Reussner's effectiveness criteria because they are many details that the researcher cannot take as they are, and his goal is to draw best practice of audience research in Museums; hence, the researcher adopts some of them to examine audience research in radio Fana. The researcher uses the following modified criteria to measure audience research effectiveness;

- the contribution of the research to informed decision making;
- the contribution of the research in understanding audience satisfaction;
- the contribution of the research to format development;
- the contribution of the research to organizational planning;
- the contribution of the research to measuring and reporting organizational performance;
- the contribution of the research to bid for financial support by advertising agencies and /or sponsors; and
- the contribution of the research to sustain organization development.

In general, these are also some expected outcomes that can influence the improvements of broadcasters' advertising revenue more effective, or to determine how to provide better programmes and services based on citizen needs and desires.

Likewise, the researcher examines the appropriateness of audience research methods with respect to their purposes and goals, the resource available for audience research and the formal responsibility for audience research within the organization. The criteria of appropriateness have been adopted from Ryan (2009:4) with some modification as many other details which are less relevant for this study also are dealt by him. To refer to:

- The level of precision of data collection tools to produce information/data for analysis.
- The level of identification the full range of the interest of all parties (the reporters, listeners, producers, etc) by the tools.
- The chance of producing data with discernible patterns for each programme by the tools.
- Acceptability of evidence to ensure broadcasters the results are supported by the data.

The above measurements are also equally helpful for the research to develop interview questions. The challenges against processing audience research and whether the findings used for the improvement of the programmes and formats in radio Fana are also discussed thematically, as the informants reveal in interviewing.

## Chapter Four

### 4. Data Presentation and Interpretation

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the data that are gathered through document analysis and in-depth interview are presented and analyzed. The data pertaining to the contexts and the intentions of audience research, the qualities of audience research and the appropriateness of the tools/ methods which are employed by Radio Fana are scrutinized. It also deals with the values of audience information and feedback of Radio Fana by looking the extent of the application of the broadcasters' audience research results. This, in turn, can be the evidences whether Radio Fana is effective in practicing audience research or not. Furthermore, the researcher analyses whether Radio Fana's audience researches have brought audiencehood data that improve the medium's performance, and the challenges against processing audience research by the Radio Fana.

#### *4.1 The Nature of Radio Fana's Audience Research*

The characteristic of Radio Fana audience research is mixed type in its nature. They have been used both survey and qualitative research tools. An anonymous informant claimed that Radio Fana knows audience by using questionnaires, phone calls, focus group discussions, letters and the station website and e-mails (Anonymous, February 18, 2011). In regarding to the methods of audience research, Mytton (1999) also stated that good audience researchers of broadcasters are always ready to the cultural and societal realities in the society they study, all possible ways, and they are always ready to adapt research methods accordingly. Formally, however, Radio Fana has used mainly questionnaires and focus group discussion when they study listeners' opinion and feedback of its programmes. Survey is the most commonly used audience research approach in which a group of listeners/ respondents/ are selected and asked the same questions (List, 2002). "This approach is the only appropriate and suitable method to address the heterogeneous, dispersed and scattered listeners of Radio Fana from all coverage areas of the station" (Anonymous, February 18, 2011).

Research documents indicate that questions are designed in closed-ended forms in the main, and the units of analysis are organized in accordance with the demographic characteristics of audiences; such as, gender, age, level of education, nature of listeners' job, etc. These questions address issues related to audiences' share of Radio Fana in relation to other stations, audience preferences of programmes, presentations, formats and contents, as well as the journalists' performance and evaluations. There are also some limited open-ended questions that are asked suggestion for programme reform. The respondents of the questionnaires are people who live in towns. Few numbers of focus group discussions are held with permanent-audiences, public relation officers, and different professionals (like medical doctors who have opinions in relation to health programme presentation and contents, and druggists who also offer opinions in relation to the presentation and the accuracy of 'Medihanit Atekakem' (Usage of medicine) programme, etc.).

Moreover, one of the researches includes evaluation of programmes which can be managed by journalists. The researcher stated that such kinds of practices particularly discussions that are held with professionals are noteworthy if they are developed considerably and engaged other more qualified professionals to other Radio Fana programmes. With regard to the permanent listeners, there is no any criterion that has been stated in the research documents regarding how the discussants are made and why they said to be permanent listeners. However, informants stated that Radio Fana has many stable listeners who often listen and participate in live talk programmes. Even, it has planned to organize these permanent listeners into listeners' club as the station believes that they are useful to give feedbacks (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). However, another informant argued that most journalists do not have good attitude for the so called permanent listeners because of many journalists perceive these listeners are not genuine and loyal. Anybody can listen their names if they tune in any other media of the country, and obtaining their feedback is not good since their participation are related to a personal means of pleasing by calling to the stations and listening their names through mass media (Anonymous, February 27, 2011). The above analysis appears to indicate Radio Fana's audience research

seems to predispose the motives of behaviorists and structuralists traditions of audience research as they both emphasize audience preference.

## **4.2 Methods Used**

As stated above, questionnaire is the major tool that Radio Fana audience researchers have used. The questionnaires are described in terms of their organization which in turn makes the tool more precise. The questionnaires describe to whom these questions are targeted, what kinds of data are requested, and the form and types of the questions are some points which makes the tool clearer. The nature of the questionnaires' organization is based on closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions often require the likes and dislikes of programmes. Some of them request information about the listeners. A few open-ended questions are also designed that require general suggestion to improve programmes. An informant also stated that focus group discussion with listeners, letters of listeners, immediate feedback of listeners, briefings which come from different desks (what the journalists' evaluation of their programmes and news in every day morning sessions), and direct phone-calls of the listeners are other considerable tools that we use while processing our formal audience research (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

The researcher observed that they use the data which are brought from journalists' evaluation, (i.e. programme evaluation/ journalists' briefings which have often made by producers and reporters after airing their programmes) only in one of their researches (Radio Fana Afan Oromo listeners' research, 2008). This way of data gathering can help to maintain the journalists' interest besides the audiences' need and interest especially when the media managers take action on programmes improvement. Another informant also supports this idea by saying, "Radio Fana use journalists' briefings, immediate feedbacks obtained through phone-call and focus group discussion with audience to supplement the numeric data obtained through questionnaires" (Anonymous, February 8, 2011).

There are some research findings which are supplemented with focus group discussions. It is stated that use of focus group discussions is to substantiate the data obtained through questionnaires. In all researches, time and place of the researches are mentioned. The tools have been used are precise and appropriate, and the questionnaires are pertinent to address large

audience notwithstanding the fact that methods are used for marginalizes an illiterate audience of the medium. The needs and interests of rural audiences are also in danger of being forgotten.

One of the focuses of the study is also examining whether these tools help them to address the full range data/ themes and to produce data discernible for each programme. In this regard, the researcher looks the tools are weak to come up with constructive results from all stakeholders of Radio Fana and to improve programme for the following two reasons:

- a) Most questions are closed-ended questions that are designed only on the basis of Likert Scales. For example, the questions state that:

What is your opinion for 'Arbito Ader'(pastoralist) programme?

- a) Very good
- b) Not good
- c) Good
- d) I have no idea

What is your opinion for 'Melkam Astedader' (good governance) programme?

- a) Very good
- b) Not good
- c) Good
- d) I have no idea

What is your opinion for 'Hizibu Min Yilal' (what the people say) programme?

