

THE PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ETHIOPIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

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This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Zemedkun Tekle Shaka entitled "The Practice and Challenges of Public Relations in Federal Government Offices" and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ACRONYMS

EPRDF	ETHIOPIAN PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT
GCAO	GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AFFAIRS OFFICE
MoI	MINISTRY OF INFORMATION
PR	PUBLIC RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Public relations, in its modern sense, is believed to have been started in Ethiopia in 1960's. Unfortunately, all the regimes that assumed power during those times implemented public relations fully depriving its professional nature and undermining its roles. Government public relations were made to serve seemingly trivial tasks, such as looking after traveling process of their bosses and organizing meetings. In very rare circumstances, where efforts were made to exercise practices that might approximately to the real practice of public relations, the driving force behind was primarily serving the interest of the ruling class. Though some efforts are being made recently so as to reform the PR practice in the country, the earlier trend of practicing public relations is more or less, is still in existence.

In the contemporary world, the task of the government to inform the public is not a matter of choice; rather, it is something related to the concept of good governance and a must be delivered task. Especially in developing countries like Ethiopia the task of the government to inform the public is highly attached to peace, development and democratization. From this perceptive, examining the practice of government public relations would be a study worth taking. Though public relations, a system whereby the government informs its public, has an important role to play, it is evident that public relations in the federal government offices does not seem to live up to expectation. Different stakeholders including public relations practitioners, seriously complain about the problems in the practice of public relations in the government offices.

Addressing the problem requires conducting a systematic study in the area, and to date there is paucity of academic research conducted in this context.

This study therefore, aims at filling the gap. To this end, it focuses on examining the practices and challenges of public relations in the Federal Government Offices. A two-way symmetry of public relations theoretical framework was used to inform the study. What is more both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the study. Under the qualitative method, data gathering tools such as document analysis and in-depth interview were used, whereas under the quantitative method a survey questionnaire was administered to respondents selected purposely. About 92 or around 77% of the respondents returned the questionnaire. In-depth interview with 12 purposely selected public relations practitioners and government communication affairs office leaders was also conducted.

The analysis of the data clearly demonstrates that though some achievements have been made through a recently initiated effort to transform government public relations, what has largely emerged is a change in form rather than in content. The practice is still shackled with some serious problems such as limiting the practice to trivial activities like organizing meetings, looking after traveling process of officials and writing minutes that impede public relations to move forward and contribute to mutual intelligibility between the government and the public.

Based on the findings, a few relevant recommendations that would contribute to improving the practice of PR in the government offices were made.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Now-a-days, having the right and timely information makes a big difference. If people are able to receive all inclusive, correct and timely information, in fact, they would be in a position to demand their rights. They would be able to be masters of their own matters. Knowing exactly what is going on would enable the public to respond accordingly. On the other hand, lacking the right and timely information is like being in the dark where free movement without inevitable danger would be impossible.

In a country like ours where the state claims to be developmental and democratic, disseminating relevant information in a very systematic and sustainable manner would be one among some of the core responsibilities of the state. As it has been stipulated in the government policy documents, such as “The Issues of Establishing Democratic System in Ethiopia” repeated emphasis was made on the critical role of Government information dissemination in a very sustainable and systematic manner. Without doing so, the document notes, would be impossible to build consensus on issues of national interest. The other policy document entitled “Capacity Building Policy and Strategy” time and again emphasized the need for empowering the public through the provision of government information, especially those related to economic, social and political plans of actions and their achievements.

So much has been said about the crucial role of government information in the effort of transforming the nation; the matter that follows would be how much has been done to ensure a two-way smooth flow of information between the government and the public. Needless to mention the critical role of timely, credible and all inclusive government information in realizing the empowerment of the public. However, the basic question that needs proper response would be how much the government has

been successful in its effort of disseminating government information in a sustainable and systematic manner. It is clear that for effective government information dissemination practice, there should be a professional way of performing the task. This requires the supply of professional practitioners and creating a conducive working environment. Speaking about effective government information dissemination task, therefore, it would be very vital to examine the practices of and the major problems in practicing public relations in government offices.

Here, it would be important to mention that some efforts were underway to establish modern government system in Ethiopia, specifically starting from the year 2002 where professional public relation practices was believed to be implemented. It's important to remember that this was a very critical transition time for the ruling EPRDF party as it was surviving the biggest and probably the hardest spilt in its history. While announcing his newly appointed cabinet the late prime minster Meles Zenawi in 2002 stressed ministry of information would be empowered and consolidated.

After serving nearly eight solid years, it seems that the government has not been satisfied with the achievements of the then ministry of information. Therefore, the government went for another round of reform. As a result, the present government communication affairs office came into existence in the year 2009. Now years have passed since this office has been established, and the office is calming it has under taken some major steps that may result in a better government communication; however, it seems that many stakeholders do not agree in this assertion.

Although GCAO has been able to establish public relation units in almost all federal government offices, from what so many public relation practitioners say, still there is no conducive environment in government offices to practice the proper public relations activities. The media as well as the public at large do not seem to believe the information coming out from public relation offices. Still there are so many complaints about serious lack of disseminating correct and timely government information.

Many commentators believe that the government public relations offices are not staffed by professional public relations practitioners; it seems that the government considers the task more of political than professional. Hence, according to those commentators, there would not be much worry and serious consideration from the government side on the assignment of public relations practitioners. Moreover, most of the government officials do not understand the critical role of public relations and they even do not know how to lead such units in their institutions. In a normal circumstance, however, the head of an institution should know that probably he/she does not have any other job that exceeds communication, for whatever he/she is doing involves effective communication. Thus, it can be said that the leadership role of the head of an institution cannot be realized without effective communication since the beginning as well as the ending of all the tasks is communication. This being the case, however, many government officials appear to operate below the standard that communication profession requires.

1.2.Statement of the problem

In a country like Ethiopia where the government is the major factor in development efforts and in all other spheres of life, access to government information matters a lot. Leave alone empowerment and other issues, such as participation and fighting corruption, a mere existence itself demands access to quality government information.

In order to realize genuine public participation and empowerment, access to quality government information is a serious matter of concern. In a country like ours where the public is believed to be the major asset in the effort of ensuring sustainable national development, the provision of correct, timely and all inclusive information is of paramount importance. For the government to effectively carry out the provision of information to the public, it needs to establish a working government communication system where professional public relations practices should occupy the center of the system.

According to Solomon (1998), a practice more or less that resembles modern public relations is believed to have been started in 1960's in Ethiopia. In fact, the emergence of the practice of modern public relations in the country came as a result of the establishment of the Ministry of Pen in 1940's. The then media organizations such as Radio, News Agency and Television service, were organized and administered under the ministry of Pen. After serving for some time, the ministry was replaced by the then ministry of information and tourism in 1950's with similar task of administering the media organizations in addition to carrying out the responsibility of culture and tourism related issues. Later in 1960's when the Ministry of Information replaced it, the responsibility of leading the media organizations was also transferred to the new ministry.

The head of government public relations, around the final years of Emperor Haile Selassie, explained the practice at that time as routine occupied by activities, such as reception, protocol and, to some extent, looking after publications. In an interview about the public relations practice at that earliest time, the former head of public relations said that strategies about how to promote the country and building consensus were unthinkable.

The practice of public relations that started to take shape during the 1960's continued for years without any change in form and content. The major purpose of the public relations then was merely serving the interest of the ruling class. As the public relations at those times was so unprofessional, it was unable to respond to the situations arising in those times.

One incident that can be mentioned to substantiate the failure was the case of the devastating famine that occurred in 1974 (Solomon, 1998). Nothing was known to the nation as well as the whole world about the fatal famine. It seems that the system was convinced the story would remain untold forever; so it opted to focus on working how to hide instead of trying to manage the crisis. The system was only able to prove the

fact that the effort to hide the shameful story was a futile exercise when the British journalist Jonathan Dimbleby disclosed the shocking story to the whole world.

The time of the military leadership has not contributed anything significant to the development and professionalism of public relations either. The only difference was the fact that during the time of the Emperor, the focus of the public relations activity was glorifying the king and his “blameless administration”. During the military leadership, at the beginning, the focus was the revolution, and, then, later it turned to the glorification of Workers’ Party.

With coming to power of the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front conducive environment for the flourishing of the private media was created. This in turn has a little bit contributed to the establishment of new public relation offices in different government offices and the consolidation of the already existing ones. Of course, this has not come about as a result of knowing and believing in the importance of public relations offices; instead, it happened for fear of not being attacked by the emerging private press. Following the establishment of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia, different policy statements and important legal frameworks for the development of media and public relations came into existence.

Those policy and legal frameworks made available, however, do not seem to bear the desired fruit so far. Many people say that public relations, after more than half a century in our country, has not shown significant progress. Even today, it seems that there is no space to practice professional public relations. One who sees the present public relations practice in some government offices will be forced to question if public relations has started to be considered as a profession at all.

1.3. The purpose of the study

Government information provision will enable the public to make informed decision. Though corruption in our country is not as rampant as that of some African countries, it is becoming one of the serious threats for the nation’s transformation effort that is

under way. Hence, all inclusive and quality information provision in a systematic way and on sustainable manner is not only vital for public empowerment but also for fighting corruption.

In order to realize effective government information dissemination, creating conducive working environment for public relation practice is very vital. Thus, identifying the bottlenecks in government public relations offices is of a paramount importance in the effort of realizing a professional government communication system. This paper is an attempt to examine the practice of public relations in the federal government offices and the challenges that surround it.

It is important to note that the researcher has come across some studies where efforts were made to identify the problems of public relations in our country. Most of these studies were conducted nearly before two decades and they also tend to focus on identifying the problems of public relations in those specific times. Government offices having public relations units then were also very few in number. What is more, the studies were conducted in a manner that did not deal with public relations theoretical frameworks and almost all of them were meant for internal consumptions, such as public relations discussion forums.

Now the scenario is very different; public relations units are organized in almost all federal government offices. Moreover, an independent government office known as Government Communication Affairs Office is established to coordinate and professionalize federal government public relations offices. Some important policy issues and legal frameworks have also been developed to transform government communication system whereby the center of focus would be the human element. Taking into account all these factors, this study seeks to examine the status of the practice of the government public relations and the challenges it is facing.

1.4. Significance of the study

Mutual understanding and trust between the government and the public can only be realized by effective and efficient communication system between the two; besides the government's commitment to deliver what it promised to bring about. It is common to witness the fact that significant number of the public hardly believes some of the information that would be released from government offices.

Some believe that this has occurred as a result of failure in disseminating credible information in a timely manner. Many believe that the government will find it very difficult to present negative stories that might in any way indicate the failure of the government offices or the system as a whole. Hence in the long effort of presenting such stories in a manner that shifts the blame or weakens the magnitude of the failure may end up in big delay and loss of credibility. Obviously such incidents will greatly damage the trust between the public and the government.

The problem in the government information dissemination process is not only limited to the aforementioned matters. Other items like lack of providing all inclusive information in a sustainable manner are also common. Those and other unmentioned relevant problems in the government communication system arise from lack of modern and professional public relations system. As the government itself repeatedly says to ensure genuine public participation and empowerment the effort to transform the government communication system has to be consolidated. To this effect, this research may contribute:

- To identify the problems that exists in government public relation offices
- To indicate modern public relations models and practices
- To indicate the gaps between what has been done and that is left undone
- To serve as an initial academic research in the area of government public relations

1.5. The objectives of the study

General objectives:

- The major objective is to examine the practice and basic challenges of public relations in Federal Government Offices.

Specific Objectives:

Specifically, the study intends to:

- Examine how public relations are being practiced in Federal Government Offices.
- Identifying the challenges in practicing public relations in Federal Government Offices.
- Examine how government officials view the significance of government information dissemination.
- Identify how the PR practitioners working in the government offices view their role.

1.6. The research questions

The following are the questions that the study seeks to address

- What is the practice of public relations in government offices like in relation to the professional standard?
- What are the major challenges in practicing public relations in government offices?
- How do government officials view the importance of government information dissemination?
- How do PR practitioners working in the Government Office view their role?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with literature review that explains the essence of public relations and the evolution of the profession. Moreover, it attempts to entail the modern theoretical frame works that are related to the practice of public relations. Though it is not possible to come across so many academic research works that are related to the practice of public relations in Ethiopia, some effort will be exerted to highlight somehow the available relevant literatures on the topic. The introduction of modern public relations to Ethiopia and its progress through times would also be the other major focus of this chapter. The beginning point would be reflecting on what is meant by public relations under the subtitle of the evolution of the practice.

2.1 The evolution of public relations

2.1.1 What is public relation?

One of the difficult matters in public relations is getting an agreeable definition of the concept among scholars (Thurlow, 2009: 246; Lomme & Russell, 2010:284). Discussing how much the scholars differ on defining public relations American historian Robert Heil Broner described it as a profession which ties together hundred thousand and yet no two of them can fully agree on the what of that profession (Seitel, 2011:34-35). Scholars who gathered to discuss public relations matters at different forums have defined the concept somehow differently. One of such a forum was the one organized in Mexico City in 1978 (Baines et al, 2004: 7) on that forum public relations was defined as follows.

Public relations practice is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, Counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programs of action that will serve both the organizations' and the public interest.

The definition has indicated five important public relations process elements. Trend analysis which is one important issue in public relations refers to the study of the current situation in which the organization is found in. This may include the public mode, the existing awareness on matters of concern to the organization and the nature of the image that exists. Predicting the consequence of existing situations in the environment is the next important matter in the aforementioned definition. Following the prediction of what may happen in the future then counseling follows. The end result of scanning the environment and predicting the outcome is to maximize the opportunity that might exist and to minimize any danger that might arise.

In order to realize such a readiness the management should be consulted on the existing situations as well as the predicted outcomes. Obviously the management who received the analysis and predictions will come up with some kind of program of action to be implemented. The five important points mentioned in the definition is concerned with serving the public interest. The planned program of action to be implemented shouldn't ignore the interest of the public; rather it has to be advantageous both to the organization and the public (Baines et al, 2004: 7-8, Ihlen, 2010:99).

According to Seitel (2011: 36), the most ambitious effort to come up with universally acceptable definition of public relations was commissioned in 1975 by the foundation for Public Relations Research and Education. At that forum more than sixty public relations leaders were participated and about 472 different definitions were also brought forward for analyses. The forum that deliberated on the ideas forwarded finally came up with the following definition.

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and

effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Seitel, 2011:36-37).

Like the former definition of public relations, this one also entails very important elements of the public relations process. It emphasizes the fact that public relations should strive to ensure the interest of the public in addition to that of its own. While doing so, activities such as public opinion survey, prediction based on environmental scanning, consulting the management on findings and designing program plan of action are the major tasks that would be conducted (Ledingham, 2008: 228-229).

To wind up the explanation on how public relations has been defined by different scholars; let us finally see how the public relations society of America defined the concept. “Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other” (Seitel, 2011: 32). Though it’s very brief, public relations society of America noted that the definition has incorporated all the important public relations process elements such as research, planning, program implementation and finally evaluation.

In all the aforementioned definitions of public relations, the major emphasis is on the roles and responsibilities of public relations. There were also other efforts where scholars made to explain public relations in its relation with other similar disciplines such as marketing and public affairs. In such an effort (Baines, 2004: 16-17) noted the fact that public affairs activities are related to dialogue with the government with the purpose of policy making, legislation and regulation. Marketing on the other hand, deals with creating market, of course, marketing might employ some techniques that can also be used by public relations. Still the argument is there; in the fact that marketing is the subset of public relations and vice-versa. Whatever the case might be, marketing and public relations are related to each other and in some instances are overlapping disciplines. When it comes to professional public relations, the major purpose is to create understanding (Baines, 2004: 6, Thurlow, 2009: 261).

2.1.2 The historical development of public relations

It is a widely accepted assumption the fact that public relations industry is a very recent phenomenon. According to Seitel (2011: 53), modern day public relations is clearly a 20th century phenomenon. Different writers have mentioned at least two major early founders and contributors of modern public relations. Ivy Ledbetter Lee who was invited by John D. Rockefeller Jr. to help him in the problem created in the coal company he owned was one of the great contributors to the emergence of modern public relations. In 1914, in Ludlow, Colorado a bloody massacre was happened between Colorado militiamen and company guards because of evicted miners and their families. It was at that crisis time Ivy Ledbetter Lee who was a journalist by profession was called for help. Lee had tried his level best to help in the effort of managing the crisis. Lee who started his public relations Job in such a manner went on to contribute significantly to the creation of modern public relations practice and accordingly came to be considered as one of the fathers of modern public relations (Seitel, 2011: 54; Baines et al, 2004: 2-3).

Edward Bernays who was mentioned to be a nephew of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, according to Baines et.al. (2004: 3), was another scholar who considered to be the father of modern public relations. Bernays like Lee has believed to have contributed very important ideas to the development of modern public relations.

Even though modern public relations is considered as very recent happening, there is a wider agreement among scholars on the fact that some public relations practices that were used to be employed during the earliest times of humanity will make it one of the ancient phenomenon. Public relations are often referred to as a new young profession or business but is not really so. PR techniques have been used in different forms for centuries (Baines et al, 2004: 3). Rulers of ancient Egypt, Sumerian, Babylonia and Assyria were using different techniques which more or less fall in the public relations category, for their personal as well as political publicity (Baines et al, 2004: 3-4).

Birds and animal symbols were also widely used for different corporate identity schemes.

Though public relations will not be denied its much earlier manifestation unlike some disciplines such as law, medicine and economics public relations is a younger field of study with not more than a century years old (Seitel, 2011: 53). The relatively younger practice of public relations, however, is in the swift process of development. The role public relations play in achieving organizational objectives is getting more and more recognition, as a result the respect for the practice and the demand for it is growing rapidly (Lahetal, 2005: 58-59, Nayden, 2009: 28-31). Public and private organizations in almost every part of the world are giving more and more space for the practice of public relations. In the United States alone there are more than 200,000 public relations practitioners (Baines et al, 2004: 4). This number might not be surprising as the USA is very much advanced and fast to accommodate value adding practices such as public relations. The issue might turn to be interesting when one considers the dramatic increase in the number of public relations practitioners all over the world within a short period of time (Baines et.al, 2004: 5-6, Chunhvive xie, 2010: 5). Even in Ethiopia where the importance of public relations has been recognized very lately, according to information obtained from government communication affairs office, out of an estimated 170 federal government offices, about 120 of them do have actively working public relations units. As the information from government communication affairs office indicates nearly all federal government offices and most of the offices in the regional states do have public relations units and some practitioners though they need some kind of reinforcements. In countries like the USA and Britannia institutions working for the professionalism of public relations practices are established and are contributing so much for the advancement and strengthening of the influence of the practice. The public relations society of American has more than 20,000 members and the institute of public relations of Britain had more than 7,000 members (Baines et al, 2004: 4).

2.1.3 Contributing factors for the development of public relations

The recently emerging public relations discipline has got some enabling conditions for its encouraging expansion and recognitions. According to Seitel (2011:53) “The strength of the practice of public relations today is based on the enduring commitment of the public to participate in a free and open democratic society.” This situation has paved the way for the establishment and growth of big institutions which in turn created a huge demand for the practice of public relations. Moreover, the existing small government and private organizations, now- a- days have been replaced by the giant ones. So, public relations professionals are to a great extent important to introduce the institution to the public whom they serve. Moreover, they are vital to ensuring mutual benefit of the public as well as the institutions, (Seitel, 2011: 53-54, Ledingham, 2008: 228).

The ever increasing public awareness and the sophistication of media are presumed to create another opportunities that contribute for the development of public relations. The vast media opportunity created as a result of technological advancement has come up with audience segmentation where continuous flow of information from organizations through different media would be very vital. Similarly, providing relevant and timely information for a public whose awareness is heightened so much would greatly require professional information delivery on a very sustainable manner. In fact, the heightened public awareness as well as the vast variety of the media created would avail a good opportunity for the demand of public relations (Yang & Lim, 2008: 46-47, Hatzios & Ruthann, 2009:241, Seitel, 2011: 56).

The dynamic societal change, conflict and conformation are other important factors that might positively influence the development of public relations. A sort of different right issue that extend from human being to animals and a lot of other social phenomena that arise as a result of human interaction are part of our everyday life. The close management of such societal issues will require effective delivery of

information from all the concerned bodies. So the chance to be perceived properly demands sustained, effective communication where professional public relations practitioners or institutions are important.

Globalization and the growing power of global media together with the ever increasing demand for public opinion are the other factor that has positively influenced the development of public relations Seitel (2011: 55, Grefory, 2003: 5). We are living in a period where news of an incident like earthquake or public unrest in a local village can reach the whole world within a fraction of minutes by the powerful global media. In fact, the social media which is faster, easier and cheaper has greatly accelerated the global flow of information (Grefory, 2003: 13, Yang & Lim, 2008: 20). On the other hand, public opinion, which is very important to measure the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the public, is getting more and more important. Hence, public relations have got an increased prominence as a result of two important tasks namely, information provision to the always hungry media and survey of public opinion (Ridway, 1984: 8-15, Joshi, 1999: 2, Jethwaney etal, 2000: 13-14).

