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Department of Social Anthropology

**Assessment of Ethnographic Film Production Process of
Walta Media and Communication Corporate**

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June 2020

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Assessment of Ethnographic Film Production Process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate

**A Thesis Submitted to Department of Social Anthropology In Partial
Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art in Social
Anthropology**

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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 source of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to investigate ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The study was conducted based on the data gathered from fifteen key-informant interview participants. The participants were Walta's ethnographic and documentary film production crew members. From the informants twelve of them are male and three females. Qualitative research method was used to answer the research questions. As Hieder (2006:112) noted, the single most important indicator for 'ethnographicness' of a given ethnographic film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the making. Furthermore, ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic understanding. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be. Therefore, the result of the study indicated that, Walta Media and Communication Corporate is producing ethnographic films without ethnographic / anthropological knowledge. And in the production process of Walta's ethnographic films, ethnographers have no any role in all stages of the production process. Therefore, to this research, Walta Media and Communication Corporate is producing ethnographic films without ethnographic filmmaking knowledge.

Key words: *Ethnographic Film, Ethnographers, Ethnographicness, Production Process*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher overviewed the background of visual anthropology, ethnographic films, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions, significances of the study, methods used, scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Visual anthropology is a branch of cultural anthropology. This field of study includes the study of visual systems and material culture. Visual anthropology proceeds logically from the concept that culture is manifested through visible symbols embedded in gesture, ceremonies, rituals, and artifacts situated in constructed and natural environments. Visual anthropology ranges over all aspects of culture that are visible-from non-verbal communication, the built environment, ritual and ceremonial performance, dance, theater, film and digital video (Ruby, 1996:1345).

Ethnographic film is one of the many forms of visual presentation of culture. Ethnographic film has been produced ever since the technological inventions of nineteenth-century industrial society made possible the visual recording. Since its beginning, ethnographic film has been burdened with the expectation that it will reveal something about primitive cultures. This expectation contributes for the growing concerns of anthropologist towards the ethnographic film (Hockings, 2003:163). Both film and anthropology were born in the nineteenth century and reached their maturity in the 1920s: therefore, a history of ethnographic film is a history of film itself. But curiously enough, it was not until the 1960s that film and ethnography systematically began to join in effective collaboration (Heider, 2006:15).

It is common to assume that the advent of cinematic technology was first adopted for cinema (art and commercial recreation), but gradually scholars started to use for academic and scientific purposes. One of the first documented academic anthropological uses of film is Alfred Cort Haddon's 1898 British expedition to the Torres Straits Islands, a large multidisciplinary expedition to study scientifically the Islands' people, 'comprehensively equipped with the very latest scientific recording instruments'. This included 'equipment for taking [photographic] stills, movies and even experimental color photographs (Bernard and Clarence, 2015:439).

As soon as movie cameras were invented early anthropologists began to make use of the technology as a documentary tool (Stern,2011:4).The initial role of ethnographic film was as the technique of recording and freezing the reality was related to the process of documenting the other, unusual and disappearing culture (saving ethnography), which was most often presented as a complement or an additional illustration of written ethnographies, university education, museum exhibits or an objective and true testimony of fieldwork (Urem,2015:247). Production of ethnographic films for public edification and amusement began as part of a general educational-film movement in the 1920s. Prior to that, films of "exotic" peoples were produced commercially, sometimes with the cooperation of anthropologists and screened in theaters as selected short subjects (Ruby, 1996:1348).

The term “visual anthropology” was coined after World War II and became associated with using cameras to make records about culture (Bernard and Clarence 2015:439). By 1952 there was sufficient interest in the field to form the international comities on Ethnographic and Sociological film which was associated with the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Ruby,1996:1348).

Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s Balinese studies in the 1940s are commonly cited as a major starting point in visual anthropology and ethnographic film. However, their work is by no means the first foray into ethnographic film. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries many other anthropologists made starts into anthropological film. Notably anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon shot film in the field, perhaps the first to do so. Baldwin Spencer, a colleague of Haddon, produced a staggering 7,000 feet of footage (more than one hour of runtime) during two periods of filming in Northern Australia, during 1901 and 1912. For his time this was quite a feat considering the volatility of film and difficulties filming in the field. Franz Boas engaged in the use of film in 1930 for his lengthy work with the Kwakiutl of the Northwest Coast, though his work was conceived primarily as a form salvage ethnography instead of exploration into visual representation (Stern, 2011:2).

A decade before Bateson and Mead, Robert Flaherty produced a number of well-known documentary films. Flaherty’s most well-known works include: ‘Nanook of the North’(1922), ‘Moana’(1926) and ‘Man of Aran’(1934). Despite his lack of anthropological background, film training, or even a basis in scientific inquiry, Flaherty is still considered by many to be a pioneer

of documentary film, and is cited for his collaborative approach to filmmaking with the Inuit people for 'Nanook of the North'(Heider,2006:23-24).

Taking into account the development of ethnographic film thus far, the work of Bateson and Mead perhaps they deserve recognition not as the first foray into ethnographic film, but rather for its scope and primacy. Their work set an early standard for observational film theory, as seen in *Bathing Babies in Three Cultures* (1952); it also served as the catalyst for reflexive evaluation of the anthropologist filmmaker sparked by a lively interview of the two anthropologists conducted by writer Stewart Brand in the 1970s. Bateson and Mead's primary concern with visuals was systematic data gathering using photography, film and sound recordings. This approach ultimately allowed for the widening of critical analysis upon the filmmaker's interactions in the creation of ethnographic film. Brand's famous interview of Bateson and Mead (1976) explored not only the idea of the subjective artistic qualities Bateson favored in contrast to the purely objective reality Mead proposed, but also began to enrich critical analysis of the work anthropologists did through a reflexive look at the research method itself (Stern, 2011:3).

Despite more than a century of experiments and research into visual methodologies the primary work of anthropologists remains the written word. Work in visual anthropology continues to be at the edges of greater anthropological inquiry and theory. Yet, attempts to bridge the descriptive power of written language with the visually demonstrative characteristics of film and video have continued to be fostered in new ways as technology has changed (Stern, 2011:4).After initial frustrations for those wanting to add visual tools to writing tools in anthropology, by the 1990s, photography and filming had become standard tools for ethnographic researchers. In Europe, the focus was almost exclusively on what came to be called ethnographic film; in the United States, various visual formats and media developed for teaching, recording, research, and analysis, which became part of visual anthropology (Bernard and Clarence, 2015:439).

Twenty-one century is characterized by new technological form of memory the digital video. Digital video has caused for the revolution of world film industry. Now a day producing film is easier and cheaper than ever before (Suhr and Rane,2012:283). The development of ethnographic film and visual anthropology greatly depended on rapid technological progress and achievements that directly influenced the changes of the paradigms of visual and anthropological theories in light of the new possibilities of using film equipment on the field (Urem,2015:274). For

ethnographic film makers digital video is a gift from heaven. Unlike in the former times, now a day anthropologists use digital video to record ethnographic memories besides pen and pad. Anthropologist produced ethnographic films to describe a certain society or community; as pictures are best ways to describe ideas more than words, ethnographic film is better to depict the culture of a given society as compared to discourse (Timothy, John and Peter, 1973:179).

There was a dramatic development in Ethiopian film sector in the past 20 years. Specially, over the last ten-year digital video production surprisingly growing fast, and a wider range of film producers were able to produce digital videos. However, most of these producers engaged in the production of fiction films; but, there are some companies and media organization such as Ethiopian Broadcast Corporate (EBC), Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), and Walta Media and Communication Corporate (Walta) engaged in the production of non-fiction films in different genre including ethnographic films. Over the past two decades, an incredible number of ethnographic films were produced in Ethiopia, Walta Media and Communication Corporate holds the lion's share in this regard.

The basic concern of this research intends to assess ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate based on anthropological knowledge.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

When I was a first year student, our anthropological theories professor taught us about the connection between film and anthropology. In fact, at that time, I had a few years experience working in film production; but, honestly speaking, I didn't have any detailed information about ethnographic filmmaking before that class. However, after that class I became highly motivated to learn about ethnographic films and I began reading some articles from the internet about ethnographic films. And finally, through my readings, I was able to figure out the research gap around the area of ethnographic films produced in Ethiopia. And finally, I decided to conduct my research on those ethnographic films produced in Ethiopia.

Few years ago, I was working in a domestic film production company, so that I have got the opportunity to closely understand the Ethiopian film industry. Throughout my experience, I have participated in the production of different fiction and non-fiction films, and this helps me to understand the way how we Ethiopian produce films.

In my experience, I could learn that, except few of them, most films produced in Ethiopia are not professional, saving the word “professional” for my discussion through the paper. There is a lack of adequate budget, professional expertise and production equipment. Many Ethiopian films produced by talented young people, are fortunately or unfortunately produced by enthusiastic young producers but who have lack professional training, adequate budget and production equipment. These filmmakers still continue producing films in different genres including ethnographic films while there are huge gaps in the basic knowledge of what ethnographic films are and with lack budget and equipment. However, there are few and comparatively well-organized private and state owned media companies engaged in film production.

Walta Media and Communication Corporate is one of those comparatively well-organized privately owned media companies. The company has engaged in the production of non-fiction films since 1994 for the past 25 years. The company particularly known by its ethnographic films production. According to the information from its audio visual library, the company has produced more than 250 ethnographic films since its establishment. Most of these ethnographic films focused on the cultural rituals among different Ethiopian ethnic group *i.e.* birth, circumcision, weeding, death, legal system and traditional house building and so on.

The focus of this thesis is to investigate ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate, based on anthropological knowledge. The research particularly focusing on the production stages of ethnographic films mainly development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. As Hider (2006:112) noted, “the principle that an ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic understanding is so obvious and fundamental that it is tautological. And yet it is resisted explicitly or implicitly by most cinematographers involved in ethnographic film. If a film is to be informed by ethnographic understanding, it is virtually essential that a knowledgeable ethnographer be intimately involved as ethnographer in each step of the filmmaking process. The ideal arrangement is for the ethnographer to do the fieldwork first, complete the analysis and writing, and then return to the scene with a filmmaker to shoot a film that has been carefully thought out on the basis of the written work”. In this thesis, I investigated if the ethnographic films produced in Walta Media and Communication Corporate meet expected standards, standards which I will discuss later and which I briefly introduced with Hider (2006:112) above.

During my study I have got five researches conducted on different aspects of Ethiopian films. However, no one attempted any research on ethnographic films produced in Ethiopia. TigistTadesse (2017), Kindeneh (2014), RidwanBerihu (2011) and Dilalew Million (2008) are those researchers who conducted research on different aspects of Ethiopian films.

TigistTadesse (2017) conducted a research on the representation and preservation of cultural elements in Ethiopian Amharic feature films. This study tries to see the cultural elements in selected Amharic films. Finding of this research indicate selected films attempted to create direct association with the country's culture in some aspects, like local foods, style of dress, local music, and family life.

KindenehTamene (2014) conducted a research on the Ethiopian film history. This study explained the development of films context starting from its initial time in Ethiopia up to now. According to the research finding, film industry is the most important economic sector to the development of Ethiopian economy in general. The research finding also included that the significant role of Ethiopian films in order to introduce country's social, economic and cultural background.

RidwanBerihu (2011) conducted a research to assess the popularity of local films in Addis Ababa. In his finding local films were very influential on making audience direct participant on the idea of film. They can put their cultural experience in the place of the characters since there is similar cultural background and language. In addition, audiences were eager to watch local films than Hollywood and Bollywood films.