- a) Very good
- b) Not good
- c) Good
- d) I have no idea

One of the advantages of having such kinds of questions is to ease the burden of respondents. Mytton also stated that "opinion statements can be a good way of helping respondents to feel more relaxed" (1999:64). It is also the most commonly used scales in mass media research. This is due to the fact that it helps the researchers in maintaining the reliability of their study. However, such tools do not allow the respondents to give opinion for each programme openly, and cannot enable the broadcasters to come up with constructive feedback that can improve programmes in respect to styles of presentation, contents, formats, and other aspects. In line with this argument, Mytton (1999:109) stated that survey cannot be suitable for obtaining detailed audience reaction and opinion. He also argued that why someone asks the respondent that an alternative and equally valid way of statements in which of opinion is closest to the researchers' opinion (*ibid*: 52).

b) Radio Fana has more than 70 programmes that have been transmitted in four languages. However, they hardly designed open-ended questions on specific programmes that can bring improvements to the entire programmes at a time. Rather, as one of the researcher's informant stated, "The study bases samples from the broadcasters' assumption of top, middle and weak programmes" (Anonymous, February 10, 2011). Questions that require recommendation from the listeners are too limited, and the responses are very general that cannot influence the broadcasters' decision as such.

Moreover, in terms of the language those questionnaires are prepared. An informant stated, "Previously they were prepared only with an official language in Amharic, and in some area of the study listeners were reluctant due to language problem, but in recent studies of Radio Fana, we have prepared in all broadcasting languages; such as, Amharic, Afan Oromo, Somali and Afar which enable Radio Fana more data on feedback and audience information" (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). Empirically, in most countries of the world, on the survey of audience with national coverage like Radio Fana, normally researchers need to prepare the questionnaires in more than one language (Mytton, 1999). For example, in India, a common practice is to prepare them in three languages, English, Hindi and the main other languages of the area being surveyed (*ibid.*).

### **4.3 The Researchers' Quality**

All the researchers have earned Bachelor's Degree and above. This equips them to capable of doing research notwithstanding the fact that their degrees is not in journalism. An informant stated, "Knowledge at the subject matter and statistics are problems of audience researchers as the result of which Radio Fana is forced to spend extra expense to recruit data interpreters" (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

In terms of experience, one of the researchers among them has more than 10 years of experiences in handling audience research at Radio Fana, and he has been working in leadership position for more than 15 years (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). All audience researchers are employees of

Radio Fana. Such kind of experience and level of education can enhance the quality of the broadcasters' audience research.

#### ***4.4 Contexts and Intentions of Audience Research in Radio Fana***

This section deals with the contexts and the intentions of conducting audience research by Radio Fana. "The broadcasting had begun its work in 1994 with limited number of journalists, its coverage was limited to Addis Ababa and around it with medium wave, and its short wave broadcasting also had many problems of signals or reception quality even if it targeted the national coverage throughout the country with 38 hours per week with very limited number of programmes and formats" (anonymous, February 7, 2011). Many of informants also acknowledged that these situations challenge the existence of Radio Fana. These challenges along with limited sources of revenue force Radio Fana to have in-house research team. Moreover, Radio Fana have organized primarily in-house audience research team to make sure of whether there is a need of a new broadcasting service in the country (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). Accordingly, for the first time a study had been conducted focused on Ethiopian Radio, Deutsche Welle Radio, Voice of America, and other Educational Media of the country like 'Legedade' before Radio Fana has taken this form in 1993 for the following inclusive reasons (Anonymous, February 28, 2011):

- To understand whether having worth situations that a new alternative medium in the country are needed;
- To recognize the information gap in which it is existed within the society;
- To have an understanding of the need and constraints of the people from the media that are targeted the country;
- To see the nature of news that are transmitted through these media; and
- To identify the medium that is better listened in the country.

“Having the above results of the study, Radio Fana has understood what issues can be the focus of Radio Fana, what needs and interests of the public need media attention, what values are added due to the establishment of medium” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). An informant also added that Radio Fana has recognized the content difference and information which is needed to bring societal development. The importance of audience research to Radio Fana is also tested when it commenced its broadcasting. For example, the society do not need to hear about the news which is done by interviewing only government officials for the reason that this kind of news is perceived to be protocol news (propaganda of political stances of the ruling party) that do not raise the needs, the problems, and the questions of the people. Raising the needs, interest and the problems of the society are, however, the basis of its editorial policy. Accordingly, it has shifted from political campaigning broadcast to commercial forms of media that promotes development of the country (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). From these points onwards, Radio Fana is able to present news and programmes in a manner that confirm with down – to – top rather than top – to – bottom approach. Consequently, Fana has obtained many ears with short period of time (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). “Radio Fana has learnt these and other issues, and in turn, Fana has recognized that persistence and continues audience research can make the station strong, and then audience research has become the culture of the medium” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

Research documents also narrate the existence of the medium in the market has presently driven by searching audiences’ needs and interests. This is due to the intense competition as the listeners are exposed for international media, especially satellite broadcasting, internet and new mass media particularly FM radio that is flourishing in the country. Therefore, knowing audience information is needed by the sponsors and advertisers also force to carry out audience research. Besides that the necessity of considering the need and interests of audience to the broadcasters is becoming complex and dynamic so that to improve the entire service commitments and programmes in both contents and formats (Radio Fana listeners of Amharic programmes research, 2008). On their own expression, they stated that:

**“የጣቢያውን ተወዳዳሪነቱን ፤ የአድማጮቹን ፍላጎት በማጥናት ና በመገንዘብ አድማጭ ተኮር ፕሮግራም በማቅረብ ብቃቱን አጠናክሮ ለማቆየት የሚያስችል ነው። በገብያ**

**ለመቆየት ደግሞ ገቢን በማግኘት ራስን መቻል ያስፈልጋል። እናም በዚህ ጥናት የተገኙ መረጃዎች ለማስታወቂያ አስነጋሪዎች ና ለትብብር ፕሮግራም ፈላጊዎች ይውላል።”**  
(Radio Fana national service listeners’ research, 2005:4)

*“The study has helped to maintain the stations’ competition, the audiences’ needs and then these would be recognized to produce audience focus programmes. It is also essential to obtain its own revenue to exist in the market. Thus, the data those found through the study would serve for advertisers and programme partners.”*

Thus, these three conditions namely media competition, sponsors’ and advertisers’ interest and the dynamic nature of audience behaviors are the existing major contexts that demand Radio Fana to conduct audience research in recent times. These, in turn, determine the station’s existence that the researcher mentioned above. In terms of intentions, Radio Fana concerns too much about its economic sustainability even though they do not totally ignore the issue of programming. However, “simple economic sustainability does not automatically guarantee good journalism practice” (CIMA, 2007:4). This is because in some market places there is many other causes that sustainability impossible for commercial media. Hence, media are not able to attract advertising revenue unless the news and programme content are relevant to the audience (*ibid*).

By the same token, an informant also argued that oppose to developed countries’ media working trend, “advertisers and sponsors in our country cannot have any requirements to broadcast their media message in any media, simply in this country, broadcasters can attract advertisers and sponsors if they obtain license and start broadcasting, and this is enough for broadcasters to work with them” (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). An informant added that setting legal basis to advertisers can serve as a ground when they deal with broadcasters and due to this reason Radio Fana audience research must have much focus on programming and other similar services rather than audience research for the marketing-demand.

Obtaining information for decision making in order to resolve some identified problems in the medium is the other emphasis of Radio Fana that audience research provides better information from increasingly potential audience size in the country (Radio Fana national service listeners’ research, 2005). It says on their own expression “...**ለአንድ ዓይነት ችግር መፍትሄ ጠቋሚ ውሳኔ**

*የሚያስገኝ የአገልግሎት ማሻሻያ ጥናት ነው።*” *“The study is an indicator for decision making to a certain problem”*. This is also in line with Wimmer & Dominick (2006) proposes that on the intention of the broadcasters’ researches to apply the results in decision making process.