The dominance of the internet and growth of social media as noted by Seitel (2011: 55) is one of the influencing factors to the development of public relations. Currently, the number of people using the internet is exceeding 1.5 billion. The expansion of the internet has created hundreds of millions of people who are not only consumers of information but also generators of communication as well. The huge and accessible vehicle which is the internet demands a huge amount and variety of information that it conveys to consumers. Obviously this situation will create a very conducive environment of communication where public relations are getting a vast opportunity to demonstrate their important role, (Yang & Lim, 2009: 341-343, Seitel, 2011:56-57).

While speaking about factors that influence the development of public relations it would be worth mentioning to talk about the role of public relations education. The

development of public relations has paved the way for establishment of public relations education. As Seitel (2011: 69) said in 1951, only 12 schools were offering major programs in public relations in the United States. "Currently more than 200 Journalism or communication programs offer concentrated study in public relations, with nearly 300 others offering at least one course dealing with the profession" (Seitel ,2011:69).

A study led by the public relation, society of America recommended the Public relations education curriculum to include areas such as relationship building, societal trends multi cultural and global issues (Seitel, 2011: 69). More over, the study recommended that the public relations education, at least some of the major courses be incorporated in business schools where this has not been done so far. The study went on further to recommend that the public relations courses be offered to journalism students as more than 70% of the daily news- papers use public relation materials as the source of their information. According to the recommendation, while taking the courses the journalists would familiarize themselves with the practice of public relations which later on enable them to work closely by understanding how public relations offices carry out their business (Seitel , 2011: 70-71).

2.1.4 Challenges facing public relations

According to Grefory (2003: 3), public relations, which is only a century old practice, has enjoyed great opportunities that were never available before. Not only big private industries are emerged and expanded more than ever, but also the role that communication plays in every aspect of life, has got a significant recognition from governments, private bodies and civil societies. The study of the UK chartered institute of public relations quoted by Grefory (2003: 2) indicated that the public relations practice not only succeeded to establish itself as an independent industry, but also has reached a level where it can grow 17 percent per year. The same study indicated the fact that almost all government offices in the UK and other European countries have established working public relation offices.

Be that as it may, there are some major challenging issues in the public relations domain that demand due attention and further intervention. The common perception of spinning with public relations is one critical problem in relation to the reputation of the practice (Thurlow, 2009: 249-250). As Grefory (2003: 4) noted, Spin not only damage the reputation of public relations but also will make people cynical about the political process and may end up in disengagement from exercising political rights. Of course, the decision of the public to give up political participation as a result of mistrust greatly affects democratic process.

The other element of public relations which usually people question is related to the ethics of lobbying. Many people believe that the rich and the powerful will hire the professional lobbyists and would be in a position to deceive the right image of a person or something, which in turn may affect the process of decision making (Grefory, 2003: 4). There is still another key question that public relations must respond to. That question is related to the fact that whether public relations are an independent profession or not. As it stands now many public relations activists believe that public relations are unregulated technical crafts. If it is going to be considered as an independent profession it needs a clearly demarcated territory where only those educated and licensed enter into (Seitel, 2011: 75, Frunza, 5).

Is public relations in effect different from propaganda and spin? Who does public relation; serve the rich and the powerful or the public interest? Can a practice involve both in the trivial as well as major issues as public relations are trying to do? Are there clients or causes that will be refused by public relations? Such common questions will significantly contribute in denying the level of legitimacy that public relations desperately need (Gregory, 2003: 4).

To end up enumerating the lists that indicate the challenge of public relations practice, adding some three critical points would be important; one of these refers to the communication convergence issue. The current global trend and advancement of

information technology has resulted in the acceleration of the pace of communication disciplines convergence. “The arbitrary distinctions that currently differentiate between, for example, public relations and marketing are being recognized as just that.” Marketing is about the management of customer relationships and customers are also the ones in the stakeholders group (Grefory, 2003: 10). Coming out as a winner in this tight competition will require not only claiming the territory but also demonstrating the knowledge and skills that stakeholders management demands.

The challenge related to the evaluation of public relations outcome is another critical issue to be mentioned. Though big strides have been made in public relations research and evaluation especially with the valuable contribution of the UK chartered institute of public relations, still challenges are prevailing. Efforts so far have made clear issues such as what public relations practitioners produces, how that product is used, what messages are crafted from the products and the result expected at the end of the practice are well addressed. An encouraging result has also been achieved on identifying measurable objectives based on solid research. However, the problem arises when it comes to the fact that public relations objective will only be met and satisfaction can be realized when ever stake holders are heard and this is the difficult thing to measure.

It is true that organizations can exist when they are able to respond to the need of their customers on a timely basis. So far nothing has been done on measuring how much and how effectively public relations practitioners listened to the interest of their stakeholders. As there is no mechanism to do so, it is also difficult to measure the quality of relationships that exist between the stakeholders and public relations offices (Grefory, 2003: 12).

The final point to be mentioned as public relations challenge is related to the fact that public relations is working in a business that never sleeps. The media and other stakeholders as Grefory (2003: 14) put it, the media works 24 hours a day all the week and highly facilitated by enabling technologies. Many practitioners will be challenged to stay in such a business that runs all the year round and never sleeping for a simple minute.

2.2 Public Relations in Ethiopia

2.2.1 The beginning

Needless to mention the fact that modern public relations practice has only a century old history globally, as a matter of fact the practice of modern public relations, in Ethiopia will not be expected to be as old as that of US and UK. As it is true for most nations in the world, the earliest manifestation of some form of public relations in the ancient Ethiopia will make public relations one of the oldest phenomena in the Ethiopian civilization. It would be difficult to detach the effort of persuasion which underlies most of public relations activities from government public relationships. It is possible to imagine that all the indicators of Ethiopian ancient civilizations haven't been realized without mobilizing the public and of course that mobilization has demanded a huge effort of persuasion.

Though it is not possible to find out when modern public relations have begun in Ethiopia there is a belief that it might have been in 1960s (Solomon, 1998: 20). Prior to this period, the beginning of newspapers since 1900's that provided advertisement space for business organizations together with the introduction of printing press, telecommunication and the rail way by Emperor Minilik II in the late 19th century paved the way for the development of mass media and communications in all aspects including the emergence of modern public relations (MoI, 2003) . According to Solomon (1998: 20-21), there were a number of public relations resembling practices during those times. Instances such as preparing and distributing news papers entitled "Bandirachen" (Our flag) in order to arise patriotism among Ethiopian guerrillas during the fascist Italy occupation of 1936-1941, and Amharic language paper entitled "Yetor Wore" (War news) that was distributed by the allied forces during world war II can be mentioned (Solomon, 1998).

The establishment of the ministry of pen in 1940's paved the way for the creation of public relations in government offices. The then information and propaganda section

was organized within the ministry of pen (Moi, 2004). The post world war II and the expulsion of the fascist Italian invading force brought a need to centrally coordinate the media organizations such as radio, TV and news agency. Accordingly those media organizations were made to be organized under the ministry of pen, which was later replaced by Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1950's. In 1960's the ministry of information, whose reminiscence as an organization, is still fresh in our mind was established. While the ministerial offices were replacing one another the media organizations were continued to be led under the newly emerging offices (Moi, 2004, Solomon, 1998).

The process of modernization continued with some element of capitalism mixed with the then strongly founded mentality of feudalism. In 1960's with Emperor Haile Selassie's more than three decades stay in power significant political maneuvers took place which made Addis Ababa the capital of Africa. The creation of the organization of African Unity in 1963 as its head quarter in Addis Ababa which was followed by the establishment of the UN Economic Commission for Africa again as its head quarter in Addis Ababa were among the significant dynamics that were worth mentioning. While such huge developments were taking shape in the country, the public relations practice in the country remained without any remarkable progress. The head of public relations at the final years of Emperor Haile Selassie in an interview, said the following about the public relations overall situation during that time;

The notion and practice of PR was developed during the 1960's ... until around 1974, a minimal consideration was given to PR. A study was made in the ministry where by the public relations Bureau was promoted to a public relations and information department ... the activities were routine reception, protocol, running the printing etc. System and strategy as to how to promote Ethiopia's real needs were unthinkable. There, of course, have been some publications... But they reflected the interest of the ruling feudal autocracy than that of the public at large (Solomon, 1998: 22).

There was no incident such as the 1974 famine that exposed the weakness of the then government public relations. During the Emperor's 51 years of reign, the country's image was that of the king's himself, rich, the bread basket of Africa. However, the famine was telling another story, the country wasn't rich as it was depicted by the image of the Emperor. The British Journalist, Jonathan Dimbleby not only exposed "the hidden hunger" to the world, but also the ignorance and weakness of the government public relations (Solomon, 1998: 22). Though an effort was made to stop the story from being broadcast as far as traveling to London, but that was just a futile exercise. The "hidden hunger" together with other critical economic, political and social issues caused a revolution that brought down the reign of the Emperor to an end.

In the history of public relations in Ethiopia 1960's was also a period when private public relations practice came in to existence. According to Solomon (1998: 23), Alem public relations consultancy established by writers Sibhat Gebreigziabher and Dereje Deressa was the first public relations consultancy firm in the history of the country.

After a couple of years with Mennen (A magazine named after the emperor's wife), Sibhat ... teamed up with Derege... Who had a talent for business, and they started a public relations firm. Derege looked after the business side and Sibhat took care of the firm's two publications:- Ethiopian mirror, a quarterly magazine taken over from Oscar Rampone, an Italian and subsidized by the ministry of information, and the Amharic edition of Mennen, a monthly magazine. The firm was closed after 7 years by order of the revolutionary government (Solomon, 1998: 13).

The revolution that ousted the emperor was highly characterized by socialist orientation. The period that started in 1974 and ended 1991 will be remembered for nationalizing big business, Controlling the political power by dictatorship of military officers who later in the middle of 1980's established a Marxist Leninist party and constitution. The political right such as assembly, association and demonstration was only possibly if it were targeted to fight the "enemies of the revolution".

The soviet model of socialism adopted by the military government led the public relations and the media practice to the full fledged propaganda. The media and the few government public relations units fell under a strict control and guidance of assigned military officers. It was for this special mission that the then Ministry of Information and National Guidance came to existence. Public relations practices in government as well as mass political organizations were masterminded by political cadres especially assigned for this purpose. Obviously in such a condition, it would be foolishness to expect the professional progress of public relations practice in the country. Solomon (1998: 24) has summarized the public relations practices at those two periods as follows.

Firstly PR, which entered the Ethiopian scenario in 1960's, remained to be government tutelage: secondly, except for their differences of political philosophy, PR in both regimes were preoccupied in creating, preserving and promoting images of their respective rulers: and thirdly, communication models employed in the PR activities during this time falls under the press a gentry, propaganda and persuasion models, devoid of democratic substances (Solomon, 1998: 24).

2.2.2 Contemporary public relations situation in Ethiopia

Communicating the public is one of the key responsibilities of any government. Without communication, governance would not be possible even the bad ones. For some, it is well known and accordingly they had tried to establish a conducive environment where they could be able to effectively communicate with their public. Especially for those types of governments who claim to be developmental and democratic, communication remains to be the center of all their operations.

A little bit later in this part, an effort will be made to briefly touch government policy statements stipulated in relation to the role of government communication. Before proceeding to that point, it would be better to mention the fact that the topic this research is planning to work on is not dealt with any of the graduates of this

department so far. Probably topics related to free flow of information and the proclamation of the mass media and access to information are the only worth mentioning relevant topics.

Be that as it may, a lot of emphasis has been given to the duty of the government in relation to disseminating correct and all inclusive information in a timely fashion. The policy document entitled “issues of establishing democracy in Ethiopia” says in order to ensure the active and vast participation; the public should be able to get correct and timely information. The other policy document “capacity building policy and strategy” gave similar emphasis to the importance of disseminating correct and timely information.

Given those clear and repeatedly declared policy statements, the next important step would be establishing the effective mechanism to ensure the dissemination of correct and timely information in a very sustainable manner. The government who understood that the realization of policy statements require practical measures, some efforts aimed at creating a viable government communication was made almost on a sustainable manner. The decision of the government to establish the then ministry of information in 2002 was one of such an effort aimed to realize the effective dissemination of government information. This came to happen with the promise of the late prime minister to empower the ministry of information at the reshuffling of his cabinet in the middle of the term.

Following the establishment of the ministry some efforts were made to ensure effective government communication system. In a continued move that might be considered as part of an effort to reform government communication system, a team was established to draw best lessons from the government of South Africa and others. Discussion forums were also held with an aim of identifying the problems, and also proposing solutions where creating effective government communication would be possible.

In one of such an effort of reforming government communication a paper presented on a consultative workshop organized by the ministry of information in 2003, by then Minister of Information Berket Simon clearly indicated the fact that the government had failed to disseminate information properly. In his paper entitled “the future of the private press in Ethiopia and the government perspective,” Ato Berket indicated that the state as well as other state actors failed to provide government information to the private press and according to him this had partly contributed to the fragile situation that the private press was found in.

During the time Ministry of Information was bestowed both with the information transaction and regulatory task, which of course placed the institution in a state of identity crisis. Moreover; significant numbers of government offices were not having public relations units as well as practitioners. Even those who were assumed to have public relations departments and practitioners were tied up with so many problems that would hinder them to function properly.

It was the intention of the government to keep on the effort of establishing effective government communication system by organizing an office which more or less focus on the mere task of information transaction. This office now has worked for about five years. Some say there are encouraging achievements so far; while others say that no change had happened; still others utter the situation has gone even worse.

According to these critics, though public relations units and practitioners are available in many federal government offices, there seems to be a serious lack of professionalism. The government itself considers public relations practitioners as more of politically committed individuals rather than professionals. It seems that most of the public relations offices do not have a clearly defined roles and responsibilities from the appropriate body. Though an effort has been made to introduce the public relations head to the management body of government offices still there are significant numbers who have been denied this opportunity. Due to lack of current information about their own offices and the prejudice media have on public relations offices, most

practitioners shy away from media engagement; most of the heads of government offices either, do not worry about properly carrying out their duty to communicate the public.

However; many countries around the world would try their level best to establish effective government communication system where professional public relations practice can be exercised. In presenting the experience of the United States of America, Marguerite H. Sullivan in her book “a responsible press office” said that governments have so much valuable information that they can provide to the public; therefore, they definitely need an effective way and professional practitioners to distribute it to their citizens.

Well developed government communication systems basically do worry about having very good working relationship with the media in general. According to Ridgway (1984:8), worrying to establish smooth relationship with the media is a matter of securing communication channels with different stakeholders. For Grunig (1992:119), effective government communication among other things is related to proper planning. When it comes to our own context it seems that media relations and public relations planning is not as such a serious matter of concern.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A number of traditional communication theories have tried to explain how effective a message from a source will be transmitted to the medium in order to generate a positive response. Given the current communication revolution created by information communication technology, a lot has been changed on ways and speed of receiving and transmitting messages (Jethwaney, 2000: 5-8, Seitel, 2011: 81-82, Joshi, 1999: 15-18, Lomme & Russel, 2010: 284-285).

As a result of this phenomenon, communications scholars have turned to develop communication theories that give emphasis on audiences. Among such audience centric theories one is constructivism (Seitel, 2011: 81, Jethwaney, 2000: 6-8,

Butterick, 2011: 16). “Constructivism communication theory suggests that knowledge is constructed not transmitted” (Seitel, 2011:81). According to this theory, for effective communication it is important to have some information about the receiver such as beliefs, predictions and background. Coordinated management of meaning is another contemporary communication theory.

When we communicate primarily through conversation we construct our own social realities of what is going on and what kind of action is appropriate. We, have our own “Stories” of life experience which we share with others in conversation. When we interact, say the creators of this theory, we attempt to “Coordinate” our own beliefs, morals, and ideas of “good” and “bad” with those of others so that a mutual outcome might occur (Seitel, 2011: 81).

The whole point of this theory emphasizes the fact that communication is not a simple task of transmitting message. Instead it is a complex interconnected series of interaction where the participants affect each other (Seite, 2011: 81).

In the contemporary theories of public relations of communications, it might be difficult to find a widely discussed theory than that of the four models of Grunig and Hunt (Seitel, 2011: 81, Jetwaney & Sacar, 2006: 6-7, Stokes & Rubin, 2010: 209). Of course not withstanding contemporary theorists are believed to have opened new ways of thinking about public relations; still a lot remains to be done. Almost all public relations text _book authors have borrowed theories from the adjacent disciplines of communication, such as psychology, sociology and organizational studies; even Grunig’s model itself is not purely an independent one (Mackey, 2003: 1-2). According to Mackey (2003: 1-2), a breakthrough happened at the 21st century.

At the end of the twentieth century, J. Grunig’s four model concept of public relations was the only modern theoretical approach that could be said to have originated from within public relations scholarship. Even J Grunig perspective is rooted in political theory but the 21st century’s burgeoning critical and professional interest in ethical

public relations has produced a flurry of discipline specific theoretical initiatives (Mackey, 2003: 1)

The four models of public relations proposed by Professor James E. Grunig and Todd Bunt explain four different approaches to the practice of public relations, (Seitel, 2011: 81).

2.3.1 Press a-gentry (Publicity): In this model of communication the focus is on sending message from the source to the receiver. Relatively it is an ancient form of communication model where one way traffic is assumed to be productive. As Seitel (2011: 81) put it, “This model is essentially one way communication where messages will be sent from a source to a receiver with the express intention of winning favorable media attention.” This model of communication was marked by manipulation, exaggeration and deception (Solomon, 1998: 9). There were international efforts to deceive the public to the extent such shameful deception was related to the assertion public relation can use all means to achieve its goal (Solomon, 1998: 10)

2.3.2 Public information model: The early 1900’s, was a time when huge business organizations were under serious attack from the media on issues of corruption and other forms of injustice. This situation has forced private organizations to establish public relations offices and hire practitioners. This period was marked with a communication model known as public information (Grunig, 1992: 286, Solomon, 1998: 10)

This is another early form of one way communication designed not necessarily to persuade but rather to inform. Both this and the press a gentry’s model have been linked to the common notion of public relations as propaganda (Seitel, 2011: 81).

As it is indicated by Solomon (1998: 10), this stage was identified as public relations practice having a significant influence on public opinion that may have its own contribution to prevent policy changes of social significance. During this time the principle of Lee which promotes telling the truth is the best way to effective public relations was a widely accepted way of doing public relations business. It was also a time when the first “public Bureau” was opened in Boston and Washington in 1902 then followed by Lee’s office of publicity (Solomon, 1998:10-11). Many governmental and nongovernmental organizations opened public relations units from 1900-1931.

Government public relations are restricted to providing “information” rather than “publicity” and to avoid practicing “Public relations”. Thus, even today, government agencies are essentially limited to practicing the public information model (Grunig & Hunt, 1992: 37).

Compared to the Press a-gentry model, the public information model got a huge acceptance, as a result it became the dominant form of public relations in many organizations (Solomon, 1998: 11). There was a slight change that came up with public information model that was changes from deliberate deception to openness and reason.

2.3.3 Two - way asymmetry: This model of public relations seems to be a bit complicated compared to the two models discussed previously. The idea of two ways communication was introduced as a result of looking for a feedback for information disseminated that began to be considered as part of the communication process. However, the purpose of seeking feedback wasn’t to change position that has been seized by an organization, instead the feedback was to be used to introduce another form of persuasion so that the audience would accept the interest of the organization (Seitel, 2011: 81-82). This third model of public relation is known as the period of propaganda and persuasion. It is also a period when some social science research such as opinion polling, random sampling and organized feedbacks and the likes were introduced to the public relations practice.

Public relations departments flourished in government offices at all levels, even armed forces also established their own public relations units. It was also a period when an overseas mission of public relations was begun. The First World War, which contributed significantly for the expansion and consolidation of propaganda, has also to be noted here as an historical matter of coincidence. The UK government established a strong propaganda office which would persuade the USA to enter into the war on the side of the Allies. Similar measure was taken from the USA side to establish the US government propaganda agency. “Slogans such as “Your country NEEDS YOU” became a catch word for the official public relations during the war in Britain” was famous (Solomon, 1998: 13).

The Empire Marketing Board (EMB) set up in 1924-1931, used huge PR techniques such as films, posters, exhibitions and the press in pursuit of mass persuasion and promotion of trade. The EMB became a prelude to another important overseas information service development. The BBC Empire service (1932), and in 1934 the British council, in which Britain’s foreign PR activities incorporated a wider educational, political and “cultural propaganda policy” (Solomon: 1998, p.13)

During these period, public relation scholars such as Bernays was advocating public relations practitioners should strive for satisfying the public interest. He has also contributed valuable works such as crystallizing public opinion (1923). The engineering of consent (1955) and propaganda, (1955). Those materials have helped as references for the public relations practitioners in the areas such as ethical values, attitudes and key interests of the people (Solomon, 1998: 13). The Second World War similarly has paved the way for the development of government public relations. Big governmental ministry offices such as the ministry of information in the UK and the USIA in the US were established to carry out government public relations. The practice of censoring information also came to be implemented; the reason then was to prevent moral harm.