Dilalew Million (2008) undertook a research on the reception of Bollywood films by Ethiopian youth. His finding elaborated that some cultural similarities between two countries incorporated in films is one of the reasons for the youth to spend their time on watching Indian films.

EskinderHailu (2008) on the image of female characters on selected political films. The finding of this research showed that the relation between female characters in our films and the actual female life condition in our country is incongruous.

Most of these studies, which have been conducted so far might have their own contribution for Ethiopian film industry; however, these researches have no any significant contribution for ethnographic films produced in Ethiopia. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no

any single study which investigate ethnographic films produced in Ethiopia. Therefore, this research will be the first of it. This research work is aimed at narrowing the research gap in the study of ethnographic films produced in Ethiopian.

Aware of the above explained facts, there is a research gap that needs further investigation *i.e.* exploring how Ethiopian filmmakers produced ethnographic films.

1.3 Research Questions

In exploring local ethnographic films, the following research questions are outlined:

- What is the current experience of ethnographic film production process in Ethiopia?
- What is the role of anthropologist in ethnographic film production projects in Ethiopia?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This research work has general and specific objectives as stated below.

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate ethnographic film production process of WaltaMedia and Communication Corporate based on anthropological knowledge.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Based on the above general objective, the specific objectives of the study are:

- To assess ethnographic filmmaking process of WaltaMedia and Communication Corporate.
- To see the extent of anthropologist participation in ethnographic filmmaking process of WaltaMedia and Communication Corporate.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This study is important for the following major reasons. Firstly, it helps to film producers see their gaps in the production of ethnographic films. Secondly, it would help understand nationwide challenge of ethnographic film production. Thirdly, it will be used as a reference for those researchers who want to make a further study on Ethiopian ethnographic film production. Furthermore, this study will give an insight to WaltaMedia and Communication Corporate, to local film production companies, to local television station, to the Ministry of

Culture and Tourism and together relevant stakeholder so as to give due attention to develop policy and guidelines on the ethnographic film production.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research is limited to the study of ethnographic films production by Walta Media and Communication Corporate. The study did not cover other local ethnographic film production companies. Walta Media and Communication Corporate is selected for this research because, it has produced a number of ethnographic films compared to other non-fiction film production companies, TV stations and research institutes found in Ethiopia. On the other hand, Walta was willing to participate in the research.

This study specially focusses on ethnographic film production stages of Walta Media and Communication Corporate, i.e. development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. This is because, in ethnographic film production, each production stage contributes a lot towards the degree of 'ethnographicness' of the final output of the film. Thus, I believed and decided that focusing on the stages of production process is a big enough scope for the study. Therefore, the research only investigated ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate based on anthropological understanding of ethnographic film production.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

When I started selecting and organizing sources to the literature part of this research, the challenge that I encountered was to find relevant literature for the topic. Except few e-books and journals from internet, I couldn't find a single reference book from AAU Social Science Post Graduate Library and John F. Kennedy Library. Finally, after continuous effort I could manage to get few reference in different ways. Most of the sources that I accessed from internet were not relevant to research topic. However, very few journals and three books were significantly important for this work namely "Ethnographic Film" by Karl G. Heider, "Picturing Culture" by Jay Ruby and "Principles of Visual Anthropology" by Paul Hockings. Therefore, the literature part of this research is entirely depended on these sources. Particularly Karl G. Heider's book "Ethnographic Film" was very important for the literature part of the research. Because,

throughout my readings,I couldn't find any relevant scholars literature about ethnographic film characteristics, nature and standard except Karl G. Heider.

1.8 Research Methodology

According to Heider (2006:57) ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic knowledge. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be. However, this is no simpleminded recipe like "stir in heaping spoonful of ethnography." If that alone were sufficient, we could turn over all ethnographic filmmaking to ethnographers and be assured of successfully ethnographic films. But in fact a film may be made by an informed ethnographer and still be a failure ethnographically. In making an ethnographic film, ethnographic understanding is useless unless it is transmuted by filmic imagination. But despite these cautions, the single best predictor of 'ethnographicness' in a film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the filmmaking.

The main focus of this research is to explore ethnographic filmmaking ofWalta Media and Communication Corporate. The data were obtained through Key-informant interviews withWaltaethnographic and documentary film crew members mainly; production managers, scriptwriters directors, cameraman editors.

I implemented Key-informant interview for this research. Because I believed that conducting key-informant interview with the production crew members, who have major role in ethnographic filmmaking was adequate to this project work. For the key-informant interviews, guiding line questions were implemented. Besides, I also made a systematic observation of selected ethnographic films from Walta Media and Communication Corporate audio visual archive.

Secondary data was acquired from reviewing of documents and similar studies conduct on ethnographic films. Therefore, the research also explored published books, unpublished literatures, documents and electronic source and ethnographic films related to the study. Apart from this the research also used, the guidelines, policy, manuscripts and journals related to the production of ethnographic films.

1.8.1 Key-Informant Interview

Key-informant interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject. Two characteristics of key-informant interviews need special mention. First, only a small number of informants are interviewed. Such informants are selected because they possess information or ideas that can be solicited by the investigator. Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, the investigator identifies appropriate groups from which the key-informants are drawn and then selects a few individuals from each group. The number of key-informants usually ranges from 15 to 35 (Kumer,1:1989).

Second, key informant interviews are essentially qualitative interviews. They are conducted using interview guides that list the topics and issues to be covered during a session. The interviewer frames the actual questions in the course of interviews. The atmosphere in these interviews is informal, resembling a conversation among acquaintances. The interviewer subtly probes informants to elicit more information and takes elaborate notes, which are developed later. If all the relevant items are not covered in a session, the interviewer goes back to the key-informant. It is the unstructured nature of the interviews that invests them with special meaning and relevance in the present discussion(ibid).

Key-informant interviews for this research were conducted with the production crew members of Walta Media Communication Corporate, since they are paramount importance and key persons in the production process of Walta's ethnographic films. The interviews with these persons were unstructured. That means the interviewees viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in a relatively openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or questionnaire.

The interview was conducted with a total of fifteen production crew members. I used convenient sampling method to select the participants for this specific research. Participants were selected on the basis of my own personal judgment and on the basis of my prior knowledge to get the

required data. Specially, their closeness to the issues was important criteria for the selection. This method helped the researcher to set an appointment and communicated in the interview easily.

The interview mainly focused on the production stages of ethnographic film production i.e. development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. All interviews were conducted in Amharic, the working language of Ethiopian, and I have carried out the transcription and translation process. Hence, all the audio taped interview data were transcribed.

1.8.2 Demographic Data of Participant

In this study fifteen individuals have participated. Informants current position in the company can be classified as production manager, scriptwriter, director, cameraman and editor. Most of the informants have participated as crew members in different Walta's ethnographic film production. Among the study participants a total of fifteen individuals willingly give the interview thirteen being male and the remaining two were female. According to the study participants, most of them participated in more than one ethnographic films.

According to interview participants, all of them have no any formal filmmaking and anthropological knowledge. However, most of them have first degree and above in journalism and in other different fields of specialization. In addition, they have long years of experience in ethnographic and documentary filmmaking. The company also provide them some professional filmmaking short-term trainings periodically.

1.8.3 Audiovisual Material

I was undertaking a research on Walta's ethnographic filmmaking process; and thus, it was significantly important to observe some ethnographic films from Walta's audio visual archive. Therefore, I asked permission the audio visual library management of Walta to access some films from the audio visual library. The library management accept my request to enter in the library for only one day and to access some films under the supervision of the library officers.

Throughout my observation, I was supported by Karl Hider's "The Attributes Dimension Grid" as I attached in Annex-II. During my one-day stay in Walta's audio visual library, I could have managed to watch twelve films. I used my own common-sense to evaluate these films. My criteria for the selection of these films were random selection from different culture. And I selected different films produced on different ethnic group cultural events. My observation was

focus on the overall characteristics of ethnographic films produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Method

As information obtained through the techniques of key-informant interview; it was believed to be helpful to get information that contain personal view of the informants on the topic. The data obtained were analyzed side by side while data collection under progress. This preliminary analysis approach helps to modify guideline questions and issues to be raised during the interview. To analyze the data qualitative techniques were employed. The qualitative data obtained through interviews were analyzed in sentence form. Finally, the results were discussed and interpreted to draw important conclusions, and implications.

1.8.5 Ethical Considerations

As I attached in Annex-I, participants were verbally informed of their rights, research procedures, and given necessary information about the research. Thus, it was made clear to participants that participation in the research was voluntary, they did not have to answer every question, and they could stop the interview at any time. Moreover, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their participation in the research was solely based on their consent. No participants objected to request.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter hitherto presented the introduction, statement of the problem, the research objectives, the research question, significant of the study, research methodology, scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter reviews the literature related to the study. The third chapter includes the findings and discussions. Finally, the forth chapter concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter presents the review of literature on ethnographic films. It discusses the meaning of ethnographic film, history of ethnographic film in Ethiopia, the characteristics of ethnographic films, theories of ethnographic films. Furthermore, the chapter discusses ethnographic film making process based on anthropological knowledge.

2.1 Ethnographic Film

Ethnographic film is a combination of two different field of studies *i.e.* “Ethnography” and “Film”. Both film scholars and visual anthropologists define ethnographic film in different ways; therefore, there is no any common explanation of ethnographic film among scholars from these two fields of study. As Ruby (1996: 1345) noted, ethnographic film is the dominant interest and practice among visual anthropologists. But there is no standard agreed –upon definition of the genre and popular assumption is that it is a documentary about exotic people, thereby broadening the term ethnographic to stand for any statement about culture. The definition of ethnographic film is obviously a contentious matter (Belford, 2010:2). The complexity of the phrase ‘ethnographic film’ is thus the result of an interdisciplinary approach, a shift within the master discipline, changes in the way of recording and using the visual material and unbalanced definitions (Urem, 2015:26)

A documentary film scholar David MacDougall cited in Urem, does not consider ethnographic film the same as film ethnography, but believes that ethnographic film is the one made to describe culture, and defines it as a cultural category, wider than the films made within or for the discipline of anthropology. On the other hand, anthropologist of visual communication Jay Ruby cited in Urem, has an opposite attitude, and he claims that ethnographic film has to be based on anthropological foundations –theory and method and that it can be made only by an anthropologist (Urem, 2015:275).

For the purpose of is research I used Karl G. Heider’s definition of ethnographic film. According to a prominent visual anthropologist Karl G. Heider, to define “ethnographic film” require either one sentence or an entire book. The sentence is “Ethnographic film is film that reflect ethnographic understanding.” Karl G. Heider tend not to define the term “Ethnographic film” but

rather provide attributes of an ethnographic film; therefore, according to him, the most important attribute of ethnographic film is the degree to which it is informed by ethnographic understanding (Heider, 2006:7).

2.2 Ethnographic Film in Ethiopia

As Kindeneh (2006:3) noted the history of film in Ethiopia is quite different from the rest of Africa in many aspects. In most of African countries literature, theater and cinema were introduced through colonial imposition. However, film was introduced in Ethiopia through the natural course as other agencies of modernization-railway, postal, modern education, telephone, etc were popularized in the country. Emperor Minilik II is credited to the introduction of film in Ethiopia. The first film screening in Ethiopia occurred during Emperor Minilik II reign at the palace. It was only three years after the world's first film ever was projected in Paris in December 28, 1895 by the Louis Lumiere brothers.