Radio Fana audience researches come into view to give too much emphasis on its audiences’ share in relation to other competent stations in the country like Ethiopian Radio, FM Addis, Sheger FM, Zami FM, etc. “This can be considered as an indicator that Radio Fana intends to increase the quality of the station to become best competitor in the market. However, broadcasting industry in the country is the untouched business area of the country, there is no much fear of audience segmentation in the country, and still there is a scarcity of the broadcasting stations though Radio Fana has gone through such a wonderful intention” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

The other intention of conducting audience research is to evaluate the quality of programmes by identifying the strengths and the weaknesses of the programme contents. On their own expressions, they stated *“አየር ላይ ያሉ ፕሮግራሞች ተደራሽነታቸውን ፣ ጥራታቸውን፣ ጥንካሬያቸውንና እጥረታቸውን ለማወቅ ነው።”*” *“It is to understand the reach of the programmes, their qualities, their strengths and their constraints that are aired presently.”* They also tend to tie this purpose in framing contents and in understanding the role and support of the station’s programme for the development of democracy and peace in Ethiopia (Fana FM listeners’ research, 2008). Identifying issues that need Radio Fana attention is also emphasized as it is important to sustain the existence and the quality of programmes (Radio Fana FM listeners’ research, 2008). Identifying the needs, the interests and complains of audience and obtaining audience suggestion for the programmes are the other specific objectives of the broadcasters mentioned in the research documents.

The researcher observes the documents of audience research that helps to investigate the nature of its audience. It also helps to obtain the audience opinions on the success and acceptance of the syndicated-programmes which are aired in collaboration with other partnership institution. It enables to identify where Radio Fana has reached by ranking the order of programmes with respect to the needs and the acceptance of audience and the stated-objectives, and to obtain any

possible suggestion for the improvement of the station activities (Radio Fana national services of the listeners' Research, 2005).

To sum up, the researcher understands Radio Fana's purposes have identical to any other media intentions to practice audience research in any corner of the world. However, the inquiry goes to with what extent the broadcasters have become effective in achieving what they intend to do. Though those intentions has been mentioned in the research documents and by the respondents by such ranges, the respondents particularly the researchers of broadcasters argued that all these intentions are intended to use research results for internal consumption. The results are useful for only the improvements of news, programmes, journalists' practice, and other services and management issues of Fana not for the benefits of external consumption. For instance, they are not to convince advertisers, sponsors and any policy makers. "Of course, there is no any trend of the policy makers in the country who has asked Radio Fana audience research or audience size when they draw any policy concerning media communication of the country like other developed countries "(Anonymous, February 28, 2011). In Canada, for example, "...audience research reports are produced, in part, to provide positive outcomes with regulatory decision making bodies..., and audience conception within the policy making are increasingly tied to be market-based demand..." (Savage, 2006:2).

On the contrary, at least from their emphasis of intentions, there is a sign of use of audience information for other purposes; take an example their researches have often shown a positive figures on audiences' share by comparing the medium with other institutions; such as Ethiopia Radio, Sheger FM, FM Addis, Zami FM, etc., Therefore, from the above data, it is easy to understand that they can employ audience research as tool for external consumption, too. A respondent also argues, "there are few research which have not shown Radio Fana's weaknesses, even the research which have been conducted by a consultant, though it is difficult to speculate where the problem lies, it is not per se useful for the improvements of the medium as we imagine" (Anonymous, February 10, 2011).

#### ***4.5 The Values of Audience Information and Feedback***

The researcher has given the contexts and intentions of audience research. Having done this, a discussion of the values of audience information and feedback of Radio Fana is undertaken so as to obtain a clear picture of the integration, the link and even the extent of application of these information which are obtained by the broadcasters' research.

Many of the researcher's informants agree upon the idea that Radio Fana is sensitive to audience. This arises out of recognition of the values of audience information and feedback for the improvements of the medium in different respects. They stipulated that Radio Fana's the managerial decision making has been taken based on the recommendation and outcomes of the audience researches which have studied in different time. "There is no audience information and feedback that have taken away while any managerial decision has taken place in any expense of others' reasons, even journalists' need and interest. This is because Radio Fana also assures that audience feedbacks are indicators of the public interest information which have been also given priority in journalism practice" (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). In terms of this view of the informant, Lacy & et al (1993) also argues that audience data are the reflection of public interest and broadcasters had better use this to aid programming decision making. Valencia and Caycedo (2009), however, argued that such argument is a self-serving argumentation, which audience research is celebrated as guardians of the public interest, a definite evidence of the media industry willingness to give the audience what it wants. Radio Fana has used audience research to shape the contents of the programmes, develop many formats for various programmes, and structure styles of presentation for different programmes (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). Two of research documents have shown that the aim of doing so is to check whether the reorganization and improvement of the programmes that have been taken on the basis of previous studies creates audience satisfaction before designing the next strategic plan (Radio Fana Amharic and Afan Oromo listeners' research, 2008). These can also be taken as indicators that Radio Fana has decided based on the views of its audience and audience information, and used results for organizational planning that has been obtained in earlier studies. The following discussions have also shown there is no disparity in this regard.

An informant among chief-in-editors stated that audience information has primarily given a paramount importance for internal improvement of the medium's performance. This requires properly compiling audience information in the research particularly in Ethiopia whose media practice is existed at poor performances (Anonymous, February 11, 2011). "Public issues are the basis of Radio Fana's plan. The interests and needs of the public are acquired through audience research and audience feedback in turn is an indication of journalists' achievements of their goal" (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

In Radio Fana, audience opinion is used to evaluate the quality of programmes (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). Another informant among chief-in-editors claimed that audience information and feedback to Radio Fana are needed to maintain the quality of programmes, to improve and revisit the programmes to maintain the interest of listeners and to check the satisfaction of listeners. In line with this, Radio Fana has worked many arrangements especially on the contents of programming (Anonymous, February 16, 2011). "Radio Fana use audience information that are gained through research not only as a kind of feedback but also as instruments to frame contents which reflects the culture of the society thereby uncovering the unobserved issues of the society by means of knowing who the listeners are, and where they are located" (Anonymous, February 10, 2011).

"Audience segmentation for specific Fana programmes has been done on the basis of audience information which is brought through research. This is, in turn, used for the adjustment and organization of contents. For instance, Fana use audience information recently to categorize issues and develop formats on gender, sport, health, agriculture, etc." (Anonymous, February 11, 2011). Lacey (2002) also found that audience segmentation has direct relation with framing contents and programme scheduling, and the advantage of doing audience research for media institution's manager is to have stable schedule so that listeners can not miss any of the programmes as they are guided by these schedules.

An informant who is an audience researcher stated that seeking audience information has added value by ensuring broadcasters when they are doing scheduling, content and presentation of programmes and planning other activities of the medium (Anonymous, February 8, 2011). "Many programmes of Radio Fana had at the beginning of the broadcasting have been merged,

cancelled, revised, or changed totally in recent action plan based upon the previously obtained information of audiences” (Anonymous, February 7, 2011).