2.3.4 Two - way symmetry: The advocates of this model presents it as the preferable model of public relations. According to Seitel (2011:82) the symmetric model advocates for free and equal information flow between an organization and its publics based on mutual understanding. This model of public relations will give practitioners a balanced relationship with the public whom they serve as a mediator to their organization. The major advocate and founder of this model James E. Grunig mentioned that it would be difficult to exactly indentify when this model came into being. However, he noted that those men who are considered to be the founders of modern public relations Lee and Bernarys used to council their clients in a way both the organization and the public mutually benefit from each other's interaction (Grunig, 1992: 286, Solomon, 1998: 15).

Following the Second World War professionalism in public relations has begun to take shape as public relations offices flourished almost everywhere. The emergence of professionalism, the demand for further refinement and expansion of professionalism together with consolidation of research work in quality and quantity as well as public relations education, created conducive environment for the popularization of the symmetric model of public relations (Grunig, 1992: 289, Seitel, 2011: 85). "The fourth model of public relations was better conceptualized by Scott Mcutlip and Allen center in their first edition of "effective public Relations", 1952 used the term "PR" to describe the principles and practice of communications employed to build good relationships with the public." (Solomon, 1998:15). In their serious conceptual analysis of symmetric public relations model, the two scholars have noted what characterizes this model.

Public relations is the communication and interpretation of information to the public's of an institution; the communication and interpretation of the information, ideas and opinion from those publics to the institution in an effect to bring the two into harmonious adjustment (Solomon, 1998: 15).

While J. Grunig and Hunt were advocating the symmetrical model of public relations over the other three models a lot of critics were there that considers the symmetrical model ideal than realistic. There were claims that the asymmetrical model is more appropriate to public relations as it stands for the interest of the organization rather than that of the public. According to these advocates of asymmetric model of public relations, it would be absurd to stand for the public interest not less than the organization interest. Those advocates of asymmetric model are of an opinion that organizations are paying for public relations with an intention of securing their interest. Given this situation it is nonsense to think that public relations should promote the interest of the public with the right balance to the organizational interest. (Mackey, 2003:1). For such critics Grunig has written the following.

Some critics of the symmetrical world view both practitioners and theorists claim that the approach is unrealistic or idealistic. They argue that organization hire public relations people as advocates to advance their interests and not as “do-gooders” who “give in” to outsiders with an agenda different from that of the organization. In short, these critics believe that organizations would not hire a public relations person who does not practice asymmetrically (Grunig & white, 1992: 46).

Grunig further added arguments which help to consolidate his symmetric model over the asymmetric one (Grunig & white, 1992: 47). He claimed that there are research findings that prove symmetrical public relations program are the most appropriate one compared to the other three. According to Grunig it has proved that the symmetric model can benefit the target audience as much as the sponsoring organization.

Although research supports the idea that the two ways symmetrical model makes public relations more ethical, senior managers of organizations who are oriented to the bottom-line also want to know whether it pays for their organizations to be ethical. Research to date suggests that it does. Several studies have shown the ineffectiveness of the press agency, public information, and two-way asymmetrical models (Grunig, 1992: 308)

As J. Grunig and Hunt's four models of public relations and specifically their advocacy for the symmetric model over the others was a very recent phenomenon, obviously there will continue a lot of arguments and counter arguments on the symmetric model. In due process public relations might have chances of getting other new theories. Be that as it may, other theoretical frameworks such as dialogic theory of public relations, rhetorical theory, relationship management and the like with their much resemblance to the symmetric model and to the extent of considering them as subset of the two way symmetric models they have been left untreated independently, under this topic.

This research will be conducted based on the two way symmetric public relations model, where public relations departments give equal emphasis to the interest of the public as that of the institutions. Especially in a country where the government is claiming to be not only developmental but also democratic, the best model for such a system is the two way symmetric. The two - way asymmetry which best serves the interest of the institution employing persuasion and propaganda as the main strategy of public relations. Moreover, the two- way symmetry model of public relations is the most progressive and ideally the one that might serve the interest of an institution as well as a country.

2.4 The major functions of public relations

Different writers have indicated a number of activities that might be considered as public relations responsibilities. Some would prefer to split relatively huge tasks into smaller pieces and the others opt to enumerate in a very summarized and inclusive manner. This paper would like to adopt the summarized and inclusive way of enumerating the functions of public relations. According to Seitel (2011: 44, Baines et.al, 2004: 161, Jethwaney et al, 2000: 56-60, Sullivan, 2006: 11, Ridg way, 1984: 45-47), The following are among the major functions of public relations.

2.4.1 Media relations: one of the basic functions of public relations is the task of dealing with journalists. The media relations function of public relations practitioners has two forms. The first one is initiating the media coverage. The PR professionals are usually advised to employ the proactive way of dealing with journalists. In this style of media relations, public relations office will prepare press release and employ other information providing mechanisms by their own so that they would be able to feed the hungry Journalists. The second type of media relations is concerned with responding to media queries. Even though it is not possible to fully quit queries that may come from journalists, providing them information proactively will help so much to minimize their questions.

2.4.2 Planning: public relations deals with a variety of planning activities; preparing the annual public relations plan is one that would be done before the beginning of a new budget year. Public relations annual plan more than anything else requires research which basically focus on finding out the kind of communication environment in which the job will be done. Trying to know the public mood, the media situation and finding out potential communication barriers would be some of the focus areas of the research. In addition to the annual plan of action, activities such as special events, media events and communication programs that demand a plan of their own nature will be conducted.

2.4.3 Writing: obviously writing will be considered to be one of the major skills of public relations. Practitioners are expected to write materials that range from half a page press release up to so many pages of speech, article or brochures.

2.4.4 Research: the public relations practice desperately needs research. The annual plan itself cannot be prepared without research; that may help to understand in what communication environment the task will be implemented. Even the task of writing measurable objectives badly requires research.

2.4.5 Counseling: after knowing the communication environment, then comes predicting what might happen in the future. After the task of predicting the future the next step would be consulting the management on what should be done to maximize the opportunities if there are any and to avoid or minimize the threats. The public relations departments also consult the management as well as other staffs on media relation issues.

The consultation service of the public relations departments will also extend to the public. There are a number of issues whereby the public relations practitioners consult the public. Like how to deal with specific current issues.

2.4.6 Stakeholders' relations: an organization in which a public relations office exists have so many stakeholders about whom the public relations practitioners should care about. Public relations office has a common responsibility of communicating different actors such as government offices, internal employees, community members and other stakeholders group that might be important to the organization. The public relations office should device the best way of approaching those stakeholders.

2.4.7 Media monitoring: though the media relations task of public relations is believed to include looking after how media reported the information it received, Some writers prefer to mention the media monitoring activity rather by its own. In whatever way it might be mentioned the media monitoring task involves following media reports related to the organization in any way and identifying the trend of those media reports. The media monitoring and trends analysis task can serve as a major input of communication research.

2.4.8 Crisis management: different crisis might occur because of different causes. Some of the crisis might occur as a result of natural cause and others might be manmade. The crisis might be anything that has occurred as a result of nature or human being, however, not to be prepared in advance for such a crisis would have a

huge potential to destroy the reputation of an organization. Pearson who is quoted by (Baines et.al, 2004: 325) said the following “A true crisis of improperly managed can destroy an organization”. So one of the major responsibilities of public relations offices would be to prepare themselves for such a crisis that usually happens in everyday public relation routine.

2.4.9 Public affairs and lobbying: are among public relations responsibilities that demand due consideration. Public affairs and lobbying refer to the efforts of public relations practitioners to ensure government bodies will not enact policies, legislations and regulations that might affect the interests of the organizations and their operations (Baines et al, 2004: 371). It is all about the organizations relationships with the government in the process of policy development and law enactment.

2.5 Qualifying factors of professional public relations

Currently we are on the verge of recognizing the fact that public relations is a profession. A lot of research works are conducted that may help to place a century old modern public relations practice on a firm foundation. Those emerging modern public relations theoretical frameworks are winning supports around researchers which greatly contribute to pave the way for the acceptance of public relations as an independent profession. The unfolding recognition to the public relations profession deserves talking about specific characteristics of professional public relations career and individual technical skills and attitudes that might be required from practitioners. Following would be a brief summary of those issues.

2.5.1 Features of successful public relations career

According to Seitel (2011: 43-45) the following seven points characterize successful public relations career.

2.5.1.1 Diversity of experience: as the profession requires communicating and building smooth relationships with different actors, having experience on a variety of issues and disciplines is much helpful. So, more than having a degree on a specific subject, exposure to different areas of work and knowledge would enable public relations practitioners to perform effectively.

2.5.1.2 Performance: earlier in this section, it has been mentioned that one of the challenges in public relations profession is related to the fact that it demands working so many hours a day and all the week. In order to successfully carry out the responsibilities expected from a public relations practitioner, one has to be a great performer. Being a great performer in public relations requires the perseverance working round the clock, updating oneself on developments, communicating with stakeholders and building smooth relationships.

2.5.1.3 Communication skills: a professional public relations practitioners are not expected to communicate as ordinary people are doing. Saying something to somebody in a given specific time and situation requires careful thinking, speaking or writing. As a professional person, while communicating with stakeholders, one should worry not to convey unwanted and probably destructive messages. This would be very much intolerable when it is done by public relations professional. Hence as a professional person who frequently deals with media, internal and external stakeholders, public relations practitioners have to equip themselves with the appropriate communication skills.

2.5.1.4 Relationship building: public relations practitioners are bridges that link the organization with different stakeholders. So the public relations office that shoulders the primary role of relationship building should develop and employ strategic measures that would enable it build smooth relationships, with different internal and external stakeholders.

2.5.1.5 Proactively and passion: most of the public relations practices are related to engagements in a variety of ways with different stakeholders. Communication is the dominant task in the responsibilities of public relations. The frequent regular engagement with stakeholders will greatly demand being proactive and passionate. In the absence of proactive information flow and lack of passion to do that will only result in the loss of one's reputation.

2.5.1.6 Timeliness: as a profession working with the media very closely needs to communicate in a timely manner. The media with a major task of informing the public on time demands swift response for the information quires. So in order to have smooth relationship with the media public relations practitioners must provide the information that the public demands on a timely manner.

2.5.1.7 Intangibles: personalities like ability and chemistry.

2.5.2 Technical Skills

Developing career requires having specific technical skills. In this regard public relations, which are emerging as a profession, surrounded with doubts and questions badly needs technical skills that might help to qualify the discipline as an independent one. According to Seitel (2011: 46), the following are six important technical skills for public relations practitioners.

2.5.2.1 Knowledge of the field: in order to be a good public relations practitioner, one has to know what public relations is all about. A clear understanding must be grasped about what public relations do and for what cause it stands.

2.5.2.2 Communication knowledge: as the public relations practice is entirely dominated by the task of communicating with different stakeholders, practitioners should master the appropriate communication skill. This may include how to write

press releases and other public relation materials. Moreover, it is important to know the kinds of media and their enthusiasm to report on issues related to ones organization and how they are doing their job is also important. The knowledge of conducting communication research is also worth mentioning item.

2.5.2.3 Technological knowledge: this refers to the importance of being familiar with computers and related technologies in addition to the ability of using the new media.

2.5.2.4 Knowledge of Current events: a profession that is supposed to deal with stakeholders on a regular basis more than anything else requires having knowledge of current affairs. The current affairs that public relations practitioners should know must not only be limited to the sector in which they belong to, rather it should extend to all sphere of life as much as possible.

2.5.2.5 Organizational knowledge: without closely knowing the in-and-out of the organization in which one is working, it would be difficult to effectively communicate with stakeholders. When the organization is found in a specific sector of industry, it would also be vital to have the appropriate knowledge of the industry. In a situation where the public relations office is stranger to the affairs of the organization, communication with stakeholders especially with the media will not be productive and sometimes might turn to be counterproductive.

2.5.2.6 Management knowledge: public relations by itself deal with a variety of management tasks. Moving as a team in public relation office requires the skill and knowledge of managing public relations offices. It is also important to have knowledge of how managers make decision, how policies are developed and what kind of pressures and responsibilities are bestowed on managers.

2.5.3 Attitude: being effective public relations professional requires just more than having the aforementioned technical skills. In addition to the technical skills, the following six factors are important according to (Seitel, 2011: 46).

2.5.3.1 Pro-communications: the constitution of many countries stipulate the public right to know. This constitutional right is based on the right to know not on the need to know. Accordingly, public relations professionals should propagate and live for disclosing information rather than withholding it. For public relations practitioner, maximum disclosure of information and exceptional secrecy has to be the rule of the game. They should never shy away from speaking to the media.

2.5.3.2 Advocacy: it is after believing in same thing that advocating for that cause comes. Here also public relations professionals should believe in their employers and the causes they stand for. However, believing in the employers' and their cause doesn't go as far as lying or distorting facts, as one of the major principles of public relations says never ever lie. Of course there are times when public relations professionals should avoid commenting on certain issues for the benefit of the organization.

2.5.3.3 Counseling orientation: top managements desire to get counseling on the intangibles such as public opinion, media influence and communication messages is not as such much developed. Even though this is the fact, public relations practitioners should strive to introduce their findings. Sometimes they might be obliged to do that in sharp opposition to other departments such as Legal, Finance or Human resource.

2.5.3.4 Ethics: while providing the counseling service to the top management, the matters that are the subject of counseling and the way it will be implemented should be ethical. As public relations professionals are image builders whatever they do has to be right and ethically acceptable.

2.5.3.5 Readiness to take risks: in an organization many people might not know about the role of public relations. This situation may demand public relations strong conviction and confidence to stand for their cause, even if that might pose a risk.

2.5.3.6 Positive outlook: sometimes public relations practitioners' advice may not get top management's acceptance. Instead the management might choose to listen to the legal department or any other unit appropriate on specific matter of concern. This customary practice should not force the public relations professionals to view their contribution as futile. Instead as consensus builder and opinion winner they should keep on smiling, dreaming for a better tomorrow.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with research methodology which deals with issues such as the research design, data sources and how the data was collected. Moreover, sampling and sampling techniques, subjects of the research and procedure are discussed under this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This research has employed a triangulation method, where both qualitative and quantitative data gathering method is used. According to Denzin (1970) “a qualitative and a quantitative research method are combined to provide a more complete set of findings than could be arrived at through the administration of one of the methods alone.” As the research topic deals with the practice and challenges of public relations in Ethiopian federal government offices, special emphasis is given to explaining what the practice looks like and the challenges that encounter while practicing public relations. In order to achieve this purpose, the researcher has tried to indicate what the global professional public relations standard seems to be and then followed comparing that standard to the existing practice in federal government offices. After doing so, challenges that encounter the practice of public relations as well as the practitioners in those federal government offices were examined.

In the effort of identifying how public relations is practiced in federal government offices and the challenges that encounter the practice as well as the practitioners, documents such regulations, guidelines, strategies and the likes that are aimed at regulating the practice of public relations were examined. Moreover, questioners were distributed to selected public relations department heads and practitioners so that they can give their reflections on how public relations is practiced in their respective offices. The information that was obtained through questioners has also helped to find out what challenges existed in the practice of public relations and also in practicing it as a practitioner.

In addition to the examination of relevant public relations documents and survey questionnaires that were distributed to selected public relations department heads and practitioners, interviews were conducted with few selected government officials specifically with those responsible to lead and improve government communication task. In this regard, offices such as the former Ministry of Information and the current Government Communication Affairs Office are entrusted with the mission of reforming government information flow and ensuring effective government communication system. Conducting interviews with officials representing them was valuable. So, this research topic, which collected data through document analysis, questionnaires and interviews, has employed a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methodology.

3.2 Sampling Techniques and procedure

According to the information obtained from the federal Government Communication Affairs Office, there are about 170 federal government offices. Out of those federal government offices, about 120 are said to have active public relations departments with practitioners and more or less important working equipments. Even out of the remaining 50 federal government offices, according to the Government Communication Affairs Office, most of them do practice public relations task though they need some kind of reinforcement.

From the 170 federal government offices, 120 actively working federal government public relations departments were addressed by the questionnaire. Though every effort was made to collect back all the questionnaires it was possible to achieve about 92 out of 120, which is 77%. When it comes to the details of the distribution some 30% of it was sent to public relations department heads, 8% to those who used to work in the public relations practice and the remaining to public relations experts in different federal government offices. Attention was also given to make some 30% of the respondents from all the three categories female. In addition to the survey

questionnaires interview with 12 federal government public relations heads and experts are also conducted. Moreover, to get the view of the government on different matters related to public relations, an interview was conducted with ministers from Government Communication Affairs Office.

3.2.1 Convenience sampling

For the purpose of this research, ten federal government offices public relations practice guiding documents were identified for examination. Those government offices are selected by their assumed critical role to play in the socio-economic and political system. As a result of the key role they play, those institutions inherently hold valuable public information which they are expected to disseminate on regular basis to the public. Moreover, because of the fact that those government offices do huge jobs and relatively do have well staffed public relations departments compared to the others, they were selected as organizations whose public relations' documents should be analyzed. Those government organizations are the following.

- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Ministry of Trade
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Customs and Revenue Authority
- Ethio Tel.com
- Ethiopian Electric Corporation

When it comes to the survey questionnaires, about 120 participants have taken part. Out of the 120 participants, some 30% were public relations heads working in different government offices including the ones selected for document analysis. Some other 62% of experts working in different government offices and the

remaining 10 questionnaires were distributed to senior public relations practitioners who had been in the profession for not less than 20 years, and are not in the profession currently. The other source of information for this research comes from interviews that were conducted with relevant government officials. In this regard, interviews were conducted with two government officials from the former Ministry of Information and other official from the Government Communication Affairs Office.

All the respondents to the questioners were those practitioners who have more than five years of experience and a minimum of first degree. The questioners were distributed to the ten government offices that are selected for document analysis as well as some other government offices that were selected on the significant role they play in the socio-political endeavor of the nation.

The document analysis part was not only limited to the ten selected federal government offices; but documents meant to regulate the government public relations practice that were prepared by the former Ministry of Information or the current Government Communication Affairs Office were also analyzed.

3.2.2 Purposive Sampling

The public relations guiding documents of ten federal government offices are selected out of 120 actively working public relations offices. The distribution of the questionnaires was also made with an assumption of gathering information from those who are believed to be appropriate and competent. Similarly, the interview is targeted to obtain relevant information about the practice and challenges of public relations in federal government offices as per the view of the government itself.

The information gathering strategy indicated above clearly shows that the sampling method is purposive. The institutions selected for document analysis, the participants in the survey questionnaires and the interviewees, all are selected purposely to get the information needed for the research topic. As scholars such as Hancock, Windridge

and Ockleford (2007: 21) noted, purposive sampling gives a researcher an advantage to ease the stress and create smooth relationship between the information seeker and provider. More over, the information seeker will have a chance to get more explanations on issues of concern. It will also create an environment of dialogue between information receiver and provider. Wancock et. al. (2002: 21-22) has mentioned the following important contributions of purposive sampling:

- It gives a chance to select those who are experienced and have the knowledge on the subject of concern.
- It will give the researcher an opportunity to identify those information sources who can effectively reflect on issues of concern.
- It will also give the researcher a chance to select relevant sources who can articulate well.
- It will give a chance to identify those who have the time to provide the information demanded.
- It will give a chance to find out those who are willing to take part in the research project in any way demanded.

3.3. Data Collection procedure and tools

3.3.1 Data collection procedure

The data source for this research came from three areas. The first source of data in this regard was collected from the Government Communication Affairs Office. Thus, documents that are written on public relations are analyzed and the findings are presented. Here the emphasis is on finding out the procedures, principles and strategies that are aimed at establishing and developing the practice of public relations. Besides, the documents at national level, public relations tools and strategies at the institutional level are also analyzed. Moreover, Questioners were prepared and distributed for federal government public relations practioniers. The main purpose here is to find out how public relations is understood and practiced in federal

government offices. In- depth interview with public relations practitioners and Government Communication Affairs Office was also employed with an aim of finding out their reflections on matters related to this research topic.

3.3.2 Data collection tools

3.3.2.1 Document analysis

Public relations guiding documents that are subjects of analysis were collected from the already identified governmental offices. The documents that were collected from the ten government offices have shown the public relations practice only at the institutional level. So, it was necessary to search for other documents that might serve as public relations national guide. Those documents were obtained from Government Communications Affairs Office.

Even the national public relations guiding document have not fully addressed all the research questions that have been raised by this research project. The national guiding documents can only show general policy directions in addition to the declaration of roles and responsibilities of public relations offices.