The production of film in Ethiopia started during the Reign of Haile Selassie I with a film in his coronation. Following this historical moment, documentary films on different issues featuring historical sites, developmental activities were produced. During the Italian occupation (1936-1941), the Italians exploited the power of film as a medium of the glorification and promotion of their culture and politics. They built movie houses in Addis Ababa, Dessie, Dire Dawa and Jimma (Kindeneh, 2006:4).

One of the major historical development of Ethiopian ethnographic films was the 1960s ethnographic film project of Robert Gardner. Robert Gardner is one of the pioneers of ethnographic film production in America. He was one of the prominent ethnographic film producer since early 1960s. 'Dance of the Kwakiutl and Blunden Harbor' ethnographic films on the Kwakiutl of British Columbia and 'Dead Birds' ethnographic film about the ritual warfare of the 'Dugum Dani' people who live on the western islands of 'New Guinea' are among the major works of Robert Gardner. Robert Gardner also produced popular ethnographic films on nomad's life of Ethiopian in the late 1960s. He has filmed Afar, Hamar, and Nuer of Ethiopia (Heider, 2006:39-42).

Robert Gardner's first Ethiopian film was 'Rivers of Sand' (1974), is about the 'Hamar' people in Ethiopia. In this film, Gardner takes the synchronous sound interview technique. The entire film around a 'Hamar' woman who sits, relaxed, before the camera and speaks at great length about

her life. She is particularly introspective about her own culture, and so she makes an ideal interpreter for viewers. Between shots of the woman talking, Gardner uses sequences of ‘Hamar’ life that more or less directly illustrate what she has said (Heider,2006:41).

Photo: Taken from internet (See Annex III)



Figure 1: Rivers of Sand 1974, by Robert Gardner

Another important feature of ‘Rivers of Sand’ is the ambitiousness of its subject matter. It attempts to describe the role of women in ‘Hamar society’. This seems like a particularly nonvisual subject. It is a matter of moods and attitudes and cultural norms, and not nearly as directly behavioral as housebuilding or farming or warfare. Yet Gardner takes on the challenge, crisscrossing back and forth over the subject, building up a sense of it through the visual images and through his narration and through the ‘Hamar’ woman’s words. It is a film without a plotline, and so it often is repetitious. It sometimes takes symbolic leaps, as when the images cut from a girl’s neck iron to the branding of a cow’s neck. And it retains the ambiguity of reality, as when we are told of the pain of whipping but then see a girl smile as she undergoes it. It is not an easy film to watch or to understand. But Gardner has attempted to move ethnographic film closer to the real concerns of anthropology (ibid).

‘The Nuer’ is also one of the most popular Robert Gardner’s ethnographic film. It is ethnographic film about ‘Nuer’ of Ethiopia. ‘The Nuer’ is a film of images of the incredibly tall, thin ‘Nuer’ and their cattle. It is one of the most visually beautiful films ever made, and it shows the rhythm and pace of Nuer life, which no ethnographer could ever capture in words. But its principles are cinema aesthetic: its framing, cutting, and juxtaposition of images are done with little regard for ethnographic reality. In the finished film we see an old man evidently responding to questions, describing in the ‘Nuer’ language what is important to him, especially his cattle.

With synchronous sound, Gardner is able to let the ‘Nuer’ speak for themselves (always presuming that the audience will accept the validity of the English translation that follows). But even if ‘The Nuer’ is ethnographically shallow, it has real use in teaching anthropology. It can give students a general holistic feeling for the people, their cattle, and their environment, helping them build a kind of cognitive landscape into which they can place Evans-Pritchard’s written descriptions of ‘The Nuer’ social organization and ritual. Through Evans-Pritchard’s ethnographic writings, the ‘Nuer’ have become one of the “standard,” best-known cultures in anthropological literature (Heider, 2006:40-41).

2.3 Ethnographic Knowledge and Film

Karl G Heider’s explanation of filmmaker vs ethnographer (Heider, 2006:8)

The ethnographer

Begins with theoretical problems
and research plans

Gathers data by making observations
and asking questions

Analyzes data

Writes and rewrites

Produces a written report

The filmmaker

Begins with an idea and a script

Shoots footage

Edits footage

Produces a film

Visual anthropologists who tie their analysis of visual information to the “printed text” are taking the idea that the anthropological film is contextually tied to ethnographic monographs. An anthropological film is considered to be anthropologically incomplete without the attendant ethnographic writings. Conversely, the ethnographic text is not seen as incomplete without being attended by a film. But we must begin to ask if the writing of an ethnographic text is really required for an ethnographic film to have anthropological value (Belford, 2010:6-7). Visual anthropologists argue that ethnographic film is a tool and ethnography the goal. Filmmakers disagree with the above argument rather they believe the film itself is an end. Sometimes this matter is phrased as an inevitable contradiction between art and science, with filmmakers argue about the case of art, and anthropologists the case of science (Heider, 2006:3).

Ethnographic understanding emerges from the analysis, and an ethnography is only as good as the analysis. But an ethnographic film can only be as good as the understanding that precedes the filmmaking. Or, put another way, the degree to which a film is ethnographic depends on the degree to which prior ethnographic understanding has informed the filmmaking. Also, films are still seen as the result of epic enterprises in 'the field', embodying a 'truthful' knowledge which viewers must come to understand one way or another (Heider, 2006:9).

2.4 The Characteristics of Ethnographic Film

According to Karl G. Heider, the most important attribute of ethnographic film is the degree to which it is informed by ethnographic understanding. According to him, it would be difficult to define ethnographic film in a few words, but we can discuss those features the characteristics of ethnographic films. Therefore, the characteristics of ethnographic films discuss as follows. The challenge of ethnographic film is to develop ways of thinking about film that will make it more ethnographic. We must make explicit those attributes that make some films more ethnographic than others. This will make possible a criticism of films from an ethnographic standpoint. More important for the future, it will allow us to explain clearly to ethnographers and to filmmakers how to make films that are more ethnographic and thereby more valuable to anthropology in evaluating the degree of 'ethnographicness' in any film, or in designing film projects that are maximally ethnographic, we need to consider a number of attributes, some of which emerge from primarily ethnographic constraints, and some of which emerge from cinematographic constraints. However, the most important characteristics of ethnographic film is the degree to which it is informed by ethnographic understanding (Heider, 2006:50-51).

2.4.1 Basic Technical Competence

Another important characteristic of ethnographic film is 'Basic Technical Competence'. It is a basic requirement for any films. However, it is also the most unambiguous criteria for any film is simple technical cinematographic competence: the images should be focused and exposed so as to be visible; the sound, especially when it is in the language of the intended audience, should be clear enough to be audible; and the editing should be free of accidental mistakes and errors due to incompetence. Today, with most film shot on videotape, such factors are no longer of great analytical importance (Heider, 2006:51).

2.4.2 Narration

Narration is the part of post-production phase; it is usually consisting of explanatory sentences read along with the visuals. It is almost impossible to have a narration that does not detract and distract from the visuals. Most ethnographic films show us totally exotic scenes: strange people wearing strange clothing doing strange things. Even if we focus our entire awareness on the scenes, we can barely take them in. But to have someone standing at our side telling us information in English as we are trying to watch the film must split our attention, and we lose much from both the auditory information and the visual scene. The purest solution to this problem was reached by the Netsilik Eskimo films, which have no narration at all, only post-dubbed natural sound. These films treat simple subjects lengthily and redundantly, and they are meant to be shown by instructors who can answer questions and direct students' discussions. Actually, much is clarified by the progress of the events themselves. But most ethnographic films must cover more activities less redundantly and are somewhat more self-contained. So narrations are almost inevitable, in some form or another (Heider, 2006:54).

2.4.3 Ethnographic Basis

Ethnographic film is a nonfiction film; therefore, according to Hider, ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic knowledge. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be. However, this is no simple-minded recipe like "stir in heaping spoonful of ethnography." If that alone were sufficient, we could turn over all ethnographic filmmaking to ethnographers and be assured of successfully ethnographic films. But in fact a film may be made by an informed ethnographer and still be a failure ethnographically. In making an ethnographic film, ethnographic understanding is useless unless it is transmuted by filmic imagination. But despite these cautions, the single best predictor of ethnographicness in a film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the filmmaking (Hider, 2006:57).

2.4.4 Relation to Printed Materials

"... The truism that "a single picture is worth ten thousand words" can be inverted as "a single word can be worth ten thousand pictures. Depending on the situation, either may be true." (Hider, 2006:3).

Written material is a backbone for ethnographic film production. No ethnographic film can stand by itself. An ethnographic film must be supplemented by written ethnographic materials. Or, put the other way around, an ethnography is a written work that may be supplemented by film. It is easy to conceive of ethnographies that are words without pictures. In fact, most of the best ethnographies either have no pictures at all (especially in the case of journal articles) or have a few irrelevant snapshots. But it is impossible to conceive of ethnographies made up of pictures without words. Of course, ethnographies can be complemented by pictures; and the use of film is to describe some things that words cannot describe (Heider, 2006:59).

2.4.5 Holism: Behavioral Contextualization

As Heider (2006:64) emphasize, although the holistic approach to human behavior is one of the hallmarks of anthropology, holism is not so much a theory as it is an attitude that characterizes anthropological research and distinguishes it from other sorts of social science research. Holism is reflected in the typical ethnographic research strategy of living in the midst of a society and making extensive observations of many events; and it is reflected in the typical ethnographic account, where the emphasis is on the interrelationships of many facets of a culture or a society. Ethnography places great emphasis on the context of behavior. Ethnography is extensive, in comparison with the more intensive interests so typical of sociological or psychological research.

2.4.6 Physical Contextualization

Physical environment is another important factor for ethnographic film production. It helps to have hill, village, farm or river as vantage points from which to film the entire physical setting of the event (Heider, 2006:66). Landscape, environment, plants, animals, village, farm, river, weather; these are all things that are outside of the human activities of the anthropological film but which a filmmaker must be aware of in order to construct elements of setting (Belford, 2010:50).

2.4.7 Reflexivity

Based on Heider (2006:67) explanation, the very presence of outsiders is the ethnographers carrying out their research or filmmakers making films, inevitably has a myriad of influences on the subjects' behavior. Reflexivity implies both the acknowledgement of that presence and,

more important, analyses of the effects of that presence. Most ethnographic filmmakers deny this effect and simply edit out any footage that reveals camera consciousness or too-blatant mugging. Admittedly, this is comparable to the general practice in ethnography, but it is one instance where the ethnographic practices can be followed too closely. The alternative is to build the outsider's presence into the structure of the film, to give some idea of how the people may be reacting to the outsiders, how questions are asked and answered, and the nature of deliberate intrusions, experiments, or the like that the outsiders are making.

On the other hand, one of the most important driving forces in the development of ethnographic film and its theory has been reflexivity. As a cinematographic and theoretical device, reflexivity is put forward by epistemological and ethical concerns in ethnographic filmmaking, and has shaped the genre of ethnographic film. Reflexivity, and particularly its limits, constitutes a very particular pivotal point of the shift from Western ethnographic film to indigenous film, a shift characterized both as disruption and as continuity (Matthias, 2013:109).

2.4.8 Whole Acts

The term "whole act" is an extremely flexible concept. But it is an important concept in ethnographic film making. Film is ideally suited to present process, or behavior through time. But in order to show the structure of a whole act, especially in non-staged shooting of naturally occurring behavior, one must know how to anticipate an action. Acts can be said to have beginnings, peaks, and endings. The unknowledgeable observer or filmmaker will notice an act as it is climaxing but will not have enough experience to know that it will happen soon enough to pick up the beginning and will not have enough sense of the act to follow it past its end (Heider, 2006:70).