One of the informants among the chief-in-editors mentioned that from the view of knowing whether the broadcasters are being listened by the audience, from the interest of knowing the stations’ presentation of programmes are listeners’ focused contents and styles, from the view of knowing market interest issues, and from view of checking the attention given by the listeners, audience information and feedback are gained by research have more values. For instance, recently Radio Fana has changed the formats of the presentation into two programmes on basis of the audience information and feedback like, “Mir’t Ye Wonjel Mirmera” (Best crime investigation) and “Buna Tetu”(Drunk coffee) from phone-in programmes to radio documentary programmes which need too much effort of journalists’ investigation and research (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). He added that audience information and feedback serve as the base to know audience need, to identify to prioritize issues and to shape the broadcasters’ presentation. Based on audience research which was conducted in 2008 year, the producers changed air time of Music and Guest hosting programmes from morning into night.

An editor informant stated that both audience information and feedback help the journalists to shape the forms and contents of the news and serve as a foundation to build their creativity. “Audience provides opinion for our presentation in which it lacks balance, and sources of information are not the right individuals, and because of they are government officials. They do not uncover the issues of the public or public opinion, and hence in all these reasons, currently Radio Fana news presentation has become reorganized to have more manifestation of bottom to up forms of presentation, and the sources of information of Radio Fana have become among ordinary public who are directly affected by societal problems and even they can be able to suggest a better source of information” (Anonymous, February 16, 2011). The informant added, “Radio Fana has expanded its air time from three hours to 18 hours per a day and developed more than 70 programmes in the last three years”. These are considered to be some evidence of the application of audience information that is obtained by the medium’s research (Anonymous, February 7, 2011).

“Radio Fana has made convinced through its audience research that the people needs public debate and discussion if they obtain evidences at different issues. Based upon this premise, Fana has started many programmes which need live talk/show, like the programme called ‘Hizibu Min Yilal’ (What the People Say), in addition to, ‘Ersow Bihonu Min Yadergalu’ (What you do if you were?)” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

Furthermore, “Radio Fana has used research results to recruit new staffs both journalists and administrators and even partners. For example, audience and partners continuously ask Fana to expand air time and to launch more new programmes, in turn, doing this, new staff have been recruited and its staff size have become increased into more than 260 which are not more than 50 in the last five years” (Anonymous, February 11, 2011).

“Radio Fana has also used audience research data to reconsider its working tradition and to control journalists’ and partners’ behavior in relation with their operation. It is claimed that Radio Fana has cancelled a partnership programme when presenter addressed programmes unethically which is proven by audience feedback” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

#### ***4.6 Are the Audience Researches of Radio Fana Audiencehood?***

Media broadcasters can increasingly decide for programmes and programming with a universal appeal. In doing this, often they demand audiencehood data, which can be expressive of the audience profiles; such as, audience composition, audience geodemographics, media availability, etc, to make sure whether they serve and sustain in the societies of media experience (Watson, 2003).

The study documents indicate the geodemographics information when they design the study area. From this information, most of Radio Fana listeners are the people from urban area of the country that include: Addis Ababa, Adama, Dessie, Gondar, Bahir dar, Debre Markos, Mekele, Semera, Dufti, Hawassa, Arbaminch, Gima, Bale, Dire Dawa, Harer. The rest rural part of the country is neglected in their study. However, they noted that audience information and feedback have been collected from the farmers despite the fact that demographic data indicate to the contrary.

In terms of media availability, the study documents state in many part of the country Radio Fana short wave broadcasting had not been listened as a result of signal interference. This media availability information tells the limitation of reception quality of the broadcasting. Launching Fana FM 98.1 at Addis Ababa, Mekele, Gondar, Gima, Harer, Shashemene, and Dessie and linking the national broadcasting are primary measure that Radio Fana has taken to improve reception quality which was found in previous studies (Anonymous, February 10, 2011).

The study of documents has not shown (the utiligraphics information) how the listeners of Radio Fana are listening programmes since they are listening Fana in accompanying other personal activities can also important for producers in scheduling programmes. The documents analysis has not clearly provided what roles the broadcasting plays in the society even though the study has presented much educational and informational base programmes which have been liked by the listeners. Many other entertainment programmes that have shown the popularity and interlinked with the lifestyles of the segmented listeners (e.g. they associate youth with music, sport, and other entertainment programmes), and the researches have shown that entertainment programmes are being remained listened in the future (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). In contrast, an informant argues that listeners who fill questionnaires are listeners of Radio Fana and hence all studies that have been conducted before are audiencehood and have shown the increment of the broadcasting audiences. They listen for many purposes by passing a single function intended by a particular producer (Anonymous, February 7, 2011).

“Lack of human resource and limited broadcasting coverage can be the main factors that hinder Radio Fana from conducting holistic audience based programmes. And it is difficult to say Radio Fana’s research came up with whether its programmes focus on socio-cultural aspects of this multicultural society of the country” (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). This view of the respondent is also in line with Lacy & et al (1993:268) view that “a station must also ascertain the community views about programming, including how well it is covering local issues and problems.”

#### **4.7 The Nature of Fana's Audience and its Development**

Listeners of Radio Fana are diverse and inclusive of all socio-economic and cultural circumstances of the country. But youths whose age is from 15 – 35 has a larger share of Fana listeners (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). Their study documents also indicate that male listeners' whose age falls between fifteen to thirty-five and unmarried individuals have a larger share, and their educational background exceeds secondary level. Unlike others, the research conducts at Afar broadcasting has got the students' attention whose education is above primary level. The composition has shown many of the listeners are employed by governmental organizations, and among them students, politicians and unmarried youths has taken the larger number (Radio Fana Afar programmes listeners research, 2008).

As Radio Fana audience research, these composition data repeatedly mentioned that youth are the major listeners of the station. The researcher understands two things from these listeners' information; one, such kind of listeners' composition seems to be needed to convince and maintain advertisers and sponsors, and second, the data has purposively needed by the broadcasters to say the higher portion of the population of the country, i.e., youth are the listeners of the Fana broadcasting and some of audience information are ambiguous; for example simply to note a few, the following stated expression of findings has supported the researcher's interpretation.

**“... የአፋርኛ ቋንቋ ስርጭት ተደራሲ አብዛኛው ወጣቱና የለውጥ ሀይል የሆነውን የህብረተሰብ ክፍል የያዘ መሆኑን መረጃው ይጠቁማል።”** (Radio Fana listeners of Afar programmes research, 2008:6)

*“The study indicates that listeners of Afar language broadcasting are youths and includes the large parts of the population who have power for change.”*

From this information, they didn't define what youth mean.

**“የራዲዮ ፋና አብዛኛው አድማጭ በጾታ ወንድ፣ በዕድሜ ከ15 – 35 ፣ አብዛኛዎቹ ያላገቡ፣ የትምህርት ደረጃቸው ሁለተኛ ደረጃ ያጠናቀቁ እና የስራ-ሁኔታ የመንግስት የሆኑ ናቸው።”** (Radio Fana national Amharic programme listeners' research, 2008:19)

*“The listeners of Radio Fana are male in gender and from 15 – 35 in age; several are unmarried; the level of education is above secondary; and several are employees of the government.”*

This audience information has shown that their age group of the listeners or respondents cannot match with the nature of employment, unless they purposely select them as the sample, but they use random sampling. In line to these arguments, Savage (2006:11) also said “... the techniques themselves are likely to frame audience in away to support a particular conception of audience.”

The researches documents also have shown that of Radio Fana’s listeners are becoming large in number by looking the exposure of the programmes. ‘Unpredictable and unexpected behaviors and needs of these listeners’ have imposed broadcasters, i.e., Radio Fana, to ‘control and monitor listeners’ through audience researches. List (2002), however, stated that the benefit of audience research has also been measured by the development of audience by way of assessing the impact of communication programmes and testing the audience concerning the awareness of the message, or the intention to change behavior rather than the exposure and use of products.