3.3.2.2 Survey questioners

In any case, distributing survey questioners to sort out existing real problems in the practice of public relations was vital. Accordingly, 100 questionnaires were distributed to the government offices public relations department heads as well as public relations experts. As it is mentioned earlier, some questionnaires were distributed to senior public relations heads and experts. Those target groups are believed to be appropriate and capable to comment on issues related to the practice and challenges of public relations in federal government offices.

The questionnaires were made to address two types of target groups. The first target group was government public relations department heads, in addition to the working government public relations heads, the retired or those who abandoned the profession have also taken part. The questionnaires have three parts. The first part deals with

sorting out general information about the respondents. The second part deals with trying to find out how public relations is understood by those respondents. Issues related to the planning and implementation of the task of public relations in respective government offices were also treated here. Moreover, requesting them to identify their major public relations activities was included in this second part. The final part of the questionnaire was devoted to finding out what practical challenges are there in practicing public relations in federal government offices.

3.3.2.3 Interview

In the interview with officials from government institutions that are established to strategically lead government public relations, questions that helped to understand the philosophical position of the government on the importance and role of public relations was forwarded. Additional questions which helped to understand what government thought the challenges of government public relations are and its evaluation of the current public relations practice of federal government offices especially after the establishment of Government Communications Affairs Office after carrying out the task for the past six years was also raised.

As a current public relations practitioner and a person who worked for about a decade in governmental institutions established to lead government public relations task, the researcher's personal experience of the sector has significantly contributed in the process of the research work. As a person who worked closely with the federal government public relations offices, collecting documents that were analyzed and have facilitated the process of distribution and collection of survey questionnaires were not too difficult for the researcher. Needless to say, the exposure and experience of government public relations practice have enabled the researcher to clearly understand the documents by which federal government public relations practices are guided. Moreover, this exposure and experience have contributed significantly in the

process of preparing and analyzing survey questionnaires and also in the task of conducting the interviews.

Since the research topic deals with the federal government public relations offices, the document for analysis and the survey questionnaires as well as the interview were limited to the selected government offices and individuals at the federal level. The task of gathering the documents from the selected government organizations were the first priority of the research project. Preparation and distribution of survey questionnaires were carried out alongside the document collection. The interview with government officials either those who used to lead or currently in charge of leading government public relations task were conducted after the documents and questionnaire analysis. This sequential order is chosen to get the chance of clearing issues that may arise out of documents and questionnaire analysis. Finally, all the finding of the data were analyzed against the global standard of the practice of public relations. As a qualitative, research the data analyzed were explained in the form of narration.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis, presentation and discussion of findings. As the research deals with the practice and challenges of public relations in the federal government offices of Ethiopia, the issue was approached in two major respectives. The first one was the government perspective. Here, an effort was exerted to find out the commitment and contribution of the government for the establishment and development of public relations in government offices. In this regard, existing documents meant to establish and develop public relations in government offices were analyzed in addition to the interview with the relevant government office that is in charge of leading the government public relations. The second perspective in dealing with the research topic was related to the gathering and analysis of views of practitioners who were managers and experts in government public relation units. In this regard, a questionnaire aimed at finding out how public relations is practiced in government offices and the challenges that practitioners face while carrying out their duties was administered. In addition to the questionnaire an in - depth interview with about 12 public relations department heads and experts was also conducted.

The discussion in this chapter is preceded by the exploration of the contribution of the government in the process of the establishment and development of public relations in the federal government offices. Needless to mention that practical steps to realize something can only happen when one is convinced of the role and importance of that specific matter. Hence, the discussion about the role and contribution of the government in the establishment and development of public relations in the federal government offices is preceded by sorting out whether or not the government has recognized public relations as an important contributing element in the process of socio economic transformation of the country.

4.2 Government public relation guidelines

In the earlier part of this paper, it was noted that modern public relations is believed to have been started in 1960's. However, it was impossible to come across any government documents that stated something about government public relations during those times. Even the national level government public relations documents which the researchers have used were very recent ones. Be that as it may, while developing the method for this research, there was an intention to analyze public relations guideline documents that were prepared and used at the institution level, by selecting some institutions as a sample. However, this couldn't be done as those institutions were not having any of such documents. So it was not a matter of choice to focus on very recent government public relations documents that were prepared at the national level and having national perspectives. The documents were analyzed according to the following major points.

4.2.1 Recognizing the importance

Most of the reform efforts of the government in all walks of life came forward following the ruling coalition's survival of the rift that occurred between the main constituent members of the EPRDF. It is clear that all the policies meant to govern different sectors were developed and distributed during that time. As it was true for all the other sectors, government position on media and public relations was also demonstrated in one of the policy papers entitled "Issues of establishing democracy in Ethiopia". The document which was published and distributed by the then Ministry of Information has incorporated a number of issues that were deemed necessary for the establishment of democracy. Relatively speaking, much space was devoted to the issue of the media and only two lines were written on the need for disseminating government information. After explaining the then media situation of the country and the problem associated with it, the policy document notes "for those who have the desire and are capable of providing correct and timely information to the society, the

government should start providing government information” (MoI, 2002, 125). A close reading of the statement reveals that this statement directly contradicts article 20, sub - article 3 of the constitution, which stipulates the following: “Freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed. Freedom of press shall specifically include b) Access to information of public interest” (constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No.1/1995).

The sub article in the constitution is specifically mentioned to qualify the elements of press freedom and it will not pre suppose any precondition. It simply says the press has the right to get information. The policy statement mentioned above, however, says the government must be ready to provide information for those media which have the desire and capacity to disseminate correct and timely government information to the public. Be that as it may, from the policy statement mentioned above, we may conclude that the government has recognized the importance of disseminating government information, which presupposes the establishment of public relations units in government offices.

After the distribution of policy documents that govern different sectors, series of moves of reform were underway almost everywhere. In a similar fashion, the information management sector which was organized together with culture sector, was made to stand by its own as an independent entity named the Ministry of Information. The newly emerged ministry just from the outset conducted series of consultative workshops with the intention of improving the press situation in the country.

In one of such forums held in January 2003, a paper presented by Ato Berket Simon, the then minister of Information, entitled “The feature of the private press in Ethiopia and the view of the government” indicated the failure of the government in providing public interest information to the press. In his paper, Ato Berket said that “for the last

ten years, the government as well as other governmental actors at all levels were unable to perform up to the responsibility bestowed upon them in relation to disseminating government information.

This problem has hindered the press to use the fact in its reporting which in effect harm the government. Moreover, the failure of disseminating all inclusive government information timely has created a scapegoat for those press that are actively engaged in the process of disseminating hearsay (MoI, 2003: 24).

The paper in fact had admitted the fact that the government had been more conspicuous than the press in its failure of disseminating a variety of information swiftly. Ensuring the effective dissemination of government information in a sustainable manner more than anything else pre supposes the presence of professional public relations managers and experts in addition to the creation of conducive working environment for those practitioners.

With the continued effort of reforming government communication, more elaborated documents on information dissemination and government public relations continued to come out. In one of such a document entitled “The importance of reaching consensus on peace, democracy and development issues and our public relations practice” which was produced by the Ministry of Information, the importance of public relations was highly emphasized.

Public relations will play a critical role by providing the public with comprehensive information in addition to its role of presenting analysis on the development matters so that their scope of imagination would be broadened. Through those kinds of activities, public relations would enable the public to actively participate in local as well as national issues, (MoI, 2003:51).

“Public relations for fundamental change” is the most comprehensive document produced on public relations. The document recognizes that the acceptance of public relations in Ethiopia has increased from time to time and it would even increase more in the time to come. According to this document, public relation is getting more and more acceptance because of two major reasons.

The first and the most decisive reason is its role and contribution in the process of building consensus. The second reason is related to the critical role public relations play in portraying the current and future true image of the country (MoI, 2008:1).

In the aforementioned document, the purpose of public relations was stated to be that of playing a critical role in the process of establishing consensus and image building. According to the document, consensus building is both an internal and external matter. However, the major emphasis it said would be given to the effort of reaching consensus among the internal public on issues of national interest. On the other hand, image building according to the document, would be more important when it comes to the external world (MoI, 2008:2-4).

4.2.2 Identifying duties and responsibilities

In the process of establishing and creating conducive environment for the development of public relations, the identification of duties and responsibilities of public relations is an essential matter. In a series of efforts to prepare written guiding documents for public relations, relatively speaking, a better elaborated and articulated work came out in 2003. In a document entitled “The importance of reaching consensus on issues of peace, democracy and development and our public relations practice” that was produced by the Ministry of Information, at least two media related public relations tasks were mentioned.

In relation to the practice of public relations two public relation tools, namely press releases and interviews can be employed. Press releases are instruments used to provide information for the public. Press releases should be brief and must be written in a plain language and of course should focus on a specific issue. Press releases can be presented in a written form or orally. Press releases that will be prepared and distributed on issues that arise through times will enable the public to acquaint themselves with comprehensive and timely information (MoI, 2003:74).

A more detailed explanation of public relations duties and responsibilities appeared in the document entitled “Public relations for fundamental change” which was prepared

by the Ministry of Information. Unlike the above documents, this one was fully devoted to a variety of issues related to public relations. The need to transform the public relations practice of the nation, issues that might serve as the starting point of public relations and some basic principles of public relations were widely discussed topics in the document. Planning public relations was also among the issues that were treated in depth. Very important elements of public relations planning such as environmental scanning, identifying objectives, deciding strategies, allocating budget and sorting out who perform each task and when, were well presented matters.

When it comes to the duties and responsibilities of public relations offices, a number of items were listed. Writing, media relations, public relations planning, counseling, research, community relations, website development and management were some among the long list.

An official guideline, the first of its kind, meant to govern the public relations bodies at the federal level was published and distributed in January 2014. The guideline entitled “The working procedures and organization of public relations at the federal government institutions,” which was published by the Government Communication Affairs Office, enumerated about 23 duties and responsibilities of public relations. Of course some of the issues in the long list could have been incorporated into a few categories. Be that as it may, the following were among the major tasks mentioned in the document:

- Performing the task of spokesperson
- Preparing institutional strategies and annual plan that correspond with the plan of government communication affairs office.
- Planning capacity building programs that will help to create professional public relations.

- Develop a system that would enable gathering and organizing information that is related to the institution so that it can easily be accessed by information seekers.
- Crisis management.
- Conducting research and public opinion survey.
- Creating, organizing and managing events.

4.2.3 Knowledge and technical skill

The recently published official guidelines have said nothing about the knowledge and technical requirement of public relations practitioners. However, the document entitled “Public relations for fundamental change” has mentioned some important points in relation to this matter (MoI, 2007:41-42).

Under the sub-title “Elements of public relations career” the following are mentioned:

- Knowledge of public relations both in theory and practice
- Principles
- Relationship building
- Knowledge of understanding political and social trends
- Knowledge of legal issues and responsibilities
- Understanding the importance of research and predicting the outcome
- Knowledge of National and International current affairs issues.

The document further mentioned important elements that were related to the public relations technical skills. Knowledge of the profession, the ability to organize and communicate messages, knowledge of how communication research is conducted and how to write press releases and other public relations materials were among the list. Knowledge of information technology is also mentioned among the technical skills (MoI, 2008:42).

4.2.4 Ethics

The ethics of public relations was mentioned in both the documents entitled “Public relations for fundamental change” and the recently published document on federal government public relations working procedure and organization. The more elaborated explanation of public relations ethics was found in the “Public relations for fundamental change”. It recognizes that there is a strong relationship between public relations and ethics. Hence, public relations practitioners, according to the document should always demonstrate a high standard of ethical behavior. Those professionals whose ethical standard is under question mark, said the document, couldn’t serve as good images of a country or an institution. As it is indicated in the document, the ethical standard that is expected from public relations practitioners should be specified in a way that could be measured and evaluated. In doing so, it said, those who fail to live up to the standard should be held accountable.

Honesty, according to the document is one of the major ethical behaviors expected from public relations practitioners. This ethical behavior it said stands to express the fact that public relations practitioners should strive to ensure the interest of the majority. Independence, as it is indicated in the document, is another important ethical behavior expected from public relations practitioners. The concept of independence here is related as it is stipulated in the document, to the practitioner’s freedom to stand for the truth when ever competing interests arise. The document noted that most of the time, maintaining one’s independence in the practice of public relations may pose some kind of threat; even though this is the case, it said a genuine professional practitioner should opt to face whatever risk might happen. The other ethical issues mentioned in the document include loyalty, fairness, advocacy and expertise (MoI, 2008:44-45).

4.2.5 Institutionalization

The documents prepared at different times for the purpose of developing public relations became more and more comprehensive through time. Matters which were not addressed in the previous documents would usually be incorporated or might be treated on their own in the preparations to come. The latest document produced in January, 2014, for example, fully dealt with institutionalization of public relations at the federal level. The guideline entitled “The working procedures and organization of public relations at the federal government institutions,” has an intention of institutionalizing the federal public relations practice.

The purpose of the guideline was specified to be uniformly organizing public relation units in all federal government offices. Accordingly, all federal government offices were entrusted with the responsibility of organizing a public relations department. Moreover, the guideline had an aim of clearly specifying mission, role and importance of public relations in addition to the duties and responsibilities of department heads and experts. Determining the working relationship of public relations bodies with their own institution and that of Government Communication Affairs Office was also mentioned as the other main purpose set to be achieved.

According to the document the, overall objective of the guideline would be ensuring fast government communication system where disseminating correct, timely and comprehensive government information would be possible. Achieving this objective would insure presenting the right picture of the country to the external world as well as to the internal public (GCAO, 2010:5-6).

The second part of the guideline dealt with organizing public relations bodies. It stipulated that every federal government institution must organize a public relations body which would be accountable to the head of the organization and would have strong working relationship with government communication affairs office. The

public relations departments organized according to this guideline should be staffed with experienced professional public relations heads and experts who were acquainted with the appropriate skills that the communication profession demands. Moreover, it is indicated that the practitioners should be trained and certified by the government communication affairs office. The guideline has also noted that public relations head and practitioners would have their own salary scale that was approved by the prime minister's office and distributed via the Federal Civil Service Ministry. The researcher has confirmed that the salary scale approved for public relations heads and practitioners exceeds that of other civil servants with the same status and educational background. For instance, the salary of a department head for planning, human resource development or finance department is about 4,300 birr, whereas the head of the public relations department earns about 6, 225 birr (GCAO, 2014:7).

According to the guideline, the position of department head would be on assignment and that would be done in consultation with the Government Communication Affairs Office. Though the regulation that established Government Communication Affairs Office gave the mandate of recruiting and assigning public relations heads and experts to the office, it would be sound and progressive to do it in consultation. However, the researcher has confirmed that currently the office is not in full command of assigning heads as well as experts. It seems that some government institutions, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Federal Police Commission, and few other organizations have been defiant of the system right from the beginning. Focusing on the majority of the ministries and consolidating experience and convincingly winning reputation, and then moving to the remaining ones seems to be the strategy of the office. In order to equip the public relations bodies with updated information that is related to the specific organization, the head of the public relations department has structurally become the management member of the executive organ of the institution (GCAO, 2014:7).

Part four of the guideline deals with organization and staffing of public relations. According to the guideline, any public relations unit that is organized in federal government institutions should have at least five practitioners including the head of the public relations unit. Experts working on web page, social media, information desk, photo and video should also be included as additional vital personnel in the public relations units. The more progressive and vital matter mentioned in this part was the one related to essential equipment and working budget. It stipulates that public relations units should be filled with important working equipment and sufficient budget (GCAO, 2014:14).

As the whole effort is to realize a working national government public relations institution clearly defining a working relationship with different bodies would be extremely important. Accordingly, in part five, the guideline deals with stating the public relations units' relationship with different bodies. Public relations units primarily would be accountable to the head of the institution. It is also noted that all departments in an institution are obliged to provide valuable information to the public relations department on timely basis and on sustainable manner.

When it comes to public relations bodies' relationship with the government communication affairs office, it seems that public relations units in the federal government offices are more tied with the Government Communication Affairs Office than that of their own organization. About 11 items were listed in relation to the working relationship between the two. Reporting every new happening that might deserve attention in the organization and in the environment around and participating in regular forums conducted biweekly and every three months were some of the areas where relation between the two were established. The capacity building relationship was also mentioned. Public relations units were also expected to have a working relationship with the institute of Ombudsman in relation to the execution of access to information proclamation.

All the provisions mentioned above show the effort of establishing a public relations institution at the federal level. A clearly designed mission and role attached to the public relations departments, the obligation exacted on federal government institutions to organize public relations units and to include the head of the public relations in the executive wing of the institution as well as a clearly defined relationship with government communication affairs office, which is entitled to lead and transform government public relations, were good indicators of establishing an institution. The minimum number of staff that a public relations unit should constitute and the idea that public relation units should be equipped with important working materials and budget requirement were encouraging steps towards the establishment of public relations institution at least at the federal level.

Though a number of important issues about the essence, role and practice of public relations are addressed in the aforementioned documents, much is not seen on the ground. For instance, some of the documents have discussed how a public relations planning is conducted, and the important steps while preparing the plan. When it comes to the practice, however, proper public relations plan is almost non existence. In the practice of public relations the power to influence the management as well as the whole institution is very essential. In order to have the power to influence, public relations, research and counseling are very important instruments. Since the public relations departments are not in a position to deliver such value adding practices, their acceptance and influence is very minimal. In most of the federal government offices, they are highly attached to non value adding practices, such as organizing meetings, writing minutes and other protocol related activities. Even the information dissemination task for which public relations are important is not done well in most of the federal government offices.

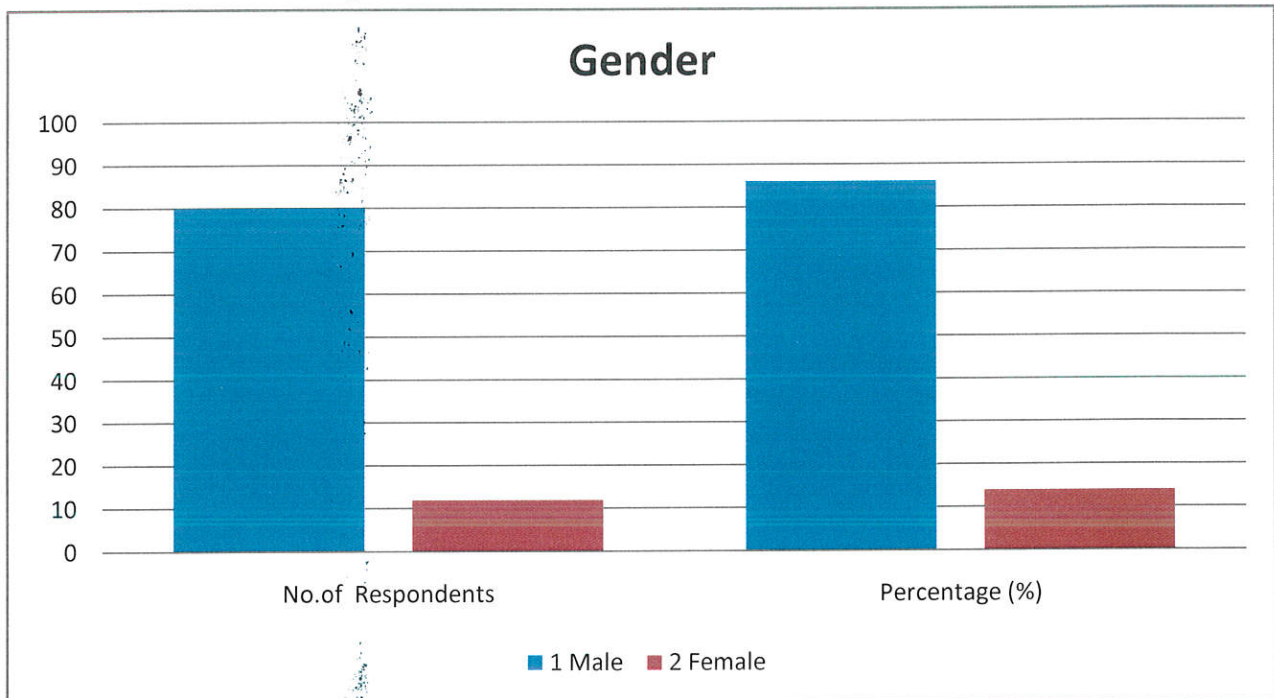
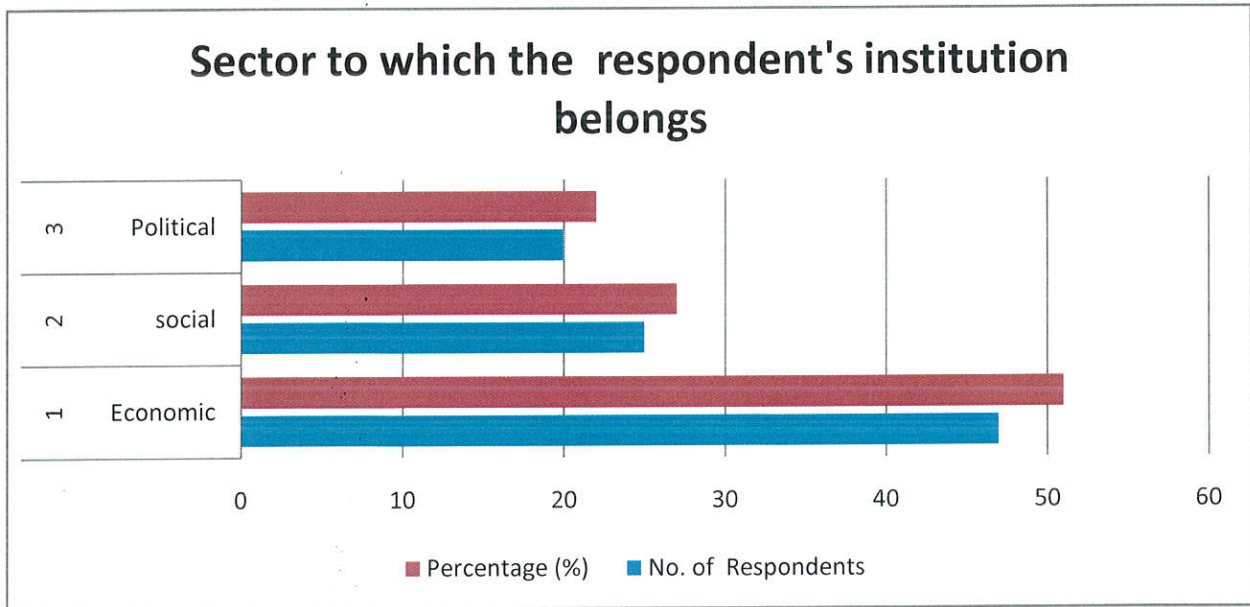
There seems to be a huge gap in identifying news worthy items and writing press releases. Identifying events that may deserve press conferences aren't also something to which public relations practitioners are familiarized with. As a result of this most