2.4.9 Whole Bodies

When we are talking about the term "whole bodies" we are talking about the application of close-up shot during ethnographic film production. One of the most entrenched conventions of American cinema is the full-face close-up, in which a person's head or even just a face fills the entire screen. The close-up is remarkable on several grounds, the first of which is its unnaturalness. In normal interaction a person may focus visually on another person's face, but only if the two faces are very close to each other will the face be the only thing present in the total visual field. Even in cultures where normal conversational distances are relatively short, the eyes of a normally sighted

person can visually attend to more than just the face of another by means of peripheral vision and quick eye shifts. A close-up shot of a face does not permit this. As an extreme example, when two people are in sexual embrace, their faces may be so close that their actual visual fields approximate that of a cinematic close-up shot (Heider, 2006:78).

2.4.10 Whole Interactions

Ethnographic film is all about people and culture. And when filmmakers do shoot conversation, they usually ignore the basic fact: conversation is interaction. One of the most consistent absences in ethnographic films is any description of communication or other sort of interaction between people. In part this is because normal, naturally occurring conversation is so hard to film. It is a relatively low-energy, fragile sort of behavior, which is easily disrupted by the camera. It is much easier to film one person or many people engaged in some physical activity. So the percentage of real interaction in any ethnographic film is very low (Heider, 2006:82).

2.4.11 Whole People

According to Heider, it is safe to say that all ethnographic films show people, even though few of the films are actually about specific individuals. But the extent to which individuals are identified and shown as well-rounded personalities varies greatly. Some films show only faceless masses, while others make the viewer acquainted with one or two individuals. There is no single ethnographic standard. Although the goal of ethnography is some sort of generalized cultural or social statement, there are many different strategies of research and description. This is reflected in ethnographic films made by ethnographers themselves (Heider, 2006:84).

2.4.12 Distortion in the Filmmaking Process

There are two main sorts of distortions: one occurs when filmmakers, intentionally or inadvertently, cause alterations in the behavior they are filming; and the other occurs during the filmmaking process itself, through the selective acts of shooting or editing (Heider, 2006:87). It is inconceivable that an ethnographic film could be made in such a way that it did not distort or alter or select its images of reality in a myriad of ways. Therefore, it gets us nowhere to ask if a film is subjective or if it distorts reality. The answer to both questions has to be yes. Ethnographies also distort reality in many ways. One could make a strong argument this is because both films and ethnographies do distort reality, there is no point in discussing reality

or truth at all. This argument may have a beneficial effect in freeing cinema apart from false constraints. But here we are talking about cinema in the service of science. Social scientists (and even physical scientists) are well aware of the distortions and the subjectivity and the selections that enter their research. But at the same time, the scientific goals are phrased in terms of truth or, at the very least, truths; and scientists speak without embarrassment of the possibility of being more or less accurate (Heider, 2006:85).

2.4.13 Culture Change

Culture change is not the primary subject of printed ethnographies; it is at least explicitly acknowledged. It is generally recognized that cultures change, and that all cultures change all the time, even though different aspects of cultures change at different rates, and some aspects may even be remarkably stable. Earlier films went to great lengths to preserve or reconstruct a sort of “ethnographic present”—the presumed untouched state before outside influences came in. But this was always an “ethnographic fiction.” (Heider, 2006:101).

2.5 Ethnographic Film Making Process

The production stages of a film, be it a non-fiction or fictional film, will almost always follow a standard of “work flow”. The work flow of a film is the industry term for the steps that are involved in the creation of a film, beginning with the decision to make a film and ending with the film being shown to an audience. While documentary film does differ in some senses from fiction film in terms of what is necessary to complete the film, many of the same procedures are part of the process (Belford, 2005:47).

Generally, the process can be divided into five steps development, pre-production, production, post production and distribution.

2.5.1 Development

The first step in the creation of a film is the decision of what the film will be about. An idea of the film will be developed. This step varies among individual projects. If a film script is to be written it will be composed at this point. Anthropological films tend not to use shooting scripts or shot layouts. Storyboarding is often not used, in the same way that documentary film tends to not use such aids. The development phase of an anthropological film is usually part of the greater ethnographic project. Developmental aspects include: the preparation of field work, research and

other aspects that are generally part of the ethnographic project. Funding for the film is also sought at this stage, though the funding might be included as part of the field work expenses. Some filmmakers decide what the film is going to be about in the development period. This is where the anthropologist's role as filmmaker begins to enter into the process. How the subject will be approached, who and what is available for filming and other aspects of what is available will be decided at this phase (Belford,2005:47-48).

Anthropological film is a special subject in the field of non-fiction film because, in many senses, there can be little prediction about how an event will actually turn out. Filming in an anthropological mode removes most of the controls of the activities that are found in fiction film and some non-fiction documentary. The performance of activities can be requested, but anthropologists who are requesting that an activity be performed as a matter of staging will be subject to criticism about the legitimacy of their footage. To avoid these criticisms visual anthropologists, try to avoid the deliberate staging of events except where absolutely necessary (Belford,2005:48).

2.5.2 Per-production

Pre-production the second phase of film production. One of the major goal of pre-production is to anticipate anything and everythingthat can go wrong during the actual production period. It is the stage where all the plans are made before shooting a film. In the professional film industry, pre-production involves recruitment of the people needed for the film, including the director, location manager, musical director, sound designer, production designer, cinematographer, casting director, lighting director, and all the other staff. These people are responsible for planning out the details, such as locations, props, set design, wardrobe, lighting, and equipment (Irvingand Rea,2006:31-34).

2.5.3 Production

The production stage is the part most people think of when you mention film making. This is gathering of footage and audio that will be edited at latter date. Any cultural activities that are to be filmed have to be negotiated by the camera operator.The theoretical approaches of the anthropological filmmaker will frame what footage is collected and how the camera is used if the anthropologist is also the camera operator. If the anthropologist is participating in the film and

the camera operator is more versed in cinematography than anthropological process, then the anthropologist can advise about what might be important to film (Belford,2010: 49).

In cases where the camera operator is not conversant in the local language it becomes very important for the anthropologist to work closely with the camera operator in order to signal what is going to happen, and where possible guide the operator's attention to more significant aspects of activities. A camera operator who does not speak the native language also needs to be instructed if the indigenous people being filmed make specific requests or demands during the process of shooting footage(Belford,2010: 49-50).

Showing recorded footage to informants so that their feedback can be gathered is also done at this stage. The importance of this cannot be denied, as the showing of such raw footage can provide the anthropologist with information that would not be considered otherwise. Showing the material is also a matter of reflection by the filmed informants(Belford,2010:50).

Additional considerations of a filmmakers to shoot "B-roll" material, cut away shots and other cohesive material that can be used in order to create montage and continuity features. Landscape, environment, plants, animals, weather; these are all things that are outside of the human activities of the anthropological film but which a filmmaker must be aware of in order to construct elements of setting (ibid).

2.5.4 Post-Production

The phase known as post-production refers to the period after filming that is often the most intensive and time consuming aspect of filmmaking in an anthropological situation. Raw footage is cataloged and notated so that the images can be assembled in the editing process (Belford,2010:50).

As previously mentioned, raw footage is often shown to informants in the field so that informants can point out specific moments found in the film. The feedback provided by informants is important in how to present cultural information through the process of editing The showing of the footage can be done while the footage is still being produced. The visual anthropologist should view these moments of informant viewings as a time to gauge their reactions, clarify translations, ask questions about confusing aspects and notate all of this information for use later in the editing process. The line between production and post-production

is not an impermeable membrane. In the process of producing film footage, many anthropologists opt to show footage to informants on a regular basis (if not daily) so that what is filmed will have influence on what will be filmed (Belford,2010:50-51).

An important aspect of the creation of an anthropological film is the editing of the film into a useable product. While raw footage can be useful for research purposes, there is an essential necessity to edit the footage for an audience. Editing usually takes place when the filmmaker is no longer in the field and has access to video editing equipment often not available in the typical rural or remote ethnographic location (Belford,2010:51).

The use of editing to show naturalistic, non-fiction footage is considered a basic aspect of a documentary, which will be viewed by an audience. The intended audience will shape the editing process, as it shapes the intentional elements of the filming process as well. Another important element of the post-production process is the translation of native dialogue. A filmmaker must decide whether to use subtitles to translate the native language, overdub in a different language or to leave the native language un-translated. The use of subtitles is the current choice for presenting native language in a film. This provides the original language as part of the soundtrack, allowing the audience to hear the sound of the language, inflections and other aspects of the informant's native tongue (ibid).

The filmmaker needs to decide what high context linguistic data present in the footage will be explained and what will be glossed over. Abstract conceptual terms suffer from the added problem that they cannot be translated faithfully without the accompanying cultural information which operates around them. For the purpose of the subtitle or narration, a gloss to a similar concept in another language might be used, but it can only describe superficially the meaning of a particular statement(Belford,2010:52).

Another aspect of anthropological film that is done as part of post-production is the creation of voice-over narration. This is different than narration overdubbing, which is the process when the narrator acts as a translator and dubs their voice over an informant's voice so that the statement they made will be in the audience's language. Narration can be a difficult situation. Narration is often perceived to have an authoritative property that can even supersede the visible film footage. In terms of acceptance of validity by the audience, the authority of the narration might

be at odds with the statements made by filmed informants. The usual choice in such statements is either to create ambiguity in the narration or remove such informant statements (ibid).

The use of narration is an accepted convention of anthropological film, but it is often a matter of contention when the use of narration takes on too much of the duty in the overall presentation of a subject. The argument mainly applies to how the film becomes more “textual” through the application of such information. There have been examples of films that avoid the use of any narration commentary, such as the previously mentioned Judith and David MacDougall produced a film titled (To Live with Herds). Films such as these can achieve a cultural presentation entirely through the native voice (Belford,2010:53).

The process of editing individual takes into sequences is also important to how the filmmaker approaches and frames the informants in the film. While there are different theoretical positions about how the filmmaker approaches the filming of a cultural subject, just as there are different theoretical framings of the informant interview, the approach to the interview will be part of the editing process. The interview will either be shown visually, or be used as the narration commentary that is voiced over visual information (ibid).

Two main theoretical schools prescribe how anthropological film should be filmed and assembled. The reductive materialist position, mostly attributed to the publication of Karl Heider, takes the view that the events which are recorded by the camera operator contain the elements of cultural reality. The narration is intended to exposit on what is filmed, explain to the viewer what they are seeing and otherwise contextualize the sequence so that the viewer can gain as understanding of the culture (Belford,2010:54).

A second position, called idealism, has been expounded by anthropologist of visual communication Jay Ruby. This position follows the idea that the application of reflexive filming will make the filming methodology a visible inclusion of the film. This will provide the viewer with a film that they can interpret and from which they can develop meaning. This position often takes into account the fallacy of the “ethnographic present” as a kind of timeless image of the culture as it has always been. Thus, idealistic presentations will be tied to very specific times of production and become historical documents as well. This historical background of any ethnographic research and program is very important in the process of understanding a culture as an expression of individuals at a particular time (ibid).

These two theoretical positions are synthesized in anthropological film process since the visual image is representing material reality as well as developing specific historical and individual activities. The ethnographic process applied to film recognizes how both the materialist and idealist approaches will yield appropriate results depending on how the proposed outcome of the film is intended. The construction of the culture through film will also be dependent on the editorial input of concision, omission and presentation of subject from available filmed materials (ibid).