An informant among chief-in-editors explains that even though listening habits in the country have developed and Radio Fana’s listeners have increased in number, the culture of giving genuine feedback to the mass media is not still mature (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). An informant among senior reporters also argues that the culture of listening mass media is highly related with the listening habit of the society. And often the habit of Ethiopian listeners in giving much attention to mass media is limited. When they tune in radio and if they obtain quality signal they carry on listening whatever the station is and whatever the content airs on. Thus, they cannot develop the habit of offering genuine feedback to the mass media (Anonymous, February 27, 2011).

An informant among chief-in-editors also stated that the size of Radio Fana listeners recently is estimated to be above 20 millions. This estimation, however, is not acceptable since there is no statistical data in the documents that has shown numbers of radio sets per each householder. Audiences’ share and size cannot matter in the Ethiopian media market rather what matter is the political stance of the medium (Anonymous, February 17, 2011). Many respondents associate Radio Fana as political affiliated medium in which its coverage focuses mainly issues of the

party. The ruling party has many members in the country that are expected to be listeners of the medium, and its listeners are estimated in line to this assumption. One of the researcher's informants argues that many of the programmes are entertaining, and it must be the reason that Radio Fana has many listeners (Anonymous, February 10, 2011). This informant's view is also supported by McQuail's (1997) argument that is commercial channels tend to little or nothing for the very poor that is why they are much concerned on entertainment programmes.

#### ***4.8 The Relationship between the Station and the Listeners***

“ ‘Radio Fana is not the only radio people listen but also the radio that people can speak out’ is Radio Fana motto which has assured to be a power to facilitate the interaction between the medium and the listeners” (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). “Generally, the media see itself as intellectual place which perceives the listeners as being passive and illiterate. Unlike this working media trend and perception, Radio Fana looks listeners as active, sources of knowledge, and hence working with them makes radio Fana profitable. Thus, audience participation in the media and media engagement into the society has obtained a position in Radio Fana system” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). This informant's view is supported by structuralist's view that the primary objective of media attention must be the media system and their relationship with the wider society (McQuail, 2003).

“Radio Fana's audience research has bridged the gap between the listeners and the broadcasters, and a number of listeners often obtain chances to offer constructive feedbacks what they do not offer face-to-face contacts” (Fana audience research, 2008). “Based on the numbers of phone-callers, in-person contacts, letters to editors and audience researches, Radio Fana has strong interaction with the listeners” (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). “The relationship of Radio Fana with its audience is expressed by the listeners' interaction with programmes. For instance, an individual listener can call a phone to the producers and inform them if they present the programme in quest of certain information which the producer do not look for, and then producers can lose once more the data that listeners expect in the continued programme. In this case, listeners recall and inform the programme lacks continuity in terms of information that they directed before” (Anonymous, February 29, 2011).

The numbers of partners, advertisers and sponsors have also considered as indicators that Radio Fana has good relationship with the listeners (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). An informant, however, argued that the extent of sponsors and partners cannot be considered as indicators for the good interaction of the medium with audiences. “These bodies have preferred to work with Radio Fana for two reasons: first, for their own benefits as they know working with the media build their own images; and secondly, they ensure Radio Fana is pro-ruling-party medium and then working with Radio Fana can have another unseen benefits which facilitate their activities” (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). In line with this informant’s argument, McQuail (1993) also argues that the institutionalized forms of accountability to the audience must be included in media regulation to protect audience, codes of practice and ethics within media organization and procedures for handling audience complaints apart from audience research. Another informant suggested that the stations’ relationship with the listeners need a different independent study (Anonymous, February 22, 2011).

#### ***4.9 Journalists’ Engagement in the Process of Audience Research***

McQuail (1997) stated that in the media system there can be a means that portrays the link between mass media senders and receivers as kept balance of various kinds from audience to media organization. In this regard, a respondent claimed that Radio Fana listeners’ research can be an appreciable effort as it is a part of the medium system which is integrated in the management structure that links with its audience (Anonymous, February 10, 2011). Unlikely, Gans’s (2005) findings that journalists’ resistance to audience research roots from factors that most audience researches are conducted by non-journalists, and the perception of journalists to audience data that are seen as inadequate to use decision making process.

Many informants of the study cannot accept that journalists’ engagement on the process of audience research because of they ensure journalists can negatively influence the outcomes of the research which can be pertinent in the medium decisions. An informant among the producers notes, as example, that journalists are involved in the study of Fana and they bring different

results particularly on the journalists' performance; i.e., by calling their own friends' name as the best performers of the medium (Anonymous, February 29, 2011).

An informant among chief-in-editors also argues that audience research shall be done by independent body whose work is out of the news and programmes rooms and able to give free directions of the study so that it can be acceptable by the stakeholders and independent to the journalists, but in Radio Fana research was previously conducted by journalists themselves (Anonymous, February 11, 2011).

Contrary to this, an informant who is audience researcher stated that no one is a member of news and programme producers and reporters so as to make the results of research free of bias (Anonymous, February 8, 2011). Anonymous chief-in-editors and audience researchers claimed that journalists participate in Fana audience research by identifying the subject (e.g. programmes) and area of the study and by segmenting their audience which needs special reform (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). Another anonymous among chief-in-editors stated that journalists participate in audience research in many ways (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). He noted that collecting data by dispatching questionnaires and conducting questionnaire base interviews during field survey enables journalists to understand the listeners' emotion directly.

Moreover, some anonymous producers and senior reporters stated that they are commonly engaged in collecting feedbacks through phone in the studio while the broadcastings are aired 'live' and a person who collects feedbacks through phones are called programme executive that the feedbacks are also inputs for the formal audience research of the medium (Anonymous, February 22, 2011). A respondent among producers mentions previously journalists and senior reporters were asked to give opinions and comments on the prepared questionnaires (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). However, there is no problem if journalists participate if they are honest for their professional integrity, otherwise, their involvement can influence results negatively (Anonymous, February 29, 2010).

#### ***4.10 Audience Research Environment in the Station***

Butsch (2003) found that research is developed very unevenly among media (TV, radio, movies, etc) that some media audience have been less researched than others, and radio audience is much less than others due to research environment in the media. The audience research in Radio Fana has a promising research environment, especially in economic matters, which can develop much better than now in order to understand Ethiopian audiences (Anonymous, February 21, 2011). Previously, audience research in Radio Fana was conducted at department level by name called Project and Partnership Programme Main Office under the supervision of the board members of the medium (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). An informant who is a producer argued that such form of organization is a problem by itself because the structure have been created direct relationship with stakeholders for the researchers. Consequently, they always bring only positive feedbacks about the medium which makes the research biased to the organization thereby diminishing its significant for the improvements of the medium (Anonymous, February 16, 2011).

Nowadays, it is undertaken at department level which is known as Research and Communication Office leads by the Director-General and accountable to the board, and structurally it had better acceptance with reporters, producers and managers (Anonymous, February 8, 2011). These indicate that audience research has been integrated with the medium systems, and such kind of environment is good to enhance the quality of the research. All informants indicated that financial support, motivation, and office facilities to carry out audience research for the organization had better standing which can conduct research in a manner that bring changes and advancements of the activities of the medium.

#### ***4.11 Acceptability and support for the Findings of Audience Research***

Studies stated that media communicators see media audience as lacking the skills and qualifications to serve as adequate judge and they prefer to take feedback through face-to-face conversation rather than accepting and supporting results that come through audience research (Burns, 1969; Gans, 1979 as cited from McQuail, 1997). Many of the informants agree upon the idea that findings has been accepted and supported by journalists even if they come across with

some shortcomings. An anonymous chief-in-editors stated, “the researches we have done, have been accepted and approved by producers and reporters, especially from the perspective of the weaknesses of the medium, even sometimes they have revealed what most of them were recognized before the research. But they have come from the listeners that we respect, and then they have made ensure editors to have managerial decisions when they are engaging with implementations of the results” (Anonymous, February 16, 2011).