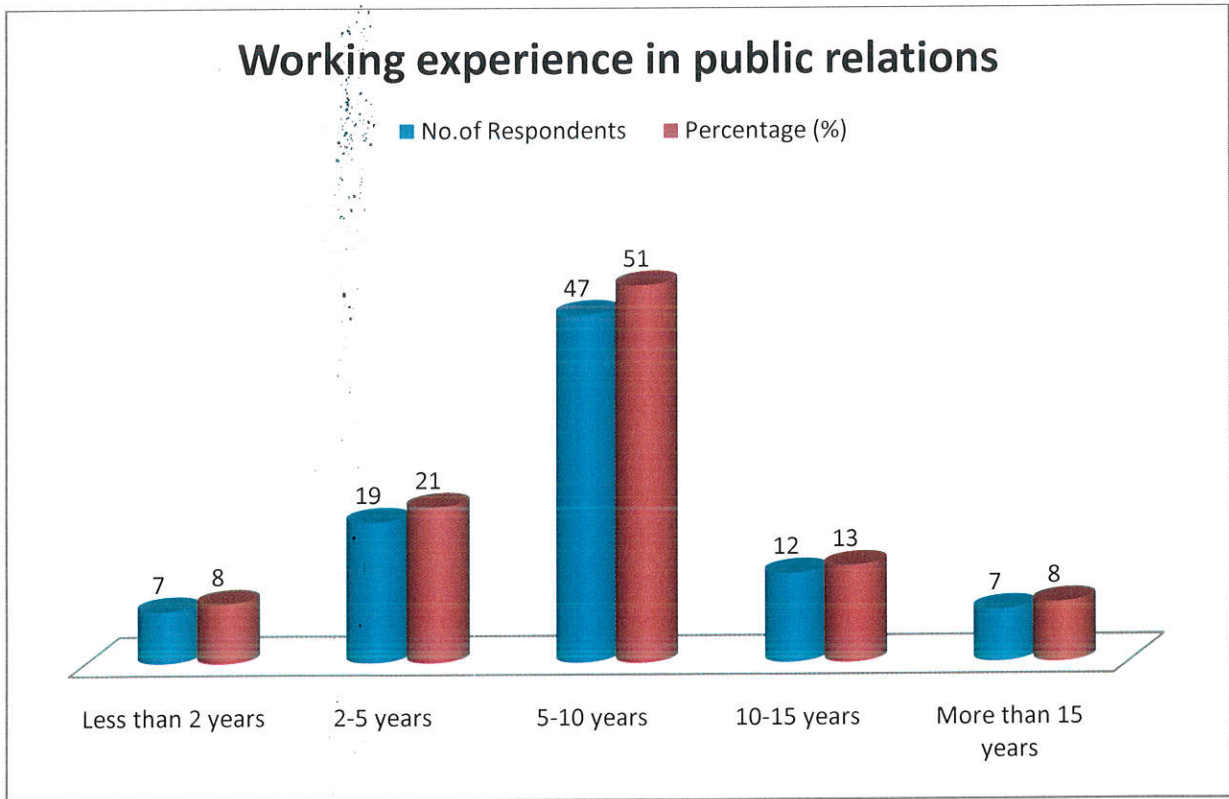
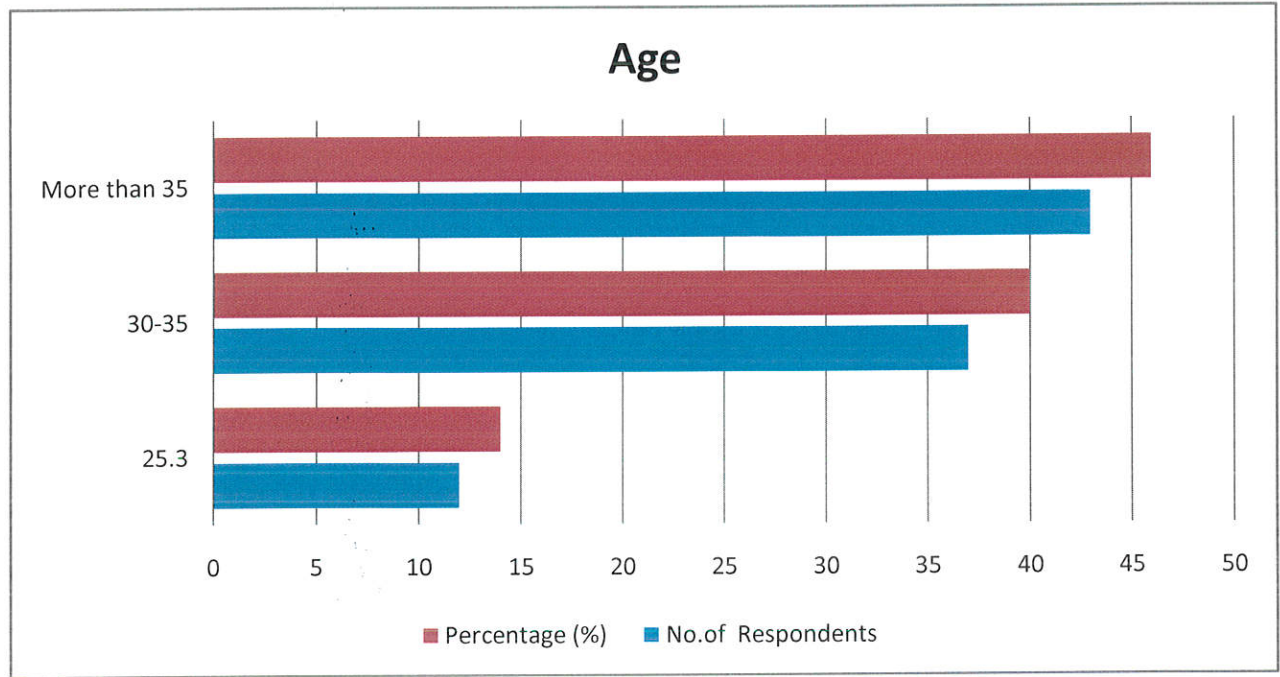
public relations offices are getting less media coverage, leaving a number of important stories untold. As they are not working proactively, they remain to be reactive where in most of the cases, they decline to speak. Regular publications which practitioners as well as other stakeholders considered as one of the major tasks of public relations are also non rewarding ones. Though much money is invested in it, no one seems to have an interest to read it. The publications are simply prepared because public relations departments are entitled to prepare them. They are not informative as well as educative. No culture of collecting about the readability the publications.

4.3 The practitioners' view

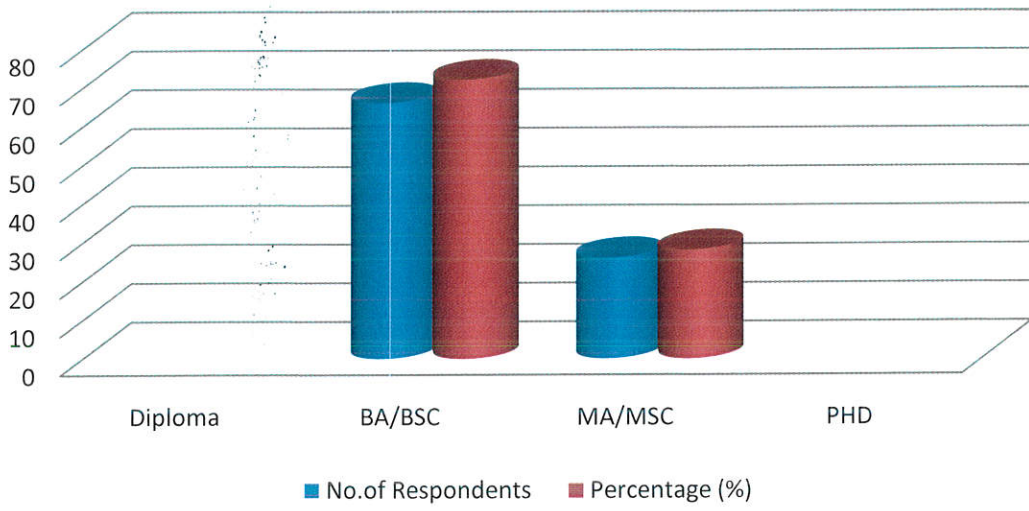
In order to have a broader and somehow nuanced view of the practice and challenges of public relations in the federal government offices, incorporating practitioners' views in some way would be vital for this study. Thus, besides trying to go through documents prepared on public relations at the national level, questionnaires for practitioners and in-depth interview with some selected public relations heads and experts were employed. Hence, the following would be the presentation of the data from the practitioners organized under selected themes. It begins with the presentation of the demographic distribution of respondents followed by tables which summarize the respondents' views. Though the word demography stands for a very broader concept, in the context of this study, it is limited only to gender, age, working experience, educational background and the status of respondents regarding training in public relations.