2.5.5 Distribution

Distribution The distribution of film is the step in the process that is probably one of the most important factors in the success (in terms of utility, not monetary) of a documentary film. It is also the step that the filmmaker will have the most limitations and the least control. Distribution of anthropological films is reliant on the same model as textbooks. Anthropological films are used by the academic community as part of the instructional curriculum. Many films are funded specifically for this purpose. The films that are adopted are necessarily limited by budget constraints at the department level, the university library level and other aspects of funding (Belford,2010:54-55).

There is also the problem of availability. Certain film distribution companies can provide copies of films which they have the right to distribute under contract with the copyright holders. Situations where legal ownership is not easily established, or is contested can result in the film being unavailable. Companies such as Documentary Educational Resources have begun to distribute many classic films and have provided distribution, and in some cases production assistance, for many new films. Their selection criteria are based on the appeal of the movie to a target audience of teaching anthropology academics and the funding of their departments. The pricing structure of their film sales demonstrates this, often being priced two to three times the market price of other documentary films that are commercially available (Belford,2010:55).

Even under ideal conditions where high quality ethnographic film is intended for general audiences, the primary distribution relies on the agency of broadcast television as a form of distribution. Broadcasting will decide when, to what audiences and how anthropological content will be shown to their national and local markets. One only has to look at the difficulties of representing indigenous nudity to different regional markets in the United States to see how

anthological prospects can run into barriers when expected to conform to mass media practices (ibid).

2.6 Theories

Ethnographic film is a combination of two different field of studies *i.e.* “Ethnography” and “Film”. Therefore, the literature about ethnographic film has been hampered by a lack of a conceptual structure sufficient to the task of allowing anthropologists to theorize about how film can be used to communicate knowledge. It is a failure that burdens all discourse about nonfiction film. As a result, authors have concentrated on making proscriptions and programmatic admonitions, and telling war stories about how a film was made. Other topics of discussion have been the assumed dilemmas between science and art; questions of accuracy, fairness, and objectivity; the appropriateness of the conventions of documentary realism; the value of film in the teaching of anthropology; the relationship between a written and a visual anthropology; and collaborations between filmmakers and anthropologists and the native production of visual texts. Theoretical explorations are consequently limited to arguing about whether or not a particular film is objective, accurate, complete, or even ethnographic (Ruby,1996:1347).

2.7Representation in Ethnography

Visual representation considered a privileged form of knowledge (Tribina,2013:25). However, questions of voice, authority, and authorship have become a serious concern among documentary filmmakers and anthropologists. Who can represent someone else, with what intention, in what language and in what environment is a conundrum that characterizes the postmodern era (Ruby,1992:42).

In a postmodern world, the camera is constrained by the culture of the person behind the apparatus; that is, films and photographs are always concerned with two things-the culture of those filmed and the culture of those who film. As a result of viewing pictures representations of an ideology, it has been suggested that anthropologists use the technology in a reflexive manner, alienating viewers from any false assumptions about the reliability of the images they see, and that visual ethnographers seek ways to share their authority with the people they study (Ruby,1996:1345).

The initial role of ethnographic film as the technique of recording and freezing the reality was related to the process of documenting the other, unusual and disappearing (saving ethnography), which was most often presented as a complement or an additional illustration of written ethnographies, university education, museum exhibits or an objective and true testimony of fieldwork. In such first visual recordings the voice of an observed subject was completely ignored and the authors of films had absolute control over what (and how) they record and present the subject matter (Urem,2015:274).

For in a sense by “ethnographic films” we mean the way in which ethnographers look at films which is part of the discourse of science. We are thus confronted with problems about the differing representational status of the pro-filmic event, about whose voice it is that addresses us, and above all, by the nagging problem of ‘gaps, in the system of representation(Adams,1979:89).The process of looking at the Other is not easily rationalized. The separation between “us” and “them” is deeply rooted inside both anthropology and ethnographic film (Tribina,2013:25). A major problem in studying anthropology is ethnocentrism, the tendency to assume that one's way of life is right, proper, and moral, and to evaluate other ways of life as primitive, weird, barbaric, and inferior. The anthropologist's position is not that value judgments cannot be made about human life ways, but instead, the practical position that real understanding is impossible in the presence of negative or biased opinions about one's subjects. Ethnocentric opinions prevent us from seeing how other peoples really live and thus from understanding their view of the world(Dannis,1982:63-66). The cultural incompatibility is deeply embedded in the representational system. Visual images, just like our notion of reality, are socially constructed communicative forms. Therefore, it is necessary to examine our inscriptions of the cultural Other to uncover the ways in which our interpretations reproduce hegemonic discourse (Tribina,2013:25).

Our cultural self becomes the sum of the scenarios in which we participate. If one can see culture, then researchers should be able to employ audiovisual technologies to record it as data amenable to analysis and presentation. Next, we need anthropologists to become sufficiently competent in the means to produce audiovisual materials that are free from the constraints of the commercial world of documentary film. They must be willing to experiment with techniques and ideas outside the world of the documentary, especially with multimedia, nonlinear, and interactive devices. Finally, they must remove their work from the traditional outlets of

distribution companies, public television, and film festivals that are in direct conflict with the scholarly purposes of anthropology. To paraphrase a military cliché, film is too important to anthropology to allow filmmakers to control it (Ruby, 2008:14).

Generally, ethnographic film is seen as a vehicle for the expression of their sensibility. It is not important for our purposes whether one assumes this sensibility is derived from the idiosyncratic mind of the filmmakers or is a manifestation of their gender, class, or culture. The filmmakers' view is regarded as paramount, even when the goal of the film is to present the actuality of other people's lives. Robert Flaherty, particularly during the filming of 'Nanook' of the North, sought to replicate the view of the world held by the people he filmed by seeking the response of the subjects to his vision. 'Nanook' was shown footage in the field and asked to comment upon its accuracy as well as assist Flaherty in planning for the next day's filming (Ruby,1991:51).

With time, changes have occurred in using the camera on the field, the way of recording and the recorded material itself, which took on the form of an independent film work that conveys a specific idea, attitude or a commentary of the author. In accordance with the abovementioned, as well as with the changes of the tradition within the anthropology, the role of the studied subjects in front of the camera is changing (Urem, 2015:275).

2.8 Technological Impacts

Now a day it has become clear that the future of visual anthropology depends partly on how its practitioners engage with new visual and digital media and technologies (Pink, 2006:106). Anthropologists like everyone else fascinated with the technology. Notebook and pencil are traditional tool of the ethnographers, but they are by no means the only tools (Timothy et al,1973:179). The development of ethnographic film and visual anthropology has greatly depended on rapid technological progress and achievements that directly influenced the changes of the paradigms of visual and anthropological theories in light of the new possibilities of using film equipment on the field (Urem,2015:274). However, taking pictures for the sake of taking pictures is next to useless. An anthropologist must understand the potential of the camera as a recording device and must understand why he is carrying all extra weight into the field (Timothy et al,1973:179).

Generally, according to Loizos (1993:10-12) the impact of development in technology can be seen in four areas as follows;

1- Production Technology: Until 1960 ethnographic film production was in a fundamental sense shaped by difficulty of recording speech spontaneously anywhere except in the artificial context of sound studio. From 1960 onwards, changes in camera and sound recorder technology allowed the simultaneous recording of image and speech. And the invention of 16 mm color film made the filming process attractive.

2- Subject Matter: The earlier ethnographic films focused mostly on rituals. Now a day the range and depth of the subject matter grew due to change in anthropological theories aspect.

3- Strategies of Argument: How the film addressed their audience and increase in the number of voices within an ethnographic film in the subtleties of their harmonies or harshness of their discords. When the use of the new video technology is added to the issue of voices, address, argument collaboration and authorship, the logical outcome the film made by people themselves.

4- Ethnographic Authentication: The existence of written sources allows for the greatest contextualization and amplification of material filmed.

2.9 Attribute Dimension Grid

As Heider(2006: 108-190) explained, the characteristics of ethnographic films can be considered as criteria to calibrate a given ethnographic film. The purpose of attribute dimension is to present systematic way of analyzing ethnographic films.

Table 1: Karl G. Hieder's Attribute Dimension Grid

No.	Attributes	Researcher's comment
1.	Appropriateness of sound	
2.	Narration	
3.	Ethnographic basis	
4.	Explicit theory	
5.	Relation to printed materials	
6.	Voice: point of view	
7.	Holism: behavioral contextualization	
8.	Physical contextualization	

9.	Reflexivity: the ethnographer's presence	
10.	Whole acts	
11.	Narrative stories	
12.	Whole bodies	
13.	Whole interactions	
14.	Whole people	
15.	Distortion in the filmmaking process	
	Inadvertent distortion of behavior	
	Intentional distortion of behavior	
	Explanation of distortions	
16.	Culture change	

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

This chapter presented and discussed the major findings of the study. The analysis was based on the objective of the study, which aimed to investigate the ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate and the extent of ethnographers' participation in the production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate. According to Heider (2006:112), the single best predictor of "ethnographicness" in a given ethnographic film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the filmmaking. In addition, according to him ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic understanding. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be. Therefore, the analysis particularly focused on the ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate.

As I noted in previous literature part, ethnographic film production process has five production phases namely development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. And therefore, in this chapter I mainly made the analysis on each stages of Walta's ethnographic film production process based on anthropological knowledge.

The analysis was carried out from the viewpoints of the models presented in the literature review. For the purpose of this research, I particularly applied Karl G. Heider's understanding of ethnographic filmmaking as a basic parameter for the analysis. However, the analysis was not limited to this specific model; in addition to Karl G. Heider explanation, I used different models as a guide in the data analysis.

To analyze the data, I employed qualitative techniques. The qualitative data that I obtained through key-informant interviews analyzed in sentence form. Finally, the results were discussed and interpreted to draw important conclusions, and implications.

3.1 Background Information of Walta Media and Communication Corporate

Except few information from its own website, I couldn't find detail background information about Walta Media and Communication Corporate. Informants were asked about Walta's background information. Some of the informants referring me to read their company website, and other respondents told to me a few information which was similar with the information that I

accessed from Walta's website. Furthermore, some of the informants told me a bit of information concerning ownership of Walta. These informants said that, Walta Media and Communication Corporate S.C., previously called Walta Information and Public Relations Center S.C., or simply Walta Information Center is a privately owned company, was established in Addis Ababa as a news agency in 1994. According to them, even though Walta is legally registered as a privately owned company; however, it is owned and operated by the former EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front), the ruling party alliance in Ethiopia.

Moreover, based on the information from its own website, Walta Media and Communication Corporate is located in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, was founded in 1994 and supplies the Ethiopian News Agency and other media with local and national news. The company is gathering, organizing, analyzing and disseminating news and provides superior media as well as communication services, serving both the domestic and international sectors. In addition, Walta has always been keen to bring a fresh and innovative approach to news, documentaries, research, and advertisement technologies and other media and communication services, acting as liaison between the public and the media. Its core values are hard work, integrity, quality customer service, and constant creativity, and innovation, respect for diversity. And its vision is: To be one of Africa's most creative developmental communication companies; and its mission is: having active, strong technology oriented and charismatic personnel with deep concern for development issues and striving to enrich the information needs for Africa's renaissance through providing excellent communication platforms. Its premises consist of a well set production area with state of the art equipment in order to produce high quality communication and media services and products. Since its establishment *i.e.* in 1994, Walta has an archive that has covered Ethiopia with full length and breadth.

The information I got from Walta Media and Communication Corporate audio visual library shows that, the company has produced more than 250 different ethnographic films. During the interview I have done an effort to know the specific figure of these ethnographic films; however, the library has no accurate and updated figure of them. Most of these ethnographic films focused on the cultural practice among different Ethiopian ethnic group *i.e.* birth, circumcision, weeding, death, legal system and traditional house building and so on.