An informant who is a producer also articulated that as research as scientific no one can argue on the acceptability of the findings and suggestions. Journalists rather have dealt with whether they add the size and share of the broadcasting and the quality of the programmes, and in understanding of this informant, there is an improved journalists’ standing on the application of the gained results (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). In line with this informant’s view, Ang (1993) cited from McQuail (2003) also found that a scientific way of knowing audience is not simply a sign of progress from ignorance to knowledge, from speculation to fact, from beliefs to truth but also proactively implement the audience data by all journalists who are accountable and engage at different levels of media activity. On the contrary, some informants notified that often results regarding journalists’ performance are not acknowledged by the journalists because the results are suspicious. For instance, “the research proclaimed journalists as best performer those who left the job before years ago, and those who were not journalists; such as, DJ players” (Anonymous, February 27, 2011).

#### ***4.12 Communicating Findings of Audience Research to the Journalists***

An informant among audience researchers described that after finalizing the research, the researchers present the results and the suggestion to the Chief-of-Manager of the station, and then the results and recommendations are communicated in form of report to all journalists (producers, reporters and other staff) by a Director of Programme Sections, and sometimes by the board of the station (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). An informant also argued that the research reports are bestowed by higher managers not by researchers, which is not a good way of research dissemination (Anonymous, February 10, 2011). This informant’s argument is also supported by McQuail’s (1997) finding that actual communicators prefer to receive feedback by word of mouth in the familiar circumstances in the form of authoritative and unchallengeable

research. On the other hand, an informant stated, “research reports are also discussed with reporters, producers, and all managers on the topic of the results that are easily executed by the journalists and those implemented by the top-managers” (Anonymous, February 16, 2011). “Sometimes the managers take the stance that audience needs and interests should be executed whether journalists want or not” (Anonymous, February, 15, 2011). Thus, the results and suggestions of the Radio Fana research can be shaped or influenced by the managers.

Furthermore, “what often becomes a problem of Radio Fana during discussion is that programmes which have planned to be left by producers become best for audience and programmes which cannot attract audience attention can also become producers’ interest. For example, some journalists other than a producer perceives a programme known as ‘lib le lib’ basis fake story and has planned to cancel it, but it attracts most listeners’ attention, and then still it survives on the basis of market thinking (Heart-to-Heart a programme which is basis lovers’ letter with a mix of music that feel affection)” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

#### ***4.13 Do Researches measure the Journalists’ and Medium Performance?***

The research documents have shown that the rank of the medium in relation to its availability, audience satisfaction and its audience share in comparison with other media of the country as the basic measurement of Radio Fana performance. Most numeric results of the researches have shown positive feedbacks on its performance. An informant claimed that positive responses of the listeners about the station have outweighed in the research. However, they also reveal apparently the factual performance likely most of Fana programs’ contents are being listened and become point of discussion by the larger public (Anonymous, February 16, 2011). In terms of this, McQuail (1997:105) found that “...the performance of the media is so widely regarded as a proper topic for the expression of public attitude, judgments and opinions.” The findings of the study have shown that Radio Fana has been listened in a better way in the country even though its short wave broadcasting availability has been limited with signal problem. The researcher’s respondent has ensured that Radio Fana has performed well by offering contents which satisfies the listeners’ interest (Anonymous, February 10, 2011). The research document has also shown that listeners of Radio Fana are satisfied by news and programmes, especially entertainments and current affairs (Radio Fana Afan Oromo listeners’ research, 2008).

The research documents have also listed the names of the journalists. Listeners have shown the likes and dislikes of the journalists. In the research, the data have been interpreted with regard to journalists' performance on the basis of the listeners' view. A chief-in-editors stated, "Often Radio Fana in-house trainees are selected based upon audience feedback to journalists' performance" (Anonymous, February 15, 2011). On the contrary, another informant argued, "Radio Fana uses many other considerable managerial systems other than audience research though audience feedback is more unfailing judgment for the people who work in journalism profession; for example, rating journalists' performance and conducting peer review are commonly used measurements in each department" (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). An informant argued that journalists' performance, the medium performance and audiences' share should be investigated by other independent body, especially by media regulators or press councils, so as to maintain its creditability as they are a time that needs results not only for internal consumption of the organization but also for external consumption and media regulators (Anonymous, February 16, 2011). In line with this respondent, Lacy & et al (1993) argued that policy makers should also evaluate media performance by considering how responsive programming is to local needs rather than how a licensee arrives at programming decisions. "Listeners' cannot identify and evaluate any of the journalists who are working on serious programmes such as informational and educational programmes" (Anonymous, February 29, 2011). "Radio Fana must use some other qualitative indicators in their audience research rather than such kinds of quantitative indicators if they want to know where its performance reaches, and journalists' performance is less acceptable since listeners have been more attentive to messages than the producers" (Anonymous, February 29, 2011).

#### ***4.14 Challenges of Radio Fana to Conduct Audience Research***

Often, listeners are unwilling to provide information about the station and careless to give information about journalists and programmes and forgetting programme contents and names. And journalists do not participate in group discussion with listeners are some major challenges stated in their research (Fana audience research, 2008). In this regard, Mytton (1999) stated that media people can think that a station identity or programme name of great significance, the

audiences are very often inconveniently oblivious to the names of programmes. Thus, the researcher recognizes such kinds of obstacles are common that the audience researchers of broadcasters should be reminded when they plan the project. In relation to recalling programme names, Starkey (2002) also found that radio audience research can lose some authenticity of results because of “the role of recall in determining actual audience is about to be relegated from primacy to irrelevance” by the audience researchers. “Likewise, lack of need to fill questionnaires by listeners due to fear and wrong perception about the station is the other challenge of audience research. For example, some listeners attach the forms of questionnaires to parties membership forms which do not have any link with our research especially during election period (N.B. polling is a common kind of audience research during election), programme names are not well known by listeners, incapable to distinguish programmes which broadcast by Radio Fana and other stations, unable to return the questionnaires and incapable to provide genuine answers for open-ended questions are also other challenges faced by audience researchers” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011). In terms of the prevailing circumstance, the research needs to relate to the results of such circumstances; such, as election, political upheaval and crisis, civil disturbances and unrest, election, etc. since they may have had influence on the research results (Mytton, 1999:81). “Of course, some of them have solutions. For instance, in order to fill the questionnaires we sometimes air announcement about the research on our radio, in order to remember them names of the programmes data collectors must brief them with much care that making briefings cannot influence results; in order to return the forms, data collectors shall inform the exact date which the questionnaires return, etc are some” (Anonymous, February 28, 2011).

“By its nature, defining who the listeners of Radio Fana is complex in seeking information from audience because defining who are listeners are too subjective that all members of the staff cannot agree upon” (Anonymous, February 7, 2011). “Weakness of the institution research capacity and emotional feedback are provided by listeners, and demographic factors are also some challenges of audience research. For example, some listeners give feedback in case when they listen somewhere on a certain occasion are some resistance a respondent states” (Anonymous, February 7, 2011).

Lack of studies on the nature of Ethiopian audience and skillful individuals who train audience researchers are also described as challenges to conduct quality audience research by a respondent (Anonymous, February 8, 2011). “Lack of obtaining free audience which means the one who gives open, clear and critical feedback including both positives and negatives or weaknesses parts of the station, of course this can be related to culture as we Ethiopian are secrecy people, and there is no an independent institution which works on audience research are also the problem face processing quality audience research in the medium” (Anonymous, February 11, 2011).