Table One: - Demographic Condition of Respondents

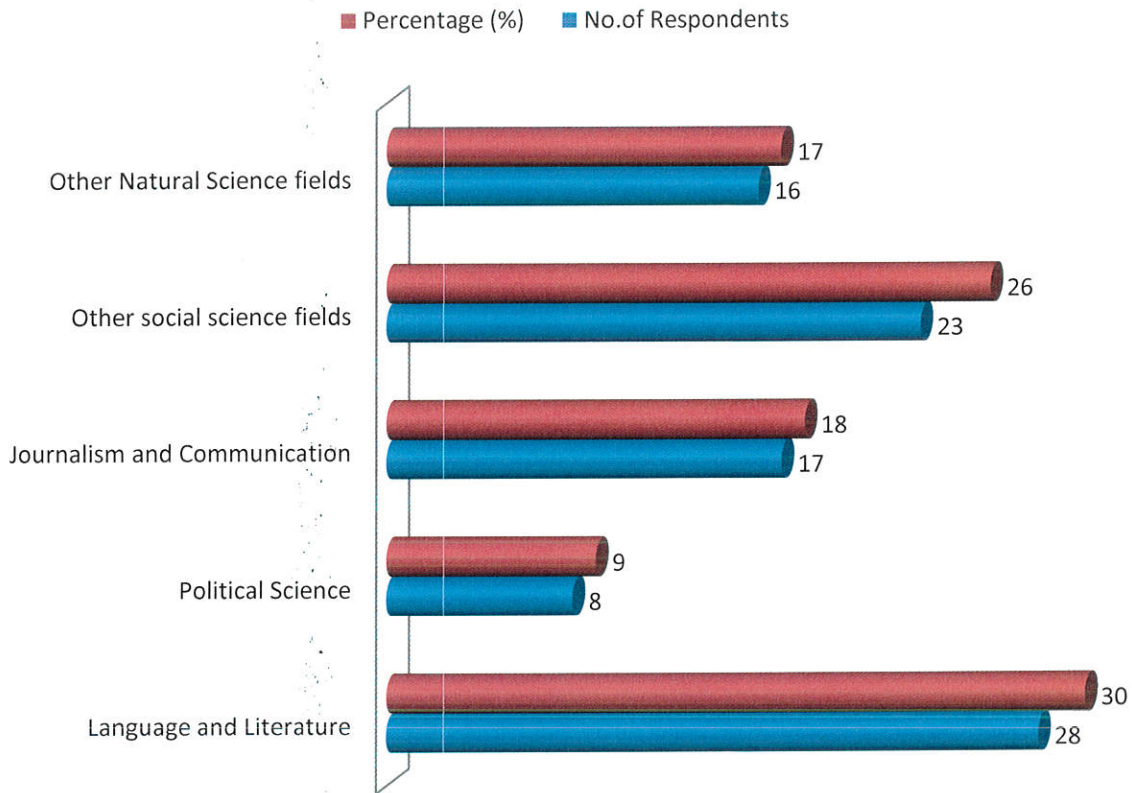




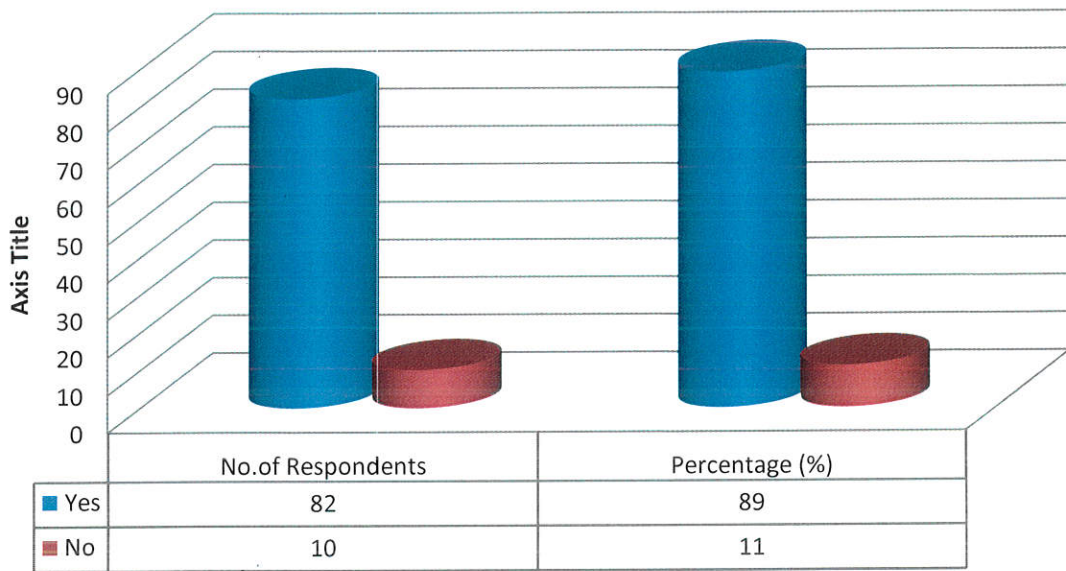
Level of education



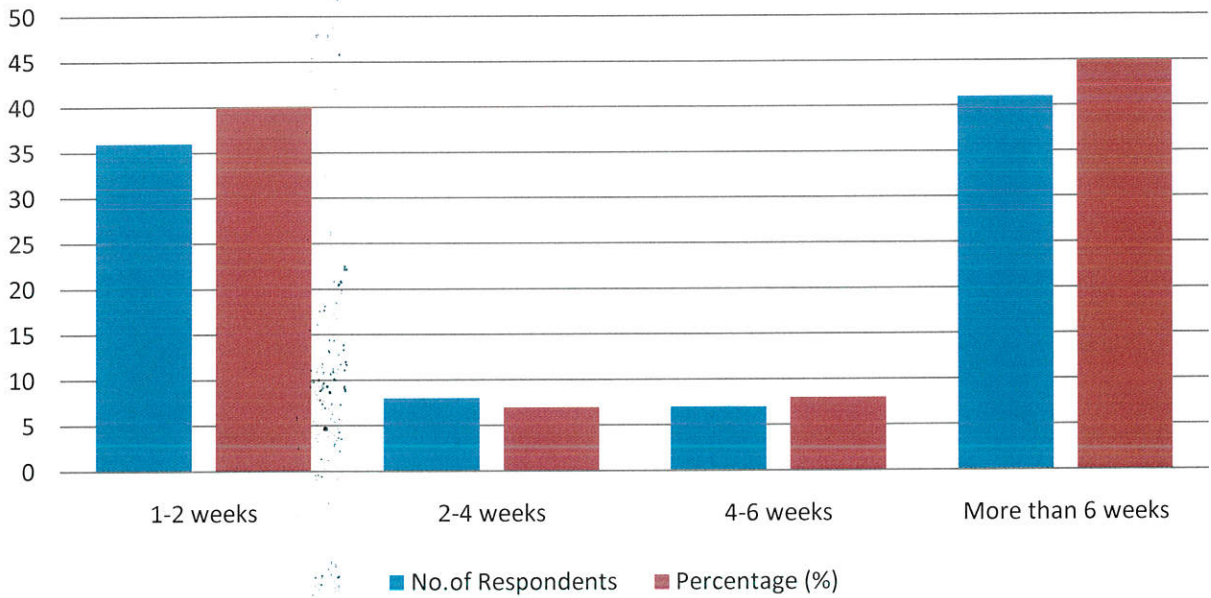
Field of Education



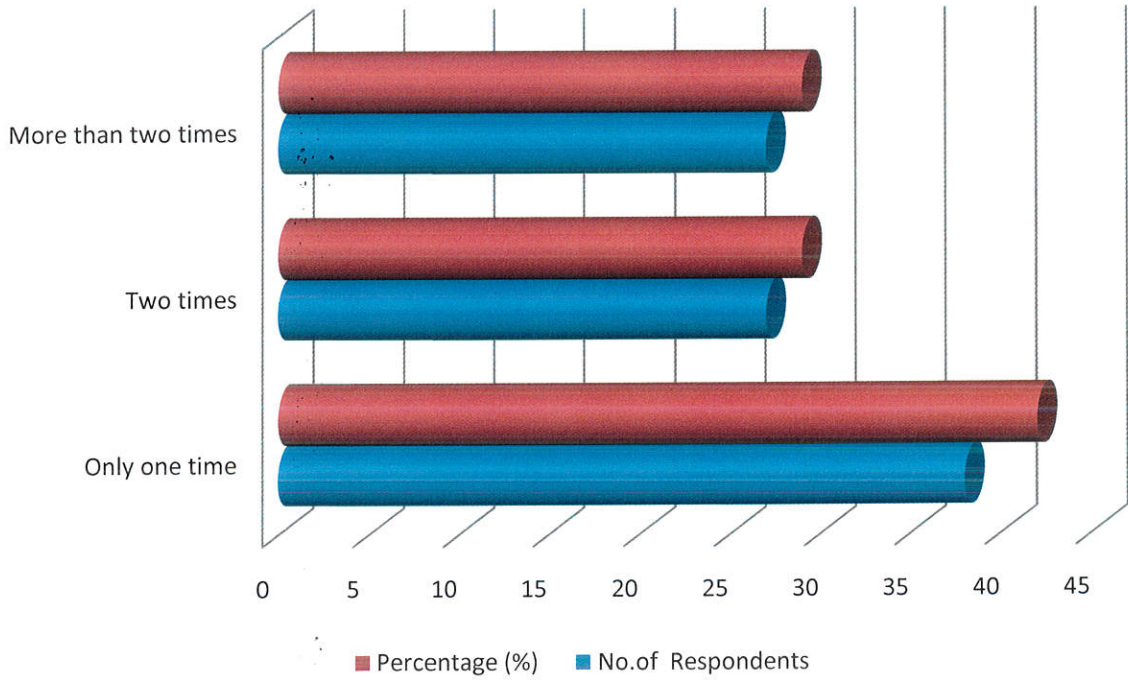
Training on public relations



The Length of The Training



The Frequency and Length of the Training



Trainer

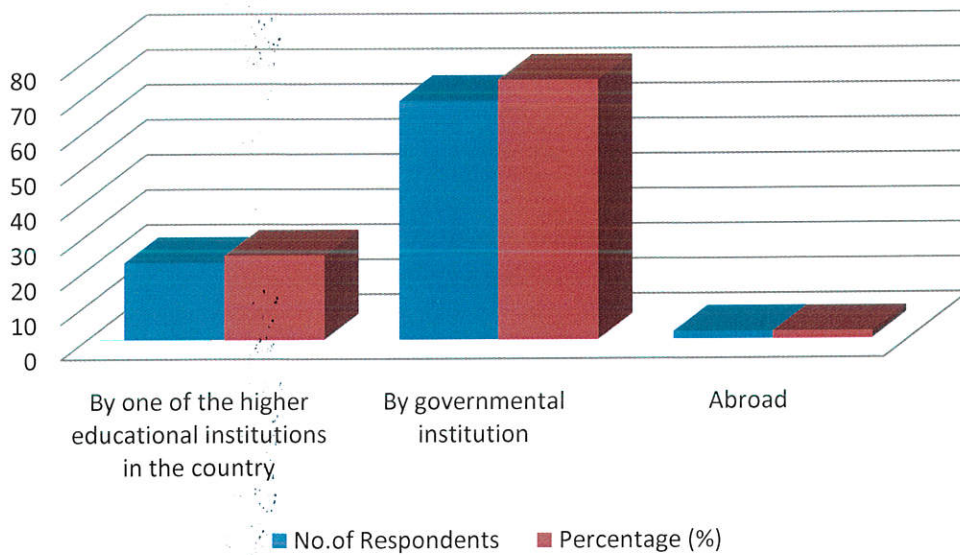


Table Two: - The top five Public Relations Missions and Objectives

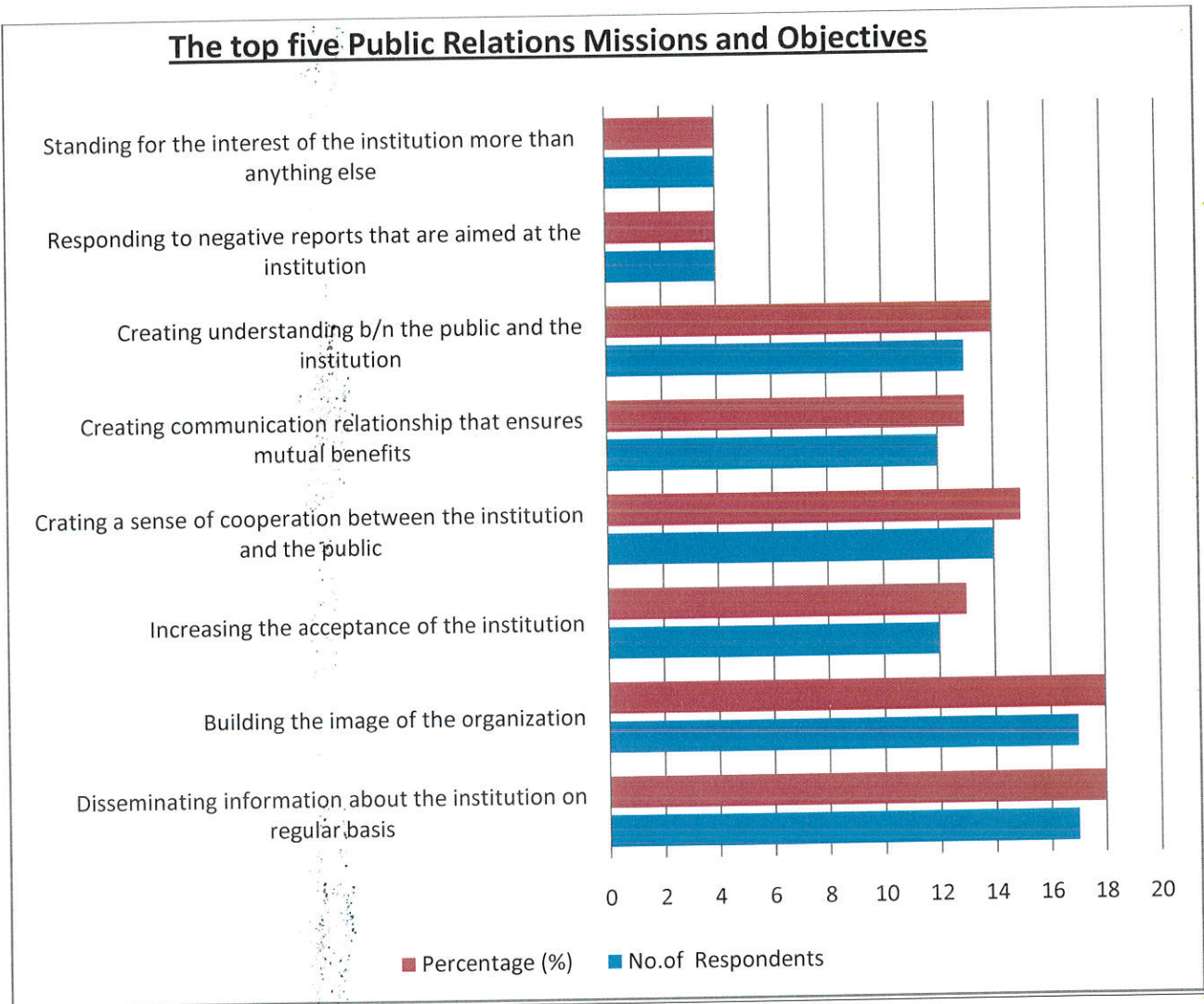


Table Three: - Activities of public relations set according to their priority to the specific organization

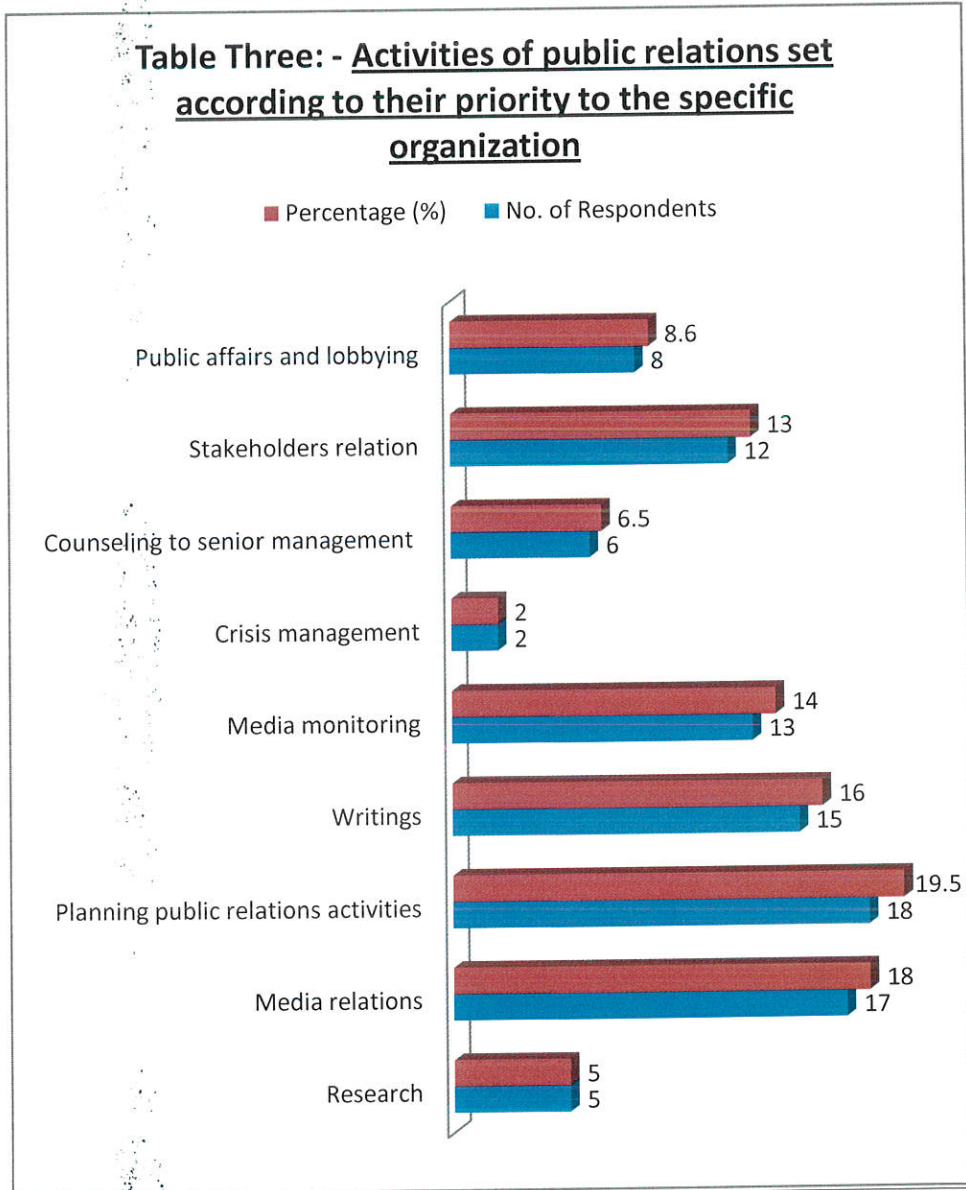


Table Four :- Professional knowledge and technical skills prioritized according to their importance for better performance

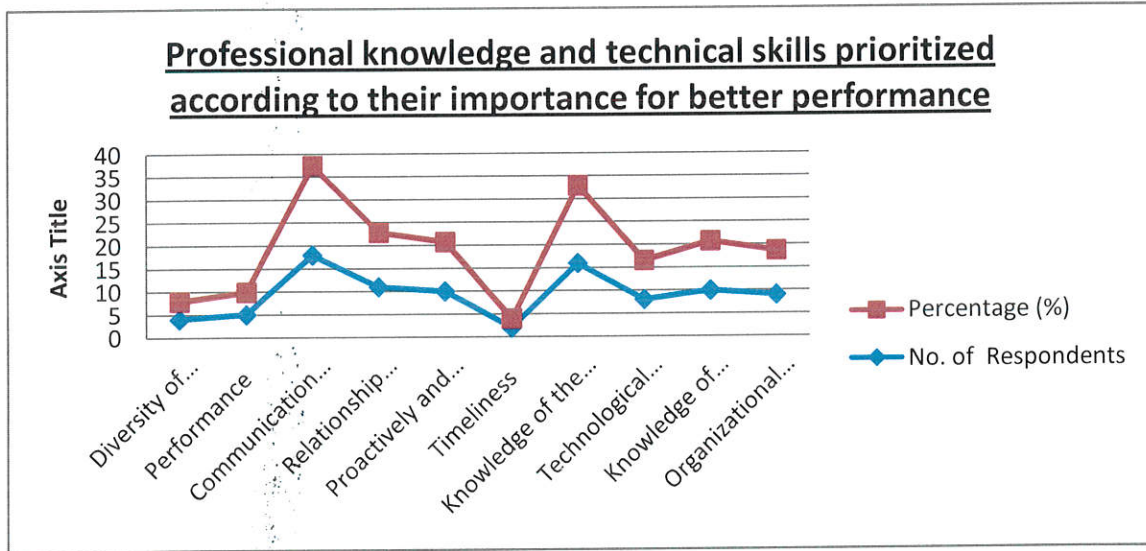
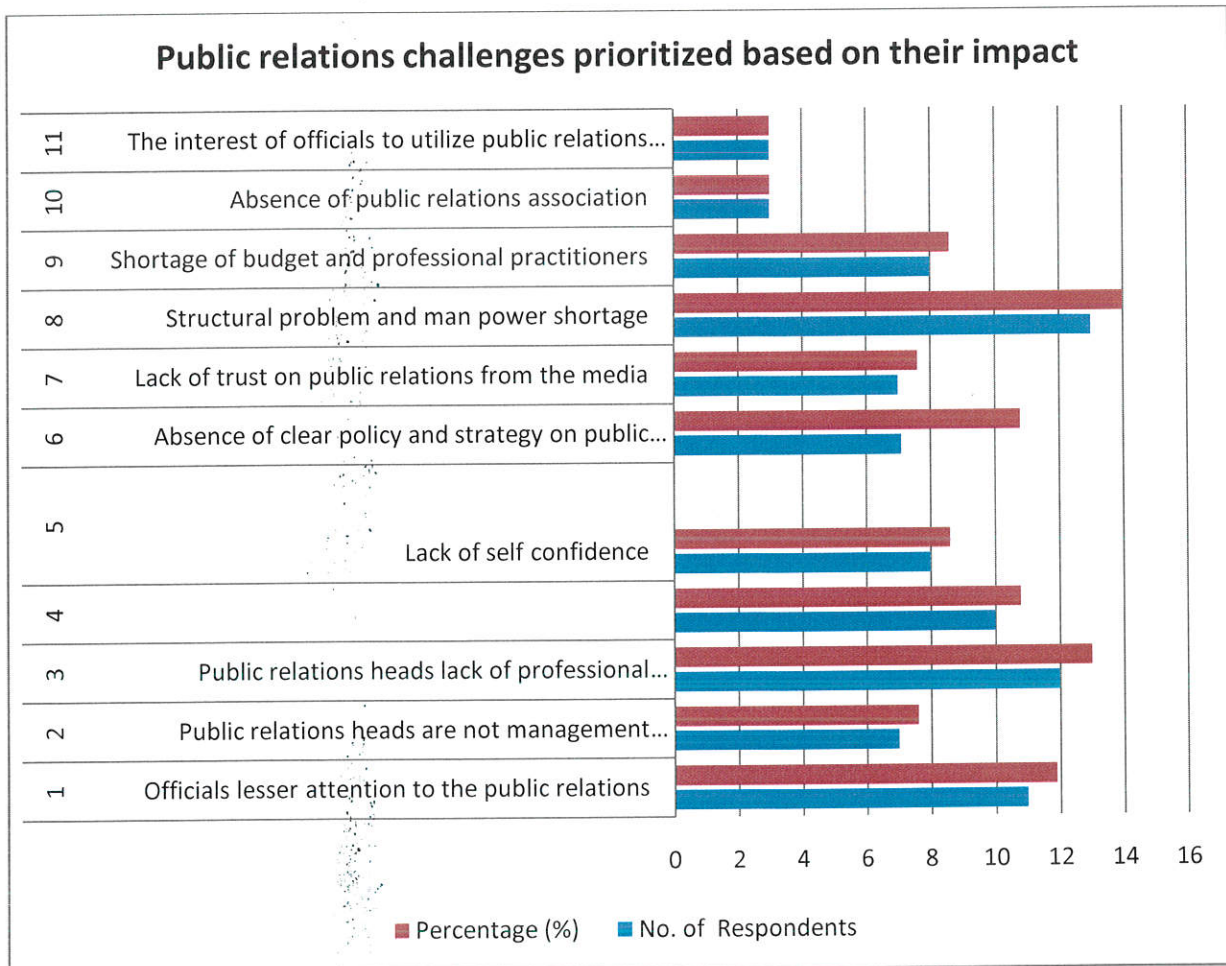


Table Five: - Public relations challenges prioritized based on their impact



4.3.1 Demographic situation of respondents

About 120 questionnaires were distributed to public relations heads and experts. Out of these 92 questionnaires (about 77 of the total questionnaires distributed) were returned. Out of the 92 respondents, about 31 were public relations heads of different government institutions and five respondents were those who abandoned the profession of public relations currently. The remaining 56 respondents were public relations practitioners in different federal government institutions.

When it comes to the sectors to which the respondents belonged, some 52% of the respondents belonged to the economic sector and 27% of them belonged to the social sector. The remaining 21% of the respondents belonged to the political sector. The other demographic issue treated in the questionnaire was gender. Accordingly, 86% of the respondents were male and only 14% were female. The researcher from the outset planned to have at least some 30% of female respondents. Despite unreserved effort, however, the researcher managed to find only a few owing to the fact that the profession is dominated by male practitioners in the Ethiopian context. The entrance of female practitioners to the practice of public relations is just a beginning phenomenon.

Regarding the age of the respondents, 47% of them were 35 years and above. Those between 30-35 years of age constituted about 41%. On the other hand, respondents who were between 25-30 years of age accounted for 14% of the total. It is believed that gathering proper information about the practice and challenges of public relations in government organizations demand competent respondents who have some experience in the practice. Hence, the majority of the respondents have been made to be those with relatively longer working experience. Only 8% of the respondents have experienced public relations for less than 2 years and the majority of the respondents

(about 51%) have experienced public relations from 5 to 10 years. Significant number of respondents has had public relations experience from 2 to 5 years. There were also some respondents with very long working experience in public relations; about 13% of the respondents had 10 to 15 years of experience and still some 8% had a working experience of more than 15 years.

What is more, some of the interviewees argued that experience wise the current personnel of public relations lack sufficient experience. The reason for this was that most of the public relations heads and experts were recruited either with almost no experience or from a background which was very far away from the practice of public relations. The interviewees mentioned a specific instance whereby an accountant or a chemist by profession was assigned as public relations head or expert. Level of education was another factor sorted out by the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents (about 72%) were BA/BSC holders. The remaining respondents were MA/MSc holders. Only two respondents failed to respond to the question related to their education. These two respondents could perhaps be diploma holders or even less. When it comes to the respondents' field of study, some 28%, which could be considered as the majority, graduated in language and literature. Those respondents with the training in Journalism and communication constituted only 18% of the total respondents.

Some 25% of the respondents came from other social science disciplines, such as sociology, economics, management and others. Political science and international relations, a field that is commonly considered as good fit for the practice of Journalism and public relations accounted 9 % of the total respondents. The number of respondents whose educational background is from natural science, which some interviewees considered irrelevant for the practice of public relations, constituted about 17% of the respondents.

For many people, the practice of public relations is basically related to the skill of writing. Thus there is a widely accepted assumption that those who graduated from language and literature are the best fit for the practice. However, this is a clear indication that there is no a clear understanding of public relations practice, it is only limited to writing press release or any other piece of article. When we further notice the fact that practitioners have been gathered from almost all disciplines of learning including the science stream the practice is not considered as an independent profession. The very important prerequisite for public relations in our country seems to be political commitment rather than field of study or technical skill.

Matters related to the training of public relations were the last issue treated under the demographic category. 89% of the respondents said that they have received public relations training. Only 11% of the respondents said they haven't received any public relations training yet. From the work experience data of respondents, it is possible to imagine that those who haven't received any public relations training yet might be those who had joined the practice very recently. In a situation where getting a training in public relations given by the Government Communication Affairs Office is a mandatory, more and more personnel would have an exposure to the training.

When it comes to the frequency of the training, those respondents who got training in public relations for more than six weeks were 45% and some 40% of the respondents received training that was 1-2 weeks long. 8 and 7% of the respondents received trainings that were 4-6 and 2-4 weeks long respectively. 42% of the respondents received public relations training only once, whereas 29% of the respondents received public relations training two times, and the remaining 29% of the respondents received training in public relations more than two times. When it comes to the trainers, the majority (about 74% of the respondents) were trained by a government institution, which might probably be the Government Communication Affairs Office. Other 24% of the respondents were trained by higher education institutions, which in most of the cases might be by the Addis Ababa university

schools of journalism and communication. Only 2 respondents have said they have received training abroad.

Some of the interviewees who spoke about the public relations trainings, have noted that most of the trainings are very boring and end up without adding anything new to the trainee. This partly comes as a result of poorly selected and organized topics and in capable trainers. Whenever public relations trainings are sought the informants said, a huge emphasis will be given not to selection of a competent trainer rather to someone who is trustful. Obviously in a situation where more emphasis is given to who is trust worthy to train instead of who is competent to do so, it will not be surprising to have non - value adding, money and time wasting trainings.

4.3.2 The top five public relations missions

One of the targets of the second part of the questionnaire was finding out the five top missions of public relations practice, which public relations heads and practitioners might identify. Accordingly, eight items were presented to the respondents so that they could indicate the five top priorities. Disseminating information about the institution on a regular basis and building the image of the organization were identified as the first two top priorities as a mission of public relations. Some 18% of the respondents said disseminating institutional information to the public on regular basis is the top priority; equal number of respondents again identified building the image of the organization should be a top priority as a mission.

Creating a sense of cooperation between the institution and the public was also mentioned to be among the first five priorities of public relations mission. About 15% of the respondents agreed that this had to be among the five top priorities. Creating understanding between the public and institution has been identified as one of the top priorities by 14% of the respondents. Creating communication relationship that ensures mutual benefits and increasing the acceptance of the institution received 13% of the respondents each making the first five top priorities. Responding to negative

media reports that are aimed at the institution and standing for the interest of the institution more than anything else each received 4% of the respondents.

The first five top priorities of public relations mission identified by 86% of the respondents almost correspond to the major public relations missions usually mentioned in many public relation text- books. On the other hand, the most important mission of public relations, on which most scholars agree upon, is creating understanding between the public and the institution. However, here it is identified as the fourth important item. All the remaining three were considered to be by- products that could only be achieved after creating understanding between the two parties.