3.2 Ethnographic Film

As noted in chapter two, ethnographic film is a combination of two different field of studies *i.e.* “Ethnography” and “Film”. Both film scholars and visual anthropologists define ethnographic film in different ways; therefore, there is no any common explanation of ethnographic film among scholars from these two fields of study. AsLoeb (2006:1) mentioned in his academic journal, “ethnographic films lack established methodology or markers of genre there are several assumed characteristics of an ethnographic film; in another expression, ethnographic films cannot be said to constitute a genre, nor is ethnographic filmmaking a discipline with unified origins and an established methodology. The general understanding of an ethnographic film is that it is a non-fictional portrayal of a group of people for the understanding of society at large”.

Participants in key-informant interview were asked to explain their understanding of ethnographic film. Most of them tried to explain the meaning and the definition ethnographic film based on their own understanding. And participants of the interview were explained ethnographic film more or less in similar ways. As I understood from their explanation, most of the informants particularly focused on the nature and characteristics of ethnographic films throughout their explanation. For instance, informant (PA) said that ethnographic film is realistic film genre focused on the production and documentation of nation and nationalities language, culture, philosophy including living-style. For informant (PE) ethnographic film is a film that reflect the real values, identities, cultures of nation nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia *i.e.* food, dressing, living-style including intangible cultural elements. Another informant, informant (PB) stated that, ethnographic film is a documentary film that shows and reflect a given society’s living-styles and values such as weeding, kinship, food, house building and so on. Meanwhile, according to informant (PD), ethnographic film is a type of documentary film which is used to show a given society’s cultural practices to the other parts of the society in the country. Generally, the above informants were focusing on the nature and characteristics of ethnographic films. On the other hand, one of the informants (informant PC) tried to consider Waltas’s understanding of ethnographic film beside his explanation. Informant (PC) said that based on our company understanding, it is a film that explore and shows different nation nationalities material and non-material culture including history, ways of thinking, philosophy

and so on. Our ethnographic film specially focuses on a unique cultural practice of a given society.

3.3 The Purpose Ethnographic Films

As we can understand from the historical development of ethnographic film production, research institutes, universities, film production companies and media broadcasting companies used to produce ethnographic films for different purposes. Therefore, in order to evaluate a given ethnographic film, it is significantly important to determine by 'who' and 'why' the ethnographic film was produced. According to Karl G. Heider's explanation, the significant role of ethnographic film is picturing and presenting culture. In order to understand the purpose of Walta's ethnographic films, I have provided the list of options to the key-informant interview participants to determine 'Why' Walta is producing ethnographic films. Regarding this question, informants' answers were almost similar. Eleven out of fifteen informants chose option number one i.e. "To Document Culture" as the first choice and they put the remaining options as the second and third choices. Following this question, informants were asked to choose the single most important reason 'why' Walta is producing ethnographic films again from the list of provided options. Out of the fifteen informants again eleven of them said that Walta is producing ethnographic films to document national and nationalities culture or "To Document Culture".

In relation to this, informant (PC) has a different opinion from the other key-informant interview participants. Informant (PC) believes that Walta is producing ethnographic films due to political reasons. Informant (PC) argues that "... Walta was initially established by EPRDF, upon entering Addis Ababa, the EPRDF immediately established Walta to promote Ethiopian national and nationalities language, culture and philosophy. Walta's ethnographic film production intention was political. It was originated from EPRDF political ideology i.e. "... historically Ethiopian national and nationalities language, culture and philosophy neglected / undermined by previous Ethiopian governments." Therefore, initially it was this ideology that initiated Walta's ethnographic film production project. This political ideology was found written even in the editorial policy of Walta. However, this ethnographic film production project gradually changed its form to commercial film production. And then regional state governments started to sponsor ethnographic films in order to promote their respective regional state national and nationalities different cultural events."

On the other hand, informants were asked about the sponsor of these films, they all said that, Walta's ethnographic films produced based on the inquiries of different the government agencies. Most of the time the requests were generating mainly from House of Federation and from the Regional State Administrations. According to them, most of these films were also sponsored by these government agencies. As I personally observed some of these ethnographic films in Walta's audio visual library, and at the end of each film there is a text (caption) that explain the sponsor of the film; and therefore, all of the films that I watched have been sponsored by different government agencies specially by the Regional State Administrations. Therefore, regarding the purpose of Walta's ethnographic films, informant PC's opinion looks more relevant than other informants' opinion.

In general, the history of ethnographic films tells us that initially ethnographic films were produced by television broadcasting companies, by commercial film production companies, by interested individuals, by anthropological researchers, by universities and research institutes for different reasons since 1920s particularly in America and Europe. And these films play significant role for historical development of ethnographic films field of study. Therefore, regardless of the purpose of the films, Walta Media and Communication Corporation as television broadcasting company is playing irreplaceable role in production of ethnographic film in Ethiopia.

3.4 Filmmaking Knowledge and Anthropological Knowledge

Ethiopian film industry is an infant in many aspects; therefore, most of Ethiopian filmmakers are producing films without professional training, adequate budget and professional production equipment. Informants were asked about the filmmaking knowledge of the production crew members. Their opinion for this question was very short and precise; it was "we don't have any formal filmmaking knowledge". Only two informants explained their view better. Informant (PD) briefly said that "... *Honestly speaking, most of the crew members of Walta are journalist; they have no any formal filmmaking or anthropological knowledge. However, they are highly experienced in documentary and ethnographic film production.*"

Informant (PG) explanation was an excellent example of Walta's production crew member filmmaking knowledge and experience. Informant (PG) stated that "... *For this question you can take my personal experience as an example. Professionally I am journalist. Currently I am working in documentary film production department. I have participated in the production of*

different documentary films. I got filmmaking knowledge from my senior colleagues. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, most of my colleagues acquire their filmmaking knowledge through similar processes.”

Throughout the interview, I have understood from the personal narrative of the informants that, most of the production crew members acquire their filmmaking knowledge from their senior colleagues, they learn how to make film by actually doing it, and they have no any formal filmmaking knowledge. Most of senior crews have long years' experience in film production. In addition, according to informants, Walta provide to all crew members some short-term filmmaking trainings periodically. However, obviously formal filmmaking knowledge is significantly important to be more creative and resourceful in their films; to improve their techniques especially in scriptwriting, direction, and production design; and to be independent and knowledgeable in cinematography and film editing.

Generally, it is difficult to think of making any film without professional knowledge, professional production equipment and finance. In the absence of any of these inputs it will be difficult to talk about film production. In fact, filmmakers can use different options to achieve budget and equipment; however, there is no substitute for professional knowledge and experience.

On the other hand, according to the prominent visual anthropologist Karl G. Hieder's, to make successful ethnographic film, it is essential that a knowledgeable ethnographer be intimately involved as ethnographer in each step of the filmmaking process. One of the most important Karl G. Hieder's ethnographic filmmaking parameter is the degree of involvement of ethnographer in the filmmaking process. In most cases anthropologists tend not to be very knowledgeable about film production and film scholars who write about genre lack an adequate understanding of anthropology. For most anthropologist ethnographic film is a tool and ethnography is a goal, and for filmmaker film is an end itself. Sometimes this matter is phrased as an inevitable contradiction between art and science, with filmmakers arguing the case for art, and anthropologists the case for science. But this is a distracting approach. The analogy with ethnography-as-literature is pertinent here. We do not demand that an ethnography be written in great literary style. However, when poor writing obscures the ethnographic point, we rightly object. Similarly, although we need not hold ethnographic films to the highest cinematographic

standards, a minimal cinematographic competence is required in order that the film communicate at all. In fact, however, it seems safe to say that films that are cinematographically incompetent are also ethnographically incompetent. (even when made by an ethnographer). Most of the films we use are far more successful in a technical cinematographic sense than they are in any ethnographic terms (Heider,2006:3).

Informants asserted that, the most misunderstood role in Walta Media and Communication Corporate ethnographic filmmaking process is that of the anthropologists' role. As noted in the above paragraph, the anthropologist position in ethnographic filmmaking is very essential. I frequently asked the informants that "What is the role of anthropologists in Walta's ethnographic film production process?" According to them, anthropologists have no any role at any stage of Walta's ethnographic film production. Furthermore, informants said that, in most cases of Walta working procedure, it is the role of production manager, director and other crew members to handle the whole production process.

3.5 Production Process

One of the major objective of this research is to assess the production process of Walta's ethnographic films. The proper implementation of each activity in the production process of ethnographic films is a basic requirement for the "ethnographicness" of the production. As Heider (2006:110) noted, if a film is to be informed by ethnographic understanding, it is virtually essential that a knowledgeable ethnographer be intimately involved as ethnographer in each step of the filmmaking process. The ideal arrangement is for the ethnographer to do the fieldwork first, complete the analysis and writing, and then return to the scene with a filmmaker to shoot a film that has been carefully thought out on the basis of the written work. Therefore, in this section, the researcher presented and discussed the findings regarding the production stages of Walta's ethnographic films. However, before discussing the findings regarding the production process, I have presented the evaluation result of some ethnographic films produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate.

Logically, results speak for themselves, therefore, it is a good idea to see and systematically analyzing some of Walta's ethnographic films in order to understand the overall production quality and characteristics of the films. Thus, I have observed and analyzed some of Walta's ethnographic films. My observation was supported by Karl Hider's "Attributes

Dimension Grid”. During my one-day stay in Walta’s audio visual library, I could have managed to watch twelve films. To evaluate these films, I use my own common-sense. The films were selected randomly from different ethnic group and from different cultural events. And my observation focused on the overall characteristics of ethnographic films produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate. Therefore, below I have provided the overall observation result of these films. The general characteristics of the films in all aspects almost similar. According to the informants, some of the films are based on true event and other are reconstructed story. Almost all the films are high budget films, specially, those films produced based on reconstructed story. The language used for narration is Amharic, language the working language of Ethiopia. The length of the films on average 30 min. Ethnographers did not participate in these films. All of these films sponsored by different government agencies, mainly

No.	Title of the films (Cultural events)	Society	Production year	Director	Ethnographer	Researcher’s comment
1	‘Quwen’ Weeding Ceremony’	Gambella/Nuers	1999 E.C.	Tadesse Belachew	N/A	Good

by regional states. They were produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate.

2	'Doniga's Death & Kingship'	Doniga	2000 E.C.	GetuBelachew	N/A	Good
3	'Funeral Ceremony of Tembaro'	Tembaro	2001 E.C.	GetuBelachew	N/A	Poor
4	'QuluQonta's Different Culture'	QuluQonta	2001 E.C.	FekaduDemessi	N/A	Poor
5	'The Ston of Faith in Benishangule'	Benishangul Berta	1996 E.C.	Fantahun H/Mariyam	N/A	Poor
6	'Marriage in Anuk'	Gambella/Anuks	1999 E.C.	TadesseBelachew	N/A	Poor
7	'Kicha Dispute Resolution'	Guragi	2001 E.C.	TesfayeMamo	N/A	Poor
8	'Afar Culture & Myth'	Afar	1996 E.C.	Fantahun H/Mariyam	N/A	Poor
9	'Death & Kingship of Hadiya'	Hadiya	2001 E.C.	GetuBelachew	N/A	Poor
10	'The Art of House Building in Wolaita'	Wolaita	2001 E.C.	FekaduDametai	N/A	Poor
11	'Birth Ceremony of Gedio'	Gedio	2001 E.C.	TesfayeMamo	N/A	Poor
12	'Ged Fedise Weeding Ceremony in Somali'	Somali	1999 E.C.	TesefayeMamo	N/A	Poor

Table 2: Walta' ethnographic films evaluation summery table

3.5.1 Development

Development stage is the first phase of film production. It is the stage where the film project created. Particularly, in the case of ethnographic film the whole process of production entirely depends on this stage. Therefore, development phase is the foundation or backbone of ethnographic filmmaking. Development phase of ethnographic film needs extended period of time; it might take several months or even years to complete this phase. The role of anthropologist as a filmmaker starts at this stage. In development phase, one of the major duty of anthropologist is fieldwork.