## Chapter Five

### 5. Summary and Conclusion

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher recaps some of the findings that come out of the study. There are two things that have been accomplished in the chapter:

- a) Summarizing what has been done the research all about, how it is undertaken and the major findings that the researcher examines, and;
- b) Winding up the thesis with suggestions for further study.

#### 5.1 Summary

The main objective of the thesis is to examine the process and conduct of audience research in Radio Fana. To attain the objective, four questions have been formulated to clarify the contribution of audience research to the medium. These are: how well the process of audience research is carried out? To what extent the broadcasters use findings of audience research to improve the medium? Is Radio Fana effective in practicing audience research? And, what are the challenges that are encountered to conduct audience research in Radio Fana? To obtain answers for these questions, the researcher has carried out document analysis and made individual in-depth interviews with three senior reporters, three chief-in-editors, five producers and three audience researchers. There are also the related literatures and findings of previous studies that have been reviewed and theoretical framework that has been described. Finally, thematic analysis has been done to present and interpret the data, and the following major findings have been disclosed:

- The researchers' level of education and experience has equipped to produce quality audience research. However, knowledge at journalism and statistics has been lacked.

- The process of audience research and its findings have good support from all journalists in the station.
- The journalists are less involved in the process of audience research. On the one hand, this is good at to produce less influenced results. On the other hand, it neglects the needs and interests of the journalists while they develop, change or cancel the styles of presentation, the area of contents and formats of programmes. This can, in turn, influence the improvements of the medium negatively.
- The findings of the audience researches are either communicated by media managers or disseminated in the form of reports. This cannot allow the journalists to raise some suspicious results while they implement the findings and suggestions.
- There is an encouraging research environment in Radio Fana that can enhance the quality of audience research.
- The findings and suggestions of audience research have been implemented at different departments at average extent while there is no a responsible independent body who is accountable in its appliance.
- Audience research has been becoming the culture of Radio Fana, and it is well integrated in its organizational structure.
- Radio Fana's audience research has served as a platform to maintain Radio Fana relationship with its listeners.
- Audience feedback and information that have obtained through audience research have got much attention or delivered values in the decision making process of the media managers and the journalists.
- Radio Fana audience research has provided the dynamic needs of audience that has also helpful in developing new programmes, and this has in turn increased its audience size.

- Many programme formats have been developed within five years based upon audience feedbacks.
- Strategic plans of Radio Fana are based on audience needs and interests that have been developed out of the audience researches.
- The audience researches have shown positive figures of the station performance, particularly on its availability or reach at the largest audience size, programme quality and audiences' share in comparison with other local media. However, the journalists' performance has been seen suspiciously by the journalists and producers themselves because they present controversial data which cannot be measured all journalists whose work are at different formats of programmes equally.
- Radio Fana's audience researches have indicated that it has much contribution to rise up the numbers of advertisers, sponsors and partners, and this is helpful to sustain the development of Radio Fana as they are helpful for the income of the medium.
- Questionnaires are the main source of data for Radio Fana audience research. Focus group discussions with permanent listeners and professionals, letters of the listeners, journalists' briefings, direct phone calls and e-mails are other considerable ways that are employed to carry out audience research.
- The tools are precise and appropriate to produce audience data though they neglect the needs and interests of illiterate and rural audience that are expected to be the actual listeners of the medium.
- The tools are weak to produce audience data that cannot improve each specific programme of Radio Fana.
- Forgetting programme names, emotional feedbacks and demographic factors are some challenges to conduct audience research. Carelessness, fear and wrong perception of listeners also have negative influence on the audience data while the broadcasters process audience research.

## ***5.2 Conclusion***

In general, research findings presented herein show that conducting and processing audience research by Radio Fana has become the culture of the medium. It is understood that taking audience data into medium activities are become indispensable working trends rather working journalists' judgments about the audience alone. The findings of the study indicate that media competition, sponsors' and advertisers' curiosity and the dynamics of audience needs and interests are major contexts that Radio Fana has carried out audience research. Radio Fana has carried out more or less better audience research in its quality. The findings of this study leave that audience feedback and information have been averagely implemented in the medium. The findings of the study also indicate that Radio Fana has benefited from audience research in improving reception quality of the broadcasting, in developing more formats of programme, in changing the style of presentation, in recruiting more new staff and other pertinent decision making processes. These are also indicators that the improvement and sustainability of the medium have come by audience research given that the medium has worked on audience maximization, audience participation and audience preference; even audience research has positive contribution to the journalism practice.

There are many tools or methods that broadcasters in developing countries used in searching the needs and interests of the listeners; for example, South African Advertising Research Foundation has been asked by broadcasters to produce audience data through the seven-day-dairy method and telephone interviewing. Thus, the broadcast media can utilize some fixed methods by considering some cultural and societal realities to undertake audience research appropriately and credibly. In Ethiopia, there can be similar trend by looking for the most appropriate methods that can able possibly address listeners from all socio-cultural background of the society, and creating an independent body for the broadcasters which can able to produce the most credible audience research. As the result, these help to improve the accountability and working culture of broadcast media and the journalism profession of the country. There is also important to seek the improvement of Radio Fana broadcasting from the perspective audience by including their opinion and reaction.

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# **Appendix I**

## **Interview Guiding Questions (English Version)**

### **For Media Managers**

1. What are the values of audience information and feedback for radio Fana?
2. Would you explain the primary functions of audience research for radio Fana?
3. Do you think your audience research is independent or free from bias? How do describe the acceptance of the research by the stakeholders?
4. To what extent producers and reporters involve in the process of audience research?
5. Do you explain the extent and the situation of applications of audience research results?
6. Do you describe the development and nature of audience of radio Fana?
7. Would you describe the extent that audience research reveals the performance of medium and journalists?
8. Who is a responsible body whether the findings are executed or not? How this body follows up whether programmes and formats reviewed or improved?
9. How do you explain the extent that audience participation in your medium activities?
10. Is there any the challenges in practicing audience research? What are they?
11. How do describe the research and its environment in the media management system?

**Thank you very much!**

### **For Producers and Senior Reporters**

1. What are the values of audience information and feedback for your programme?
2. Do you think your radio programmes base on audience needs and interests?
3. How do you describe the relationship between the audience and your programme?

4. How audience researchers communicate results with you and other staffs after the research?
5. Do you have any participation in process of audience research?
6. What are the major factors that shape the content of your radio programmes?
7. How do describe the acceptability and support for audience research and its findings in your department?
8. Do you think your radio programmes air at appropriate time for the listeners?
9. Do you have any contribution for audience researchers?
10. What are the benefits of audience research for your programme?

*Thank you very much!*

### **For Audience Researchers**

1. What are the methods of audience research often employed in radio Fana? Why they are employed in the studies? Do you think they are appropriate in Ethiopian medium context? Why?
2. How do you communicate findings and recommendations with other staffs?
3. What are the values of audience information for radio Fana?
4. Would you explain how do use the findings and recommendations of audience research in radio Fana? Tell me the experience so far?
5. Do you think the research is audiencehood? How?
6. What are the challenges you encounter in conducting the research?
7. Do you think your research covers all area of the broadcasting?
8. How far your research is acceptable by producers and reporters?
9. How do you follow up whether the findings are executed or not?
10. How your research tools address the interest of producers and reporters? How the research addresses all programme listeners?
11. How do you explain the availability of facilities or resources in your department?
12. How do describe the contribution of audience research in radio Fana?