On the other hand, some of the interviewees approached by the researcher did not agree with the fact that the number one priority of public relations mission is creating understanding; rather they argued that it should be building the image of the organization. Informants number 7 and 9 have said the following in this regard:

Any institution organizes public relations offices with a clear mission of building the image of that specific organization. Of course this can be achieved by employing different public relation tools, such as event creation and promotion, disseminating correct and all inclusive information that is related to the institution, etc. Otherwise, it is difficult to put creating understanding as a number one mission of public relations (personal interview conducted on May 14, 2014).

However, other interviewees agreed that creating understanding between an organization and the public is the first priority in public relations mission. Informants' number 1, 2 and 4 said that if public relations units were successful in their effort of creating mutual understanding, all the other missions and objectives would also be accomplished simultaneously.

The major mission of public relations according to a two-way symmetric paradigm of public relations is equally striving to ensure the interest of the institution as well as that of the public. As the two-way symmetric public relations paradigm advocates,

effective public relations where the interest of the institution is served best can only be achieved with equal emphasis to ensure the interest of the public. However, from the statistics presented above, working to satisfy the interest of the public as well as that of the institution is not rated as the first priority. Instead minor issues that are conducted in the process of public relations have been identified as the top priority. This kind of public relations is more related to public information model where the big emphasis is on providing information rather than being open to accommodate the interest of the public.

Of course, when we closely observe the public relations practice in our country, the main emphasis is on information provision. Whenever we observe the press statements of government offices, most of them are aimed at defending the practice of the government even in a situation where a clear accountability is rested on the government. Moreover almost all the information those are disseminated tries to tell the government side of the story. All information dissemination efforts are tailored to build the image of the government, ignoring fully or partially the interest of the public.

4.3.3 Public relations activities

Respondents were asked to identify the most important public relations activities to their organizations. Accordingly, 20% of the respondents said that planning public relations activities is the most important and frequently performed activity. About 18% of the respondents agreed that dealing with the media is a very important activity when it comes to their organizations. Writing is identified as an important function of an organization by some 16% of the respondents. Media monitoring and stakeholders' relation were identified as important public relation activities receiving 14 and 13% of the respondents, respectively. Research which is believed to be the backbone of public relations business has got the least attention from respondents. Only 5% of the respondents identified research work as important public relations activity. The other least rated public relations activity was crisis management, only 2% of the respondents considered it one of the top important activities in the practice

of public relations. Counseling the senior management also received only about 5% of the respondents consent. Public affairs and lobbying got 8.6% of the respondents' consent.

Though planning public relations activities has received the consent of the majority as a top public relations activity, most of the interviewees noted that poor planning of the public relations practice was one of the serious problems. Interviewees number 1, 2, 3 and 4 have said the following:

Most of the public relations departments do not know what a public relations planning is. There is a lot of confusion when we see from where public relations plan should emerge, of course, every one may tell you that he knows all the elements in planning, but that is not true. Everyone may tell you that it can emerge from the major objectives and goals of that specific organization. However, the problem arises when the practice comes. One can only find very few public relations plan that might be considered closer to the standard, and hence it would be very difficult to consider most of the plans as proper public relations plan, in fact they may tell you a very scattered piece of public relations activities of the organization (personal interview conducted on May15,2014).

Other interviewee raised the problem of poor public relations planning, which is often attributable to lack of proper research. Most public relations departments do not seriously consider the critical role that research plays in the process of preparing public relations plan. Interviewee number one was sharp and bold while he was commenting on the problems of public relations that arise from the lack of research, and the following is taken from his words:

The problem of public relations can be viewed from two directions. The first one is the fact that significant number of public relations heads and practitioners were dumped to the practice probably from very irrelevant background and experience. Those kinds of practitioners obviously will not be able to practice public relations research as they couldn't deeply understand the importance. They will also be afraid of practicing it as it seems to them very complex. On the other hand, we may find few public relations departments that would try to conduct public relations, research with its own limitations. From those types of public relations a good deal of them presents a distorted kind of public relations. Their research output in most of the cases is misleading, and might stand in

contradiction with the existing reality. For example, in a situation where the public is furious about a policy or a measure taken by the government, the research finding might come up saying the public is agreed or satisfied with what has happened on the ground (Personal interviews conducted May 15,2014).

The public relations activities in federal government offices are not yet turned to the influential ones. The respondents figure here clearly indicates the fact the practice is much deviated from the biggest and value adding ones. Research that is considered the back bone of two way symmetric public relations is placed the least in the table. If research is missing then the public relations unit has lost all its influencing power. In the absence of research, no power to predict the future and no space to understand and accommodate the interest of the public as a result of this, the public relation practitioner will not be in a position to counsel the management. Thus, the public relations influence and acceptance will be in a problem. When we see the practice, most public relations offices in federal government offices are occupied with organizing meetings, writing minutes preparing regular publications and few of them deal with protocol activities related the travel of their bosses. It is hardly possible to find out a public relations head or practitioner who has been able to influence his institution as a result of performing professional public relations task.

4.3.4 Knowledge and Technical Skills

The other element that the questionnaires tried to find out was which of the professional and technical skills public relations practitioners considered the most important. Accordingly, some 20% of the respondents said that communication skills are the most important. Some 17% of the respondents indicated that knowledge of the practice of public relations is one of the top important matters for effective public relations practice. Knowledge of current affairs, working proactively and with a passion equally received 11% of the respondent's consent

One of the major tasks of public relations department as it is also indicated earlier is dealing with the media and other stakeholders. This relationship, more than anything, demands working proactively, being very fast and working round the clock. Surprisingly, matters related to those issues were rated at the bottom of the table. Timeliness, for example, which is related with dealing swiftly with media inquires and stakeholders demands received only 2% of the respondent's consent. Similarly, performance, which stands for the fact that the practice of public relations demands working all days a week and 24 hours a day because of the nature of the media that never sleeps, was also rated at the bottom of the table with only 5% of respondents. Other elements, such as organizational and management knowledge and technological knowledge received 10% and 9% of the respondent's consent, respectively. Diversity of experience was another item thrown at the bottom of the table with only 4% of respondents.

While dealing with the practice of public relations, it would be impossible to bypass the controversy of professionalism. The informants with whom the researcher conducted in-depth interview had opposing views on the issue of public relations professionalism. The Government Communication Affairs Office minister, his Excellency Ato Redwan Hussen, has also reflected the view of the government on this issue during an interview on issues of interest to this topic. Some of the interviewees (1, 2, 4 and 11) noted that public relations professionalism has been denied a space as a result of the government's measure following May 2005 election.

The problem was the result of May 2005 election. Following the seriously contested election between the rival parties and the election results that followed brought a problem that the public relations sector is facing currently. The government started undertaking different "correcting" measures. Public relations which was tied with so many problems at that time partly contributed to the ruling party's poor election performance, especially in big cities. There was a wrong evaluation in the camp of the ruling party about the failure of the public relations in presenting the achievements of the government in power and that was believed to have happened because of the lack of commitment

from the public relations practitioners. It was on this distorted and unfounded evaluation that a measure was introduced to replace all government public relations practitioners by newly recruited and shortly trained public relations heads and experts. No consideration was given for the professional side of the practice. The whole assumption was public relations can be performed by anyone who is the member of the ruling party. This measure led the situation of professionalism from bad to worse (A personal interview conducted on May 16, 2014).

On the other hand, some of the interviewees who belonged to the new comers did not agree with the fact that professionalism is ignored and is in the process of decline. Instead, they argued that professionalism is starting to develop rapidly. Interviewees number 3, 5 and 7 have noted the following:

The public relations practice in our country is on the rise. In this regard, the government has taken important measures that created conducive environment for the development of public relations in our country. If we take for example, professionalism in public relations, is concerned it is only very recently that a lot of writings about public relations started to come out. The whole details of public relations are well articulated by different writers'; frequent public relations trainings are common now-a-days. Of courses those public relations practitioners that came to the scene following May 2005 election haven't joined the field as professionals but in the due process, they are moving to professionalism, in fact with an encouraging pace. On the other hand, public relations professionalism is being supported by working procedures. We can take a good example where the routine protocol focused orientation of public relations has already been avoided. Currently, almost all public relations practitioners would not consider protocol related tasks to be part of public relations activity. There are a lot of improvements supported by legal systems; probably what lacks here is the readiness from the side of public relations practitioners to make use of these conducive situations (A personal interview conducted on May15 &16, 2014).

Government communication affairs office minister approached by the researcher for interview has commented on this controversial issue of professionalism.

To comment on the current public relations professionalism, it would be important primarily to look back at how it was started. In order to speak and persuade on an issue, first of all one has to believe in that issue. So

at that time the priority was to find someone who believes in the direction the government moves and able to articulate on issues of interest to the public as well as to the government. This was how it all started, so, for me there was no problem in it when I see how it started. However, when it comes to the process of developing professionalism in public relations, obviously it is not moving as fast as we would have liked it to be. We should work hard to develop professionalism in public relations. In this regard, in addition to regular trainings in public relations it is important to commence the education of public relations in the higher learning institutions as we have done for journalism and communication (Personal interview conducted on May 15/2014).

It is clearly expressed in the preceding sections that the practice of public relations in our country is devoid of professionalism. Following the May 2005 election, the party in power led the public relations professionalism from bad to worse. The ruling party who admitted that it lost the election in some big cities as it failed responding to the basic needs of the people in the city, in practice proved that it believed the other way. The ruling party in power partly made the already fragile public relations units accountable for losing the election in some cities. There was an evaluation in the EPRDF camp that concluded the election loss had happened as a lack of communicating the effort and achievements of the government in all spheres of life. This failure to communicate the efforts and achievements of the government, according to the ruling party, happened as a result of lack of commitment from the public relations practitioners' side. So a measure was introduced which totally ignored professionalism. It was assumed by the government that effective public relations can be established by recruiting those who proved to be committed at least by being members of the ruling party. The government policies on the other hand, clearly depict the fact that each member of the civil service has an obligation to implement policies. When we see those kinds of policy statements, the matter of commitment is mandatory to anyone in the circle. The civil service regulation itself has its mechanism whereby it evaluates the performance of every one. Unfortunately, things went opposite to

all those realities. Public relations heads and experts who were members of the ruling party were recruited and made to assume a place which they did not know. As this was made to happen, public relations turned to be a fully politically oriented instrument, without any worry about professionalism. So in this kind of situation, it would be difficult to expect element of professionalism to be practiced on the ground.

4.3.5 Challenges in the practice of public relations

Part three of the questionnaire deals with sorting out the major challenges that face public relations. From the list of 11% items that might be considered common public relations challenges, respondents were asked to identify the first top five challenges with high impact. Accordingly, 14% of the respondents have said that structural problem and manpower shortage was the number one challenge of public relations that negatively impacted the practice. Public relations heads and experts lack of professional knowledge and technical skills was identified as the second biggest challenge of public relations. About 13% of the respondents have agreed to it.

The other major public relations problem identified by the respondents was lesser attention of officials leading the institutions to the practice of public relations. Some 12% of the respondents have identified it as one of the serious impediments. Lacking all rounded and timely information about the institution was also marked as a serious problem by about 11% of the respondents. Absence of clear policy and strategy on public relations was identified as other big problem by about 11 % of the respondents. Similarly, shortage of budget and professional practitioners together with lack of self confidence from the side of the practitioners equally got 9% of the respondents consent.

The problem related to the fact that public relations heads were not represented in the management was identified as a problem by some 8% of the respondents. Lack of trust in public relations from the media has also been mentioned as a problem by 8%

of the respondents. Absence of public relations association and the interest of officials to utilize public relations for building their own personal image were placed at the bottom of the table with only 3% of the respondents each.

Public relations challenges were one of the widely discussed issues both with public relations practitioners and with Government Communication Affairs Office minister Ato Redwan Hussen. Almost all the interviewees raised what they considered as a challenge. Some of the problems were common to all public relations practitioners though they were presented by different speakers. One of the interviewees whom the researcher marked as number 12 said that:

For me, the most serious problem was related to lack of trust. Journalists as well as other stakeholders considered public relations practitioners as politicians rather than professionals. Journalists for instance, hate receiving information from public relations departments. For me, this has happened as a result of public relations practitioners' recruitment. As most of them were recruited merely from political side, they highly lack professionalism; they do not know how to deal with the media. Even they don't know what makes news. Because of this journalists would prefer to get information from the heads of the organizations or other department heads and experts. The problem of trust was not only limited to the media. A great deal of government organizations heads consider public relations heads and experts especially those assigned after 2005 election as spies rather than professionals, as a result, they do not feel comfortable to closely work with them. So this is this is a serious problem; where there was lack of trust there would not be credibility and acceptance (Personal interview conducted on May 14, 2014).

Most of the interviewees raised issues, such as lack of professionalism, lack of proper attention from organization leaders to the practice of public relations. They noted the fact that still in some organizations public relations departments are not represented in the executive body of the institution as a contributing factor. They also mentioned problems related to occupying public relations with routine tasks such as protocol activities and writing minutes. Still some interviewees mentioned the problem of getting current information. The presence of departments which considered

themselves superior than other departments forgetting that they were serving the same cause of an institution still some interviewees believed that these still exists. As impediment gap in properly understanding the role of public relations and the contribution of every one towards the success of public relations.

Ato Redwan Hussen Minister of Government Communication Affairs Office who was asked on matters of interest to this research has said the following regarding the problems of public relations in the country:

Though the government has decided to disseminate government information abundantly on regular basis, there is still a huge gap in performance. Still significant number of government officials does not know for which media, on what frequency and when information should be provided. At the beginning there was a big resistance from some officials even to accept public relations practitioners. Another problem in our public relations practice is related to the fact that officials don't really know the responsibility of disseminating information about their organization is primarily that of their own. As a result of this they tend to shift all the task of disseminating information to the public relations department (Personal interview conducted on May 15,2014).

Ato Redwan, who appreciated the progress of public relations development in the country, further mentioned some more problems in the practice of public relations which need swift measure. As follows;

When someone is assigned to public office, it would be better if he has received training on how to communicate with the media and other stakeholder groups. If government officials are exposed to some basic principles of communication just from the outset, they could establish an encouraging relationship with the media and other stakeholders. Officials who entered office with this basic communication knowledge would be able to improve their experience in practice. (Personal interview conducted on May 15, 2014)

The problem related to information management was another issue mentioned by the minister. Because of the practice of poor record management the process of information dissemination has become challenging argued the minister. The lack of

integrated and coordinated information system between different government offices was another serious challenge mentioned by Ato Redwam. According to him, government communication office itself is not receiving information from other government offices in a modern and systematic way. Rather it collects through individual communication and effort. This shows the fact that there are only individuals but not the system, He concluded.

All the problems mentioned above are worth mentioning elements. However, of all the problems, public relations' denial of the status of professionalism is the critical one. In order to have truly value adding public relations institution professionalism in public relations has to be recognized. The mission of public relations should also be redefined. A government claiming to be democratic and developmental should establish a public relations institution that works for the interest of the public as well as that of the institution. After all, a popular government is not expected to have an interest that will not match with the interest of the public. Regular programs at higher learning institutions both at the under graduate as well as post graduate levels are also important to minimize the problem related to professionalism. Creating understanding and reaching consensus with government officials on the importance and implementation of the practice of public relations is very important. However, as this understanding is lacking most of the officials in federal government offices are not contributing to the development and better implementation of the practice. The measure introduced in public relations has also created a rift between the practitioners themselves, of course, as it happened in government media organizations.

4.4 Public relations in a move

Ato Shimles Kemal who is currently the state minister for Government Communication Affairs Office and who previously worked very closely with the former minister of Information was interviewed by the researcher on the changes in government public relations. He said that encouraging results have been achieved.

Ministry of information was not supported by the proper legal framework that would enable it to involve in developing the practice of public relations. Moreover, it was occupied by huge regulatory activities in addition to the business of information transaction. The government realized the fact that the role of information transaction should be independently treated, and, hence, decided to establish government communication affairs office in 2008. The regulatory activities of the ministry was transferred to the Ethiopian broadcast authority and an independent office that deals only with the task of information communication started operating with the proper mandate of governing the task of government public relation. This has brought a number of encouraging developments in the field of public relations (Personal interview conducted on May 15, 2014).

Ato shimeles, who worked with Ministry of Information and the former officials of the ministry has applauded the measure that is introduced to establish Government Communication Affairs Office and the establishment of public relations units in most of the federal government offices. During the interview with the state minister the researcher had realized the fact that the problem in the current public relations practice is not as serious as the progress achieved. It seems that no worry to tackle quickly the problem of professionalism in public relations practice is in his near plan. Besides the establishment of public relations units in most of the Government offices, Government Communication Affairs Office didn't seem to have a consolidated study about the quality and volume of information production. So where there is no solid research on the practice, it might not be possible to discuss on major issues pertinent to the topic.

Ato Redwan on his part said that a shift in government public relations came following the 2005 national election, where the government held a strong position and declared that government information should be disseminated in modern and systematic manner.

Government policies, their implementations and achievements should be communicated to the public was a good move. Informing the public was announced to be as good as performing the work itself. The importance of creating the right picture was promoted and awareness was also

created on what it means. From that time onwards, a good progress has been made in government public relations. Public relations working units were established almost in all federal government offices and training was provided to those new entrants to the field of public relations. A great stride has been made in an effort of building the image of the country and reaching consensus on basic issues of common interest. However, still we haven't done up to the standard we are expected to do. We know that our assignment of realizing government public relations reform should be conducted with a sense of urgency. Establishing public relations school at our higher learning institutions with relevant teaching curriculum is among one of our top priorities. Enacting additional legal frameworks that would help strengthen the implementation of the freedom of information is also another assignment that should be done very quickly (Personal interview conducted on May 15,2014).

Government public relations heads and practitioners with whom the researcher conducted in-depth interview fully agree that public relations is in a positive direction. The establishment of government communication affairs office to lead the sector and the establishment of public relations departments in all government offices are some of the indicators of the positive development. Regular trainings on public relations and the recognition attached to public relations are also good indicators about the positive move of government public relations.

The establishment of public relations units in most of the government offices and regular trainings on public relations offices are indicated as encouraging moves by most of the interviewees. However, the public relations practice in federal government offices are tied with some persistent problems. One of the major problems is related to the mission of public relations. No public relations paradigm where the mission of public is derived from. As it stands now, the mission of the public relations in federal Government offices seems to be informing the public. When we closely observe the mission, it focuses on the interest of the government, not on that of the public. After all the idea of massively informing the public has come following the May 2005.

As it is indicated in the earlier sections, the ruling party attributed its loss of the election to not informing the public. Thus, the interest to widely inform the public came not in the interest of the public but in the interest of the government. When we see it from this angle, the public relations in the federal government offices is related to the public information model where the major emphasis is on information provisions in order to ensure the interest of the institution or the government. All the other problems would be solved with the success of solving the problem related to the mission of the public relations. Even the lack of professionalism is the result of the mission; solving the matter related to mission will pave the way to solve the problem related to professionalism.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the preceding Chapters, an effort has been made to go through basic matters in relation to the practice and challenges of public relations in the Federal Government Institutions. This Chapter tries to deal with a brief conclusion and recommendations of the research topic. Accordingly, the first issue to be treated here would be the conclusion followed by the one possible recommendation that could help to get rid of or minimize the problems and sustain the strengths.

5.1 Conclusions

The whole attempt of this research was to assess how public relations is practiced in the Federal Government Offices. The modern practice of public relations is believed to have been started in Ethiopia during the 1960's. However, without any significant development in the number of public relations practitioners as well as professionalism, it continued up until recent times. In effect, the public relations continued strictly serving the interest of the ruling classes. A considerable shift that deserves attention in the practice of public relations came following the may 2005 National Election.

Though attempts were made to examine public relations practices during the last three regimes, the main emphasis has been made on the recent development in public relations. The main focus was on how public relations is practiced, how public relations is understood, what public relations missions are stipulated and adhered to. The challenges that are encountered in public relations practices are also another matter of concern.

In the literature review section, the essence and evolution of public relations, the major activities of public relations and issues related to professionalism and technical skills were discussed. Commonly observed public relations challenges all over the world are also touched under the literature review.

In order to answer the research questions, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this regard, relevant Government public relations documents were analyzed and interviews with appropriate officials and public relations practitioners were also conducted. Moreover, a questionnaire was distributed and the response was analyzed to supplement the research work. The questionnaire was distributed to more than 120 public relations heads and experts, and the analysis was done on different items including challenges encountered in the public relations practice (Table 1-5). The responses were counted and presented in numbers and percentages. Based on the findings obtained from the research, the following conclusions are drawn:

The Federal Government public relations compared with the previous times, when it was completely neglected, is currently showing a good progress. However, the effort of establishing public relations on a sound intellectual foundation requires well articulated policies and academic writings. In this regard, a lot remains to be done. The practice of public relations should not only be confined to the political territory. Rather, it should be made one of the important issues that would be articulated widely in the academic circle.