Informants were asked the role of anthropologist and the significance of fieldwork at development phase. They replied positively and stated generally what they know about activities usually done during development stage. All informants agree with the importance of fieldwork at development phase of the production but they were not sure about the involvement anthropologist as a researcher in their ethnographic films. According to them, development phase considered as an important production phase by their company. At this stage their company used to send researchers for fieldwork. The fieldwork is usually undertaking by research and business

development department of the company, and most the workers of this department are graduates of business fields and journalism. Regarding this issue, one informant said that we have no any anthropologist in the research department at all. According to him, the team members might have some knowledge of anthropology just by reading literatures about anthropology; however, they have no any formal anthropological knowledge.

Another informant (informant PA) have a few explanations about this matter. Informant (PA) said that “... *Most production members do not have anthropological knowledge. However, at development stage we used to send a researcher to respective places and collected information and we produced the films according to the information gathered. The fieldwork is usually done by our company research and business development department. Personals that are likely to be sent to the place may be two or three in number including the production manager. The research team is supported by different information gathering equipment, from these, video and photograph cameras are some of them. When the research team completed the respective research and when return from the field work, the gathered information will be presented as report to the production crew members. Most of the time the research team studies how much budget, manpower and production period needed to make the film. So that, in addition, the team shall study about the cultural event and record it with script, video and photograph. According to the research team report and based on the company work directive, “treatment plan” shall be prepared. In this plan questions relating to what kind of film we do? In what language we make the film? What is the main objective? And other pertaining question shall be answered. Regarding the research team member’s profession, the team is composed of different professionals and members having different knowledge and experience; but, as far as I know usually anthropologist is not included in the team.*”

The information I acquired through interviews shows that anthropologists have no any role at the development stage of Walta’s ethnographic film production. It is the main problem of Walta’s ethnographic films partly because at development stage the role of anthropologists as a researcher is significantly important for the remaining production phases. In spite of the fact that, the production crew of Walta would like to provide the best production design as much as possible to make the film believable and realistic, the role of anthropologists still needs to be considered. For instant, most of the activities explained by informant (PA) in the above narration are usually the part of development stage of any non-fiction films, however, anthropological fieldwork, which

very essential for ethnographic film production is not included. Due to this, it is difficult to tell the development stage is fulfilled.

On the other hand, informant (PC) has different opinion from informant (PA), according to him, currently in Walta's ethnographic film production process, there is no field work at all. According to him, this might lead the misinterpretation of the cultural event that we record. Informant (PC) explanation reflects that, the production crew members of Walta fails to follow the supposed production phase to be accomplished. Informant (PC) have strong emphasis about this issue, he emphasized that *"... Previously, we used to send the company research and business development team for the field work, and they have been doing researches for about three months for each ethnographic film projects. However, currently, the production crew members get information needed for the film from the regional states culture and tourism bureau and from phone callings directed to the local society. Therefore, now a day we don't send any researcher for the field work."*

In relation to this, another issue that the informants noted is the lack of anthropological knowledge of the research team. According to them, most members of the research team have no any anthropological knowledge which enable them to undertake anthropological research. Particularly informant (PD) emphasized that *"... Yes we do research at development stage of the production; but the researchers have no any anthropological knowledge. Most of them have different knowledge and experience mainly in journalism and business fields."*

Development phase is undeniably an important stage for any kind of film production; furthermore, it is the backbone and irreplaceable phase for ethnographic film production. At this stage of production process fieldwork is one of the major activity to be performed by knowledgeable anthropologists. Informants also affirmed the significance of this stage and the importance of fieldwork. However, according to them, the fieldwork usually done by the research and business development department of the company. In this department there is no anthropologist at all. The department members usually conduct research in the same way they do research for any documentary films. Moreover, according to some informants, in recent time there is no any fieldwork at all.

Generally, informants affirmed that anthropologists have no any role at the development stage of Walta's ethnographic film production. According to Heider (2006:5) ethnography is a way of

making a detailed description and analysis of human behavior based on a long-term study on the spot. A “come-in shooting-and-get-out-fast” approach and an intuitive-aesthetic appreciation of behavior and people are other sorts of approaches, and although they may well result in beautiful films, these must inevitably be ethnographically shallow.

3.5.2 Pre- production

Pre-production is another important stage of ethnographic film. The role of anthropologist in the pre-production arrangement contribute a lot for final output of the film. One of the major goal of pre-production is to anticipate anything and everything that can go wrong during the actual production period. It is during this stage that the anthropologist transitions from what is possible to what will be done. What can be planned is often variable due to the particulars of the field situation and the nature of the film project. This often overlaps with the developmental stage when we refer to ethnographic films since the limits of time in the field often mean an anthropologist will have to combine development and pre-production phases.

Informants were asked either anthropologists participate in pre-production arrangement or not. It is noted from their response that anthropologists have no any participation at pre-production phase. According to them, in most cases of Walta working procedure it is the role of production manager to handle pre-production planning. Informant (PA) supports this opinion, as he stated that although pre-production is an independent production phase, in our company it is usually the part of development stage. On a similar note, informant (PA) states that pre-production planning is mainly the duty of production manager.

Informants (PC) and (PF) both said that, there is no circumstance where the anthropologist is involved. It is production manager's role to arrange pre-production planning. Similarly, another informant (PE) said that the production manager is charged with the responsibility to pre-production activities. According to him, Walta have no any platform that include anthropologist at pre-production phase. Therefore, all of the above facts confirm that, in Walta Media and Communication Corporate pre-production arrangement is the duty and responsibility of production manager. According to informants, anthropologists have no any role at this stage.

3.5.3 Production

“... Ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic understanding. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be. However, in making an ethnographic film, ethnographic understanding is useless unless it is transmuted by filmic imagination. But despite these cautions, the single best predictor of ‘ethnographicness’ in a film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the filmmaking”(Heider,2006:57). Production period is the actual recording phase of the film, involving shooting at a real location. This requires appropriate equipment and Production crew. This stage is an essential phase for the creation of ethnographic film, and this is also a production stage where anthropologist and filmmakers work in collaboration.

According to informants, the actual production stage is very important stage for Walta’s ethnographic film production. At pre-production stage, the research team provide to the production crew with the information that: what to shoot, where to shoot, when to shoot. The production crew start filming based on the prior information they got from the research team. Local community representative plays the role of anthropologist by explaining the cultural event. Most of these representatives assigned by the government agencies usually by regional state administration. According to them, anthropologists have no any role in the actual production period.

Regarding this stage informant (PA) explain his views as follows; *“... Based on our company procedure there is no any platform that include anthropologist at any stage of ethnographic film production. Thus, during production stage decisions regarding shooting i.e. camera angle, type of shot, setup and continuity made by the production manager and the film director. However, some technical issues shall be decided by crew members jointly. Most of the time, when the film is being recording the respective regional government representatives participate by translating the local languages and by explaining the community culture. The production manager explain what is going on to community through the regional state representative or through the local elderly.”*

In addition, informant (PC) emphasize that, anthropologist will not participate at any stage of ethnographic film production. When the film being recorded decisions regarding directing usually made by the production manager and the director. Another informant (informant PG) also said

that “According to our company working culture, it is the role of the production manager and director to make decision regarding shooting; however, when there are disagreements between crew members, and then the issues shall be decided by holding meeting. Based on the interview data, thirteen out of fifteen respondent said that anthropologists have no any role. However, at this stage of production, the role of anthropologists as a decision maker significantly important.

As I mentioned previously in chapter one and in chapter three, I have observed and evaluated twelve ethnographic films that are produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate. And the purpose of this observation and evaluation is to understand the overall production quality of ethnographic films produced by Walta Media and Communication Corporate. In order to evaluate these films, I used Karl G. Heider’s “Attribute Dimension Grid” as a parameter. However, the evaluation of the films done based my own personal judgments and my prior knowledge about ethnographic films. Therefore, according to my personal observation, generally most of these films failed to fulfil Heider’s “Attribute Dimension Grid” parameters. They are almost similar in many aspects. Technically the picture and the sound quality of these films is not bad. The directors’ directing skill also good. The editors also have good editing knowledge. Generally, the crew members’ knowledge and skill might be good for other films that are different from ethnographic films. However, Karl G. Heider’s “Attribute Dimension Grid” checklist viewpoints and my point of reference as a researcher is all about ethnographic film production quality.

Therefore, below in (Table:3) I have presented the evaluation result of one of these ethnographic films. In fact, the purpose of this study is not to analyzing Walta’s ethnographic films. The purpose of this research is to assess the production process of Walta’s ethnographic film production. However, the final production quality of ethnographic films, usually indicates and shows the production process by itself; this is because, final production is the result of the whole production process. Therefore, here I have provided observation result of one of the twelve films as an example. The evaluation is supported by Karl G. Heider’s “Attribute Dimension Grid”. The “Attribute Dimension Grid” indicates only the attributes affected during the actual production stage.

Description of the film; The title of the film is ‘Quwen Weeding Ceremony’, the film was produced in 1999 E.C. .The sponsor of the film was Gambella Culture and Information Office and producer of the film was Walta Information Center. The director and scriptwriter of ‘Quwen

'Weeding Ceremony' was directed by Tadesse Belachew and the editor was Yaqob Tesgera. The film was narrated in Amharic language, the working language of Ethiopia. The length of the film was 30 min. In the film there is no any text (caption) that explain the involvement of anthropologists. The film is about the marriage ceremony of 'Nuer' of Ethiopia. The film shows the marriage story of two young 'Nuers'. In the film there is no any description either it is actual true story or constructed story. Generally, based on my personal observation, the film is cinematographically good but ethnographically shallow.

Table 3: 'Quwen Weeding Ceremony' production part evaluation

No.	Attributes	Researcher's Comment
1	Explicit Theory	N/A
2	Ethnographic Basis	N/A
3	Holism: Behavioral Contextualization	Poor
4	Whole acts	Good
5	Whole bodies	Poor
6	Whole interaction	Poor
7	Whole people	Poor
8	Physical contextualization	Poor
9	Distortion in the filmmaking process	Distorted

3.5.4 post-production

Post-production refers to the period after filming, it is often the most intensive and time consuming aspect of filmmaking in an anthropological situation. Raw footage is cataloged and notated so that the images can be assembled in the editing process (Barbash and Taylor 1997:430-432). An important aspect of the creation of an anthropological film is the editing of the film into a useable product. While raw footage can be useful for research purposes, there is

an essential necessity to edit the footage for an audience. Editing usually takes place when the filmmaker is no longer in the field and has access to video editing equipment often not available in the typical rural or remote ethnographic location. The use of editing to show naturalistic, non-fiction footage is considered a basic aspect of a documentary, which will be viewed by an audience (Belford, 2010:51).

Informants were asked about the role of anthropologist at this stage of the production process. According to informants, post-production in Walta characterized by no participation of anthropologist. A decision in choosing footage, cut and narration is made by crew members of the film, mainly by the production manager of the film or by the director of the film. According to some informants, most of the time decision concerning technical issues usually done the editor of the film. Generally, according to informants, anthropologists have no any participation during periods of editing.