*Thank you very much!*

## Appendix II

### Guiding Interviewing Questions (Amharic Version)

#### ለሚዲያ ሥራ አስኪያጆች የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ

1. የአድማጮች መረጃ ለሬዲዮ ፋና ምን እሴት አላቸው?
2. የሬዲዮ ፋና የአድማጮች ጥናት ዋና ዋና ተግባራት ቢገልጹልኝ?
3. አዘጋጆች ና ሪፖርተሮች በአድማጮች ጥናት ላይ ያላቸው ተሳትፎ ምን ያህል ነው?
4. የአድማጮች ጥናት ውጤቶች አተገባበር ሁኔታ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
5. የሬዲዮ ፋና የአድማጮች የዕድገት ሁኔታ እንዲሁም ምንነትን ቢገልጹልኝ?
6. እስካሁን የተካሄዱ የአድማጭ ጥናቶች የሚዲያውን ሆነ የጋዜጠኞችን ብቃት ይጠቁማል ብለው ያምናሉ? እንዴት?
7. የአድማጭ ጥናት ውጤቶችን ተግባር ላይ እንዲውሉ ክትትል የሚያደርግ የተለየ አካል አለ? ካለ የፕሮግራም ለውጥ፣ ማሻሻያ ወይም ክለሳን እንዴት ያረጋግጣል?
8. የአድማጭ ተሳትፎ በሬዲዮ ፋና የስራ እንቅስቃሴ ምን ይመስላል?
9. የአድማጭ ጥናት ለማካሄድ የሚያጋጥሙ ችግሮች ይኖሩ ይሆን? ካሉ ቢዘረዝሩልኝ?
10. የአድማጭ ጥናት ካለው አካባቢያዊ ሁኔታ እንዲሁም ከተቋሙ መዋቅር አንጻር ያለውን ቦታ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
11. የሬዲዮ ፋና የአድማጭ ጥናት ነፃ ና ገለልተኛ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ?

*በጣም አመሰግናለሁ!*

#### ለአዘጋጆች ና ሪፖርተሮች የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ

1. የአድማጮች መረጃ ና ግብረ-መልስ ለምታቀርቡት ፕሮግራም ምን እሴት ወይም ጠቀሜታ አለው?
2. የምታቀርቡት ፕሮግራም የአድማጮች ፍላጎት መሰረት ያደረገ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ?
3. የአድማጮች ና የሬዲዮ ፕሮግራሞች ቁርኝት ወይም መስተጋብር እንዴት ይገጹታል?
4. የአድማጮች ጥናትን የሚያካሂዱ አጥኝዎች የጥናቱን ውጤት ወይም የማሻሻያ ሀሳቦች እንዴት ነው ለእናንተ የሚያሳውቁት?
5. የአድማጮች ጥናት ሲካሄድ እናንተ በጥናቱ ላይ ምን አይነት ተሳትፎ ታደርጋላችሁ?

6. በፕሮግራሞች ላይ ዋና ዋና ተፅእኖ የሚሳድሩ ጉዳዮች ምንድን ናቸው?
7. በእናንተ በኩል የአድማጮች ጥናት ወይም ውጤቱ ያለው ተቀባይነት ምን ይመስላል?
8. ፕሮግራሞች አየር ላይ የሚውሉት ለአድማጭ ምቹ በሆነ ሰዓት ነው ብለው ያምናሉ?
9. ለአድማጭ ጥናት ለሚያጠኑ አጥኝዎቻችን ያለዎትን ድርሻ ወይም ያደረጉት አስተዳደራዊ ካለ ቢያብራሩልኝ?
10. ለፕሮግራሞች መለወጥ ወይም መሻሻል የአድማጮች ጥናት ምን ድርሻ እንደነበረው ቢገልጹልኝ?

*በጣም አመሰግናለሁ!*

**ለአድማጮች ጥናት አጥኝዎች የቀረበ ቃለ-መጠይቅ**

1. ብዙ ጊዜ የምትጠቀሙበት የመረጃ መሰብሰቢያ መንገዶች ምንድን ናቸው? ከኢትዮጵያ ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ ጋር አብሮ ይሄዳል? እንዴት?
2. የማሻሻያ ሀሳቦች እንዲሁም ውጤቶችን ለጣቢያው ሰራተኞች በምን መልኩ ታሳውቃላችሁ?
3. በእናንተ አስተሳሰብ የአድማጮች መረጃ ወይም ግብረ-መልስ ለሬድዮ ፋና የሚጨምረው እሴት ምንድን ነው?
4. የጥናቱ ውጤት ወይም የማሻሻያ ሀሳቦች የአተገባበር ሁኔታ ቢገልፁልኝ? ከዚህ በፊት ያለዎትን ተሞክሮ ቢሆን ለጥናቱ ይጠቅማል።
5. ጥናቶችሁ አድማጭ ተኮር ነው ብለው ያምናሉ? እንዴት?
6. የአድማጭ ጥናትን ለማካሄድ የሚያጋጥሙ ችግሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
7. ጥናታችሁ ሁሉንም የስርጭት አድማስ ይሸፍናል?
8. የምታካሂዱት ጥናት በሪፖርቶች ና በአዘጋጆች ምን ያህል ተቀባይነት አለው?
9. የጥናቱ ውጤት ወይም የማሻሻያ ሀሳቦች መተግበራቸው እንዴት ታረጋግጧላችሁ?
10. የምትጠቀሙበት የመረጃ መሰብሰቢያ መንገዶች ምን ያህል መጠነ ሰፊ የሆነ የሁሉንም የባለድርሻ አካላት ፍላጎት የሚረዳ መረጃ ለማግኘት ያግዛል?
11. የአቅርቦት ና የሪሶርስ ሁኔታ በአድማጮች የጥናት ክፍል ምን ይመስላል?
12. በጠቅላላው የአድማጮች ጥናት ለሬድዮ ፋና ያለውን አስተዳደራዊ ቢያብራሩለልኝ?

*በጣም አመሰግናለሁ!*

## Appendix III

### *List of Informants*

N.B. *These informants are quoted by their occupational titles anonymously when the data are presented and interpreted because they didn't want to identify by name for their own responses.*

No.	Name	Educational Background and Years of Job Experience	Position in Radio Fana Broadcasting
1.	Ashenafi Jima	MA in Marketing, 16 years	Previous Audience Researcher, Head of Partnership Programmes and Marketing Office
2.	Yodit Solomon	MA in International Relations, 3 years	Head of Research and Communication Office, and Audience Researcher
3.	Bereket Girma	BA in Foreign Language and Literature, 3 years	Audience Researcher
4.	Tibebu Tadesse	BA in English Language, 11 years	Chief –in – Editor of Amharic National Programmes
5.	Endris Gudeto	BA in History, 11 years	Chief – in – Editor of Afan Oromo Programmes
6.	Mekoya H/Marriam	BA in Amharic Language, 4 years	Producer
7.	Bezabih Mamo	BA in Literature, 3 years	Producer
8.	Solomon Alemu	BSC in Animal Science, 10 years	Producer
9.	Kassa Ayalew	BA in Journalism & Communication, 9 years	Chief – in – Editor of FM Programmes
10.	Demeke Kebede	BA in Journalism & Communication, 4 years	Producer
11.	Nigatu Regassa	BA in Journalism & Communication, 8 years	Producer
12.	Rahiwa Yifter	BA in Journalism & Communication, 6 years	Senior Reporter
13.	Emebet Andualem	BA in Journalism & Communication, 4 years	Senior Reporter
14.	Anteneh Mengiste	BA in Journalism & Communication, 4 years	Senior Reporter