The current available documents on public relations are more of scattered and lack a well balanced academic articulation. No theoretical frameworks are laid so far as to which kind of public relations paradigm our country tends to pursue and why. This shows that the field is not yet opened for academic research.

The two-way symmetric public relations paradigm stresses that public relations departments as well as the organizations they work for should equally care for the interest of the public as that of the institution. This paradigm emphasizes public relations departments can only ensure the interest of their institutions, if they equally care for the interest of the Public. However, the research findings in this regard show that government public relations departments do not give top priority that equals their institutions. The survey indicates that only 13% of the respondents consider public interest should be prioritized top in the practice of public relations, which means it is rated at half of the table. This would lead one to conclude that government public relations lack in prioritizing public interest as equal as that of the institution.

Public relations textbooks as well as government documents produced on government public relations highly emphasize the importance of credibility in the practice of public relations. Public relations heads and experts should be trusted by the media as well as other stakeholders. However when it comes to the current government public relations, it seems that there is a serious lack of credibility. During an interview with public relations heads and experts, the majority of them mentioned the fact that public relations offices are facing huge credibility problems. This has come as a result of the process of public relations practitioners' recruitment and assignment. Moreover, the common culture of attaching public relations with routine protocol activities has contributed significantly towards this. As a result of this problem, journalists usually prefer to gather information from the head of the organization or other technical experts.

Effective public relations demands research work. However the survey questionnaire as well as interview conducted with public relations practitioners clearly indicated the fact that the practice of public relations in federal government offices has suffered serious lack of proper public relations research. The survey questionnaires conducted revealed that only 5% of the respondents said research is one of the most important

items in the practice of public relations. This clearly shows that public relations practice that is lacking in research will not be professional as well as productive.

Professionalizing the practice of public relations is an important matter in order to achieve the objective expected out of public relations. Public relations practice should not be concluded dominantly as a political instrument that would be driven in any way seeming alright. Instead, the political interest should be integrated with the appropriate professional balance. The current public relations practice in federal government offices highly lack professionalism. In the survey, about 17% of the respondents, which is the second highest in the table, agreed on the fact that professionalism is an important item. In the interview conducted with public relations practitioners as well as government communication affairs office ministers, the problem of public relations professionalism is not denied. Hence, in the absence of minimal professionalism, it would be difficult to expect an encouraging achievement from the practice of public relations.

The initiatives taken to establish public relations working departments in almost all federal government offices, steps being taken to provide public relations trainings on sustainable basis and the preparation and implementation of PR working guidelines at the national level and procedurally including PR heads in the management team of every organizations are encouraging strides made so far, within a short period of time, still leaders of government institutions in a number of areas don't properly support the practice of public relations in their offices. Most of them even do not recognize the task of communicating with the public is primarily their own responsibility. Moreover, they are not well aware of the position of the government which regards informing the public is as good as performing the physical work for which the organization is established. On the other hand, the encouraging moves observed in institutionalizing public relations need to be speeded up. Officials leading government

organizations should be oriented and trained on the whole process of institutionalizing public relations and on the major practice concerning them in this regard.

In conclusion, though an encouraging development is underway in federal government public relations offices, still there remains a lot of work to be done in order to exploit maximum benefit out of the practice of public relations.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. The development of professionalism in the practice of public relations should be given due attention. Accordingly, scholars must be motivated to produce research works and journal articles on public relations in the Ethiopian context. Issues that will contribute to the development of public relations should be identified and intellectual discourses be conducted on regular basis.
2. Public relations credibility is a very important matter of concern. Hence, measures such as recruitment procedures, educational standard and experience of public relations heads and experts should be set according to high and best standard so that the respect for public relations is gained.
3. Transforming the practice of public relations more than anything demands commencing regular programs in higher learning institutions both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The office in charge of leading government public relations in collaboration with higher learning institutions should closely work to commence such regular educational programs on public relations.
4. Government organizations heads are not as such familiarized with the work of public relations. Whatever effort exerted by the Government Communication Affairs Office to transform the practice of public relations in the country has to be supported and owned by the majority of organizations' heads. Thus, a system has to be put in place to engage government officials to develop the practice of public relations.

5. Government public relations paradigm should be clearly specified. The government claiming to be democratic and developmental should clearly indicate and practically promote the fact that public relations must strive for the interest of both the public and that of the institution.
6. Government Communication Affairs Office needs to empower itself in a manner that enables it provide strategic, up to standard and professional leadership in the sector.
7. Audience based media selection and usage has to be strictly implemented. Public relations practitioners whom the researcher interviewed has raised the problem they are facing as a result of lack of the national TV coverage on key issues related to the organization. Significant numbers of government officials assume that getting national TV coverage as indirectly reporting to their bosses. As a result, if these officials do not get the TV coverage whenever they need it, then the fight with the PR starts. So, awareness creation for government officials on media usage and issues of news values should be conducted frequently.
8. As the minister of Government Communication Affairs Office himself noted, when new officials are appointed to office, the first thing they should be required to undertake must be attending a short-term a short training on how to communicate with the media and other stakeholders.
9. Developing the practice of public relations in the country requires a lot of research work. Probably a public relations is the most untouched territory in Ethiopia. Thus, scholars should give attention to conducting further studies on the subject.

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Appendix -A

Questioner prepared for public relations heads and experts

Working in federal government offices

This questioner for public relations heads and experts who are employed in Federal Government Offices is aimed at assess the working procedures, challenges that encounter and opportunities that exist in public relations offices. The information that will be gathered by this questioner will only be utilized for academic research. Therefore you are respectful requested to give correct and genuine response to the questions and give it back as much as possible within a short period of time.

Section one

Issues related to general matters

(Please specify your choice by putting the sign x where ever choice is available)

- 1.1 Name of the organization _____
- 1.2 Are you currently in public relations A) Yes B) No
- 1.3 The name of the public relations unit _____
- 1.4 Gender _____
- 1.5 Age : less than 25 25-35 30-35 More than 35
- 1.6 Working experience in public relations _____
- 1.7 Educational status : Diploma BA/BSC MA/MSc PHD
- 1.8 Field of education _____
- 1.9 Have you ever received public relations training? A)Yes B)NO
- 1.10 If your response is yes? For how many times?
A) Only for one time B) For two times C) More than two times
- 1.11 How long was the training you received?
A) 1-2 weeks B) 2-4 weeks C) 4-6weeks D) More than 6 weeks
- 1.12 The Training was conducted
A) By higher learning institution in the country
B) By governmental organization
C) Abroad

Section Two

Issues Related to Communication Objectives and Mission

2. Based on Public Relations principle adopted by your organization, please prioritize public relations objectives and mission according to their importance to your organization (give no.1 for the most important and continue numbering down up to no.8 based on the importance)
 - 2.1 Information dissemination
 - 2.2 Image building
 - 2.3 Increasing the acceptance of the institution
 - 2.4 Creating sense of mutual cooperation between the institution and the public
 - 2.5 Establishing communication relationship for mutual benefit
 - 2.6 Establishing consensus between the institution and the public
 - 2.7 Responding to negative responses
 - 2.8 Standing for the interest of the institution more than anything else

3. Please specify public relations activities that your organization considers more important. (Please put number 1 for the most important task and go down up to 9 according to the importance to your organization)
 - 3.1 Research
 - 3.2 Media Relations
 - 3.3 Public relations plan
 - 3.4 Writing
 - 3.5 Media monitoring

3.6 Crisis management

3.7 Counseling

3.8 Stakeholders relationships

3.9 Public affairs and lobbying

3.10 Please specify if there is any other-----

4. Please specify professional and technical skills according to their importance to effective public relations (put no 1 for the most important one and then go down up to no.10 according to your priority)

4.1 Diversity of experience

4.2 Performance

4.3 Communication skill

4.4 Relationship building

4.5 Proactively and passion

4.6 Timeliness

4.7 Knowledge of the field

4.8 Technological knowledge

4.9 Knowledge of current events

4.10 Organizational as well as management knowledge

Section Three

Challenges of public relations

5. Please specify the challenges of public relations according to their impact on your organization (put no.1 for the most serious challenge and go down up to no.11 based on decreasing levels of the problem)

- 5.1 Officials give less attention to public relations
- 5.2 Public relations department heads are not management members of the institution
- 5.3 Public relations heads lack of professional and technical skill
- 5.4 Lack of updated and all inclusive information related to the institution
- 5.5 Self confidence
- 5.6 Clear public relations strategy and guideline
- 5.7 Lack of trust from the media on public relations
- 5.8 Structural problem and shortage of professional manpower
- 5.9 Shortage of budget and working equipment
- 5.10 Absence of public relations association
- 5.11 Using public relations for the purpose of propaganda

6. What is your evaluation of the current public relations practice in your organization?

A) Very good

B) Good

C) It has a lot of problems and needs quick intervention

7. What measures do you think should be taken to improve the current public relations practice in our country?

8. Are there any opportunities in the country that enables to develop public relations practice?

Appendix -B

ለፌዴራል የመንግሥት መሥሪያ ቤቶች የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ኃላፊዎች የተዘጋጀ መጠይቅ

ይህ የፌዴራል የመንግሥት መሥሪያ ቤቶች የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ኃላፊዎች መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው በፌዴራል የሕዝብ ግንኙነት የሥራ ክፍሎች ያለውን አሠራር፣ የሚያጋጥሙ ችግሮችንና ያሉ ምቹ ሁኔታዎችን ለማወቅ በማሰብ ነው። ከዚህ መጠይቅ የሚገኘው መረጃ ለኮሙዩኒኬሽን (ህዝብ ግንኙነት) ጥናት ግብአት የሚያገለግል ሆኖ ለዚህ ዓላማ ብቻ ጥቅም ላይ የሚውል ነው። ስለሆነም በኃላፊነት ስሜት እውነተኛውንና ትክክለኛውን መረጃ በመሙላት ባጭር ጊዜ ውስጥ መጠይቁን በመመለስ ትብብር እንዲያደርጉ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ክፍል አንድ

አጠቃላይ ጉዳዮችን በተመለከተ (በምርጫ ቦታዎች የ X ምልክት በማድረግ ያመልክቱ)

- 1.1 የተቋሙ ስም _____
- 1.2 አሁን በኮሙዩኒኬሽን (በህዝብ ግንኙነት ስራ) ላይ ሀ) ያሉ ለ) የሌሉ
- 1.3 የህዝብ ግንኙነቱ የሥራ ክፍል ስያሜ _____
- 1.4 ያታ _____
- 1.5 ዕድሜ ፣ ከ25 በታች ከ25-30 ከ30-35
ከ35-40 ከ40 በላይ
- 1.6 በሥራው ላይ የቆዩበት ጊዜ _____
- 1.7 የትምህርት ደረጃ፣ የኮሌጅ ዲፕሎማ BA/BSC/ MA/MSc PHD
- 1.8 የተማሩት የትምህርት ዓይነት _____
- 1.9 የህዝብ ግንኙነት ሥልጠና
ሀ/ ወስጆ አውቃለሁ ለ/ ወስጆ አላውቅም
- 1.10 ምላሽዎ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስልጠና ወስጆ አውቃለሁ ከሆነ ሥልጠና የወሰዱት፣
ሀ/ ለአንድ ጊዜ ለ/ ለሁለት ጊዜያት ሐ/ ከሁለት ጊዜያት በላይ
- 1.11 የወሰዱት ሥልጠና የጊዜ ርዝመት፣
ሀ/ ከ1-2 ሣምንታት ለ/ ከ2-4 ሣምንታት ሐ/ ከ4-6 ሣምንታት
መ/ ከ6 ሣምንታት በላይ
- 1.12 ሥልጠናውን የተከታተሉት፣
ሀ/ በአገር ውስጥ ከፍተኛ የትምህርት ተቋም ለ/ በአገር ውስጥ የመንግሥት ተቋም
ሐ/ በውጭ አገር የሥልጠና ተቋም

ክፍል ሁለት

የኮሙኒኬሽን ዓላማና ተልዕኮን በተመለከተ

2. መሥሪያ ቤትዎ የሚከተለውን የኮሙኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራ/ መርህ መሠረት በማድረግ የኮሙኒኬሽን ዓላማዎችን ወይም ተልዕኮዎችን በአስፈላጊነታቸው ቅደም ተከተል ይለዩ /የበለጠ አስፈላጊ ነው የሚሉትን 1 ቁጥር በመስጠት በአስፈላጊነት ደረጃ ዝቅተኛ የሆነውን ደግሞ 8 በመስጠት ይገለጹ/

- 2.1 የተቋሙን መረጃዎች ለሕብረተሰቡ በመደበኛ ሁኔታ ማሰራጨት
- 2.2 የተቋሙን ገጽታ መገንባት
- 2.3 የተቋሙን ተቀባይነት ማሳደግ
- 2.4 በተቋሙና በሕብረተሰቡ መካከል የትብብር መንፈስ መፍጠር
- 2.5 የጋራ ተጠቃሚነትን የሚያሳሉበት የኮሙኒኬሽን ግንኙነት መፍጠር
- 2.6 በተቋሙና በሕብረተሰቡ መካከል መግባባት መፍጠር
- 2.7 በተቋሙ ላይ የሚሰነዘሩ አሉታዊ ዘገባዎችን እየተከታተሉ ምላሽ መስጠት
- 2.8 ከምንም ነገር በላይ ለተቋሙ ጥቅም ለመቆም

3. በሚሰሩበት ተቋም በኮሙኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራ/ ትኩረት የሚሰጣቸውንና የሚተኮርባቸውን ተግባራት በቅደም ተከተል ያስቀምጡ /1 ቁጥር የበለጠ ትኩረት የሚሰጠውንና የሚዘወተረውን ተግባር የሚያመለክት ሆኖ 9 ቁጥር ዝቅተኛ ትኩረት የሚሰጠውን ተግባር ያመለክታል/

- 3.1 ምርምርና ጥናት
- 3.2 የሚዲያ ግንኙነት ሥራዎች/ለሚዲያ መረጃ የመስጠት ሥራ/
- 3.3 የተለያዩ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራዎች ዕቅድ ማቀድ
- 3.4 መጻፍ /ፕሬስ መግለጫ፣ ፊቸር አርተክል፣ የሃላፊዎች ንግግር ወዘተ/
- 3.5 የሚዲያ ክትትል /ሚዲያ ሞኒተሪንግ/
- 3.6 የቀውስ ማኔጅመንት /ችግር ባጋጠመ ጊዜ የሚሰራ የኮሙኒኬሽን ሥራ/
- 3.7 የማማከር አገልግሎት
- 3.8 ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር መገናኘት
- 3.9 የሕዝብ ጉዳዮችና የማግባባት ሥራዎች
- 3.10 ሌሎች ካሉ ይገለጹ _____

4. ለኮሙዩኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራ/ አስፈላጊ የሆኑ ሙያዊና ቴክኒካዊ ክህሎቶችን በእርሶ አረዳድ አስፈላጊ ናቸው ብለው በሚያምኑት ቅደም ተከተል ያስቀምጡ /1 ቁጥር በጣም አስፈላጊ የሆነውን የሚያመለክት ሆኖ 10 ቁጥር ዝቅተኛውን ያመለክታል/

- 4.1 በተለያዩ ሙያዎች የሥራ ልምዶች
- 4.2 ጠንካራ ሠራተኛ መሆን
- 4.3 የኮሙዩኒኬሽን ክህሎት
- 4.4 ጥሩ ግንኙነት የመገንባት ችሎታ
- 4.5 ቀድሞ አስቦና አቅዶ የማሰብ ችሎታ
- 4.6 ጊዜ ጠብቆና አክብሮ የመሥራት ችሎታ
- 4.7 የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሙያ ዕውቀት
- 4.8 የቴክኖሎጂ በተለይም የኢንፎርሜሽን ቴክኖሎጂ ዕውቀት
- 4.9 ወቅታዊ ጉዳዮች የመከታተልና የማወቅ ችሎታ
- 4.10 ተቋማዊ ዕውቀትና የማይገደብ ዕውቀት

ክፍል ሦስት

የኮሙዩኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ ሥራ ተግዳሮቶችን በተመለከተ

5. በኮሙዩኒኬሽን /በሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ ሥራ ውስጥ የሚያጋጥሙ ተግዳሮቶችን ባላቸው ተዕዕኖ ክብደት መሠረት በቅደም ተከተል ያስቀምጡ /1 ቁጥር ክፍተኛ ችግር ሆኖ የሚጠቀሰውን የሚያመለክት ሆኖ 11 ቁጥር በንዕዕር አሉታዊ ተዕዕኖ በመፍጠር ዝቅ ያለውን የሚያመለክት ይሆናል/

5.1 ኃላፊዎች ለኮሙዩኒኬሽን /ለሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ ሥራ የሚሰጡት ትኩረት አነስተኛ መሆን

5.2 የኮሙዩኒኬሽን የሥራ ክፍል ኃላፊዎች የተቋሙ ማኔጅመንት አባል አለመሆናቸው

5.3 የኮሙዩኒኬሽን ኃላፊዎች የሙያና የክህሎት ማነስ

5.4 ስለተቋሙ የተሟላ መረጃ ባለቤት ለመሆን አለመቻል

5.5 በራስ የመተማመን ችግር

5.6 የኮሙዩኒኬሽን ሥራ የሚመራበት ግልጽ ፖሊሲና ስትራቴጂ አለመኖር

5.7 ሚዲያው በሕዝብ ግንኙነት ኃላፊዎችና ባለሙያዎች ላይ እምነት የሌለው መሆን

5.8 የአደረጃጀት ችግርና የባለሙያ አጥረት

5.9 የበጀትና የሙያ መገልገያ መሣሪያዎች አጥረት

5.10 ለኮሙዩኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ ሙያ ዕድገትና ተቀባይነት የሚሰራ የሙያ ማህበር አለመኖር

5.11 መንግሥት በአጠቃላይ በተለይም ደግሞ የመንግሥት ተቋማት የኮሙኒኬሽን /የህዝብ ግንኙነት/ የሥራ ክፍሎችን እራሳቸውን ለማደናክቅ እንዲሁም የፕሮፖጋንዳ ሥራ ለመሥራት እንደተፈጠሩ አድርጎ የሚቆጥሩ መሆናቸውና ለዚህ ተግባር የሚጠቀሙበት መሆኑ

6. በርስዎ መሥሪያ ቤት አሁን ያለውን የኮሙዩኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ ሥራ እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?

ሀ/ በጣም ጥሩ ነው ለ/ ጥሩ ነው ሐ/ ብዙ ችግሮች ያሉበትና በአፋጣኝ መስተካከል የሚፈልግ ነው።

7. በአገራችን የመንግሥት ተቋማት አሁን ያለውን የኮሙዩኒኬሽን /የሕዝብ ግንኙነት/ አሠራር ለማሻሻል ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?

8. በአገራችን የኮሙኒኬሽን /የህዝብ ግንኙነት/ አሰራርን ለማሳደግ ምን ምቹ ሁኔታዎች አለ ይላሉ?

Appendix –C

ለሕዝብ ግንኙነት ኃላፊዎችና ባለሙያዎች የተዘጋጁ ጥያቄዎች

1. በተቋም የውጭና የውስጥ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት /የኮሚዩኒኬሽን/ ሥራዎች እንዴት ይፈጽማሉ? ምን ምን የማስፈጸሚያ መሣሪያዎችን ትጠቀማላችሁ?
2. ተቋሙ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት /ኮሚዩኒኬሽን/ ሥራ የሚሰራበት መመሪያ አለው? ካለው ዋና ዋና ይዘቶቹ ምንድናቸው?
3. የተቋሙ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ተልዕኮ ምንድነው?
4. በተቋሙ ያለው የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ግንዛቤ ምን ይመስላል?
5. በተቋሙ የሚታዩ የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ችግሮች ምንድናቸው?
6. ለሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሥራ አመቺ የሆኑ ሁኔታዎች ካሉ ይገለጻሉ?

Appendix -D

Questions for Public Relations Heads and Experts

1. How do you carry out external and internal Communication in your organization? What public relations tools you employ?
2. Is there any public relations guideline in your organization? If yes, what are the major contents of the guidelines?
3. What is the mission of the public relation in your organization?
4. How do you evaluate your organization's awareness on public relations?
5. What are the problems of public relations in your organization?
6. What opportunities are there in your organization as well as at the national level for the development of public relations?

Appendix –E

Interview Questions for Higher Government Officials

1. Of the four public relations models, to which one the philosophy of the government belong? What about the practice?
2. How do you evaluate the success of public relations at the federal government level? What are the success? And also the problems?
3. On what issues should the focus be in order to improve the public relation practice at the federal level?
4. How much is the government committed to develop professionalism in public relations? What measures are introduced in this regard?
5. What are the contributions of the former ministry of information and the current government communication affairs office for the professional development and recognition of public relations? What would be the next role of Gcao in this regard?

Declaration

I the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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School of Journalism and Communication

June, 2014

Approved by -----

Advisor