In relation to above issue, informant(PH) stated that, as far as I know the production crew members of our company usually jointly work on editing particularly on the issues such as selection of footage, cut, narration, and other technical issues. According to him, except few cases, at this stage of production editors play a decision making role; however, they refer few cases to the director or to the production manager. On the other hand, informant(PJ) explain that, in case our company editing is more of technical issue. Editors of the film sometimes consult the director of the film or production manager of the film. So that there is no any editing work to be done in collaboration with anthropologist.”

From my personal observation of Walta's ethnographic films, I could have understood that the films are edited without the ethnographers' participation. As an example, below I have presented 'Quwen Weeding Ceremony' post-production part evaluation result in (Table:4). The evaluation is supported by Karl G. Heider's "Attribute Dimension Grid". It is noted that as I present the evaluation result of 'Quwen Weeding Ceremony' under section (3.5.3). However, in section (3.5.3) I only evaluated those attributes related to the actual production period. The remaining attribute in the dimension grid are related to the post-production.

Description of the film; The title of the film is 'Quwen Weeding Ceremony'. The film was produced in 1999 E.C... The sponsor of the film was Gambella Culture and Information Office and producer of the film was Walta Information Center. The director and scriptwriter of 'Quwen

‘Weeding Ceremony’ was directed by Tadesse Belachew and the editor was Yaqob Tesgera. The film was narrated in Amharic language, the working language of Ethiopia. The length of the film was 30 min. In the film there is no any text (caption) that explain the involvement of anthropologists. The film is about the marriage ceremony of ‘Nuer’ of Ethiopia. The film shows the marriage story of two young ‘Nuers’. In the film there is no any description either it is actual true story or constructed story. Generally, based on my personal observation, the film is cinematographically good but ethnographically shallow.

Table 4: ‘Quwen Weeding Ceremony’ post-production part evaluation

No.	Attributes	Researcher’s Comment
1	Appropriateness of sound	Good
2	Narration	Too much narration / very poor
3	Distortion in the film making process	Distorted

3.5.5 Distribution

The distribution of film is the step in the process that is probably one of the most important factors in the success of a film. It is also the step that the filmmaker will have the most limitations and the least control. Even under ideal conditions where high quality ethnographic film is intended for general audiences, the primary distribution relies on the agency of broadcast television as a form of distribution. Broadcasting will decide when, to what audiences and how anthropological content will be shown to their national and local audience (Belford, 2010:54).

Informants were asked how Walta distribute ethnographic films to its audience, all informants said through television channel. Informant (PM) said that Archiving and distribution of ethnographic film is the end result of producing ethnographic films. In this regard Walta has a proper archiving system of raw footage and produced films. According to him, Walta mainly distribute its Ethnographic films using TV channel.

Finally, one of the informants stated that, usually after the completion of the films they shall be showcased through television channels. Particularly, at the beginning of ethnographic film production project of Walta, it was transmitted through Ethiopian television channel, namely

“Hageri” program. On the other hand, there were circumstances when it was sent to be seen via projector in different cities and towns. According to him, currently these films archived in Walt’s audio-visual library in cassette and VCD form. And the informant suggested that “...as to my belief, this films shouldn’t be kept in such way, yet I believe that they should be kept in digital form. The researcher personally observed the fact that explained by the above respondent.”

CHAPTER FOUR

4 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes some of the most important issues and findings that come up in the discussion so far.

4.1 Conclusion

This study under the title of “Assessment of Ethnographic Film Production Process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate” aimed to investigate the ethnographic film production process of Walta. It was exploring by employing qualitative research methods based on responses of interview from Walta production crew members. The study was guided by two research questions as stated in chapter one and key-informant interview was selected as a technique.

The main focus of this research is to investigate the ethnographic film production process of Walta Media and Communication Corporate based on anthropological knowledge. However, a couple of things were important to understand Walta’s ethnographic film production in general; the first one is “The purpose of Walta’s ethnographic films” or why Walta is producing

ethnographic films and the second one what looks like the filmmaking and ethnographic knowledge of the production crew members of Walta.

With regard to the purpose of Walta's ethnographic films, the finding shows that the initial purpose of Walta's ethnographic film production project was political purpose *i.e.* it was steamed from the former ruling party (EPRDF) political ideology that "Ethiopian nation and nationalities culture undermined by previous Ethiopian governments". Therefore, this ethnographic film production project was initially started to promote Ethiopian nation and nationalities culture. However, according to the research finding, Walta gradually turned this project to income generating or commercial project. In general, the initial purpose of Walta's ethnographic film production project was political and then gradually turned to commercial. In fact, the significant purpose of ethnographic film is picturing and presenting culture. However, regardless of the purpose of Walta's ethnographic films, Walta Media and Communication Corporate as television broadcasting company is playing irreplaceable role in production of ethnographic films in Ethiopia.

Regarding the filmmaking and ethnographic / anthropological knowledge, the finding indicates that, except short-term training and work experience, Walta's film production crew members have no any formal filmmaking and ethnographic / anthropological knowledge. Most of the production crew members acquire their filmmaking knowledge from their senior colleagues, they learn how to make film by actually doing it, and they have no any formal filmmaking knowledge.

Like any other film production, ethnographic film production has five production stages *i.e.* development, pre-production, production, post-production, distribution. In the creation of ethnographic film, each production stage contributes a lot for final output of the film. Moreover, in ethnographic film production, ethnographers have irreplaceable role at each production stage. However, As the finding indicate, the most misunderstood role in Walta Media and Communication Corporate ethnographic filmmaking process is that of the ethnographers' role. In Walta Media and Communication Corporate ethnographers have no any role in all stages of the production process. Whereas, the ethnographers position in ethnographic filmmaking is very essential. As Hider (2006:112) noted, single most important indicator for 'ethnographicness' of a given ethnographic film is the extent to which an ethnographer was involved in the making.

Furthermore, ethnographic film must be based on ethnographic understanding. The more successfully a film has this understanding, the more ethnographic it will be.

Finally, the result of the study indicated that, Walta Media and Communication Corporate is producing ethnographic films without ethnographic / anthropological knowledge. And to this research, in the production process of Walta's ethnographic films, ethnographers have no any role in all stages of the production process. Therefore, according to the research findings, Walta Media and Communication Corporate is producing ethnographic films without ethnographic filmmaking knowledge.

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Annex I: Key-informant Interview

Discussion Guide

Introduction

“My name is NiguseTamrat, post graduate student of Addis Ababa university. Currently, I am undertaking research to assess ethnographic films produced by Walta Information Center (WIC). Your knowledge will be very valuable as I complete my paper. ”

“This interview aims to assess ethnographic film produced by Walta Information Center (WIC). It will focus on areas that are critical to ethnographic film production. That is: development, preproduction, production, post production and distribution period. The interview also includes the role of crew member throughout the production period.”

“Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. This interview should only last for 45 minutes, participation is voluntary, you do not have to answer every question, and you can stop the interview at any time. In order to keep your responses anonymous, they will be coded and the link between your name and the code will be kept in a separate, secured location. This interview should only last for 45 minutes.”

“Do you have any questions before we continue?”

“Thank you!”

Interview Questions

Respondent Code:

Interviewer Name:

Gender:

Education Level:

Part 1

1.1 What is your current position?

1.2 Did you participate as a crew member in any of Walta Information Center ethnographic film production?

☐
☐

1 Yes

2 No

1.2.1. If the answer for previous question YES what was your role?

Part 2

2.1 Do you know how many ethnographic films produced by Walta?

2.2 Does Walta currently producing ethnographic films?

☐
☐
☐

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

2.2.1 If your answer for previous question NO, please explain why?

2.3 In your opinion, why Walta produce ethnographic films?

☐
☐
☐
☐

1 To document culture

2 For research purpose

3 For public scholarship

4 Regional government agencies request

☐

5 Federal government influence

☐

6 If any please (SPECIFY):

.....

2.3.1 In relation to your previous response, what is the single most important reason of Walta to produce ethnographic film?

2.4 In your opinion, does Walta have any written document or any policy document to produce ethnographic films?

☐

1 Yes

☐

2 No

☐

3 I don't know

2.4.1 Please explain your answer?

2.5 Do you know how many ethnographic films produced by Walta?

Part 3

3.1 What is your opinion of the “Script Writers” knowledge and experience?

3.2 In your opinion, did the “Script Writers” have anthropological knowledge to write ethnographic film script?

☐	1 Yes
☐	2 No
☐	3 I don't know

3.3 If the answer is NO for previous question, did the “Script Writers” work with / assisted by anthropologist?

☐	3 Yes
☐	4 No
☐	5 I don't know

3.3.1 Please explain your answer?

Part 4

4.1 What is your opinion of the “Directors” knowledge and experience?

4.2 In your opinion, did the “Directors” have anthropological knowledge?

☐	1 Yes
☐	2 No
☐	3 I don't know

4.3 If the answer is NO for previous question, did the “Directors” work with / assisted by anthropologist?

☐	1 Yes
☐	2 No
☐	3 I don't know

Part 5

5.1 What is your opinion of the “Editors” knowledge and experience?

--

5.1.1 In your opinion, did the “Editors” have anthropological knowledge?

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

5.1.2 If the answer is NO for previous question, did the “Editors” work with / assisted by anthropologist?

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

Part 6

6.1 In your opinion, during the development periods of the productions , did Walta send researchers/ anthropologists to study the cultural event?

☐
☐
☐

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

6.1.1 If your answer is (NO or I DON'T KNOW) from where the script writers were gathering information about the cultural event?

6.1.2 Please explain your answer?

--

6.2 In your opinion, did the script writers work with the anthropologist/ the researcher?

☐
☐
☐

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

6.2.1 Please explain your answer?

--

Part 7

7.1 In your opinion, did Walta send anthropologist with other crew members for pre-production arrangements?

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

7.1.1 If your answer is (NO or I DON'T KNOW) who was arranging pre-production preparation? Please explain your answer?

--

Part 8

8.1 In your opinion, did anthropologists participate with other crew members during the production period?

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

8.1.1 If the answer is YES for the previous question, what was the role of the anthropologists?

--

8.2 In your opinion, who was the decision maker during production about type shots, camera-angles.....?

☐	1 Director
☐	2 Anthropologist
☐	3 Both
☐	4 I don't know
☐	5 If any other decision maker? (SPECIFY):

8.2.1 Please explain your answer?

--

8.3 In your opinion, did you explain about yourself to the society who were filmed?

☐	1 Yes
☐	2 No
☐	3 I don't know

8.3.1 Please explain your answer?

8.4 In your opinion, did the society who were filmed understanding what was going on?

☐
☐
☐

1 Yes

2 No

3 don't know

8.4.1 Please explain your answer?

8.4.2. If the answer for pervious question is YES, who was giving awareness to the society?

8.4.3. Please explain your answer?

Part 9

9.1 In your opinion, did the anthropologists participates during post-production period?

1 Yes

2 No

3 I don't know

9.1.1. If the answer for previous question YES, what was the role of the anthropologists?

--

9.2 In your opinion, who was the decision maker about choosing footage, continuity, cut and narration.....?

1 Editor

2 Anthropologist

3 Both

4 I don't know

5 If any other decision maker? (SPECIFY):

.....

Part 10

10.1 Do you know how Walta distribute ethnographic films to its audiences ?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| ☐ | 1 Yes |
| ☐ | 2 No |
| ☐ | 3 I don't know |

10.1.1 If your answer for previous question YES, please explain?

--

10.2 In your opinion, dose Walta archiving and making accessible ethnographic films for research purpose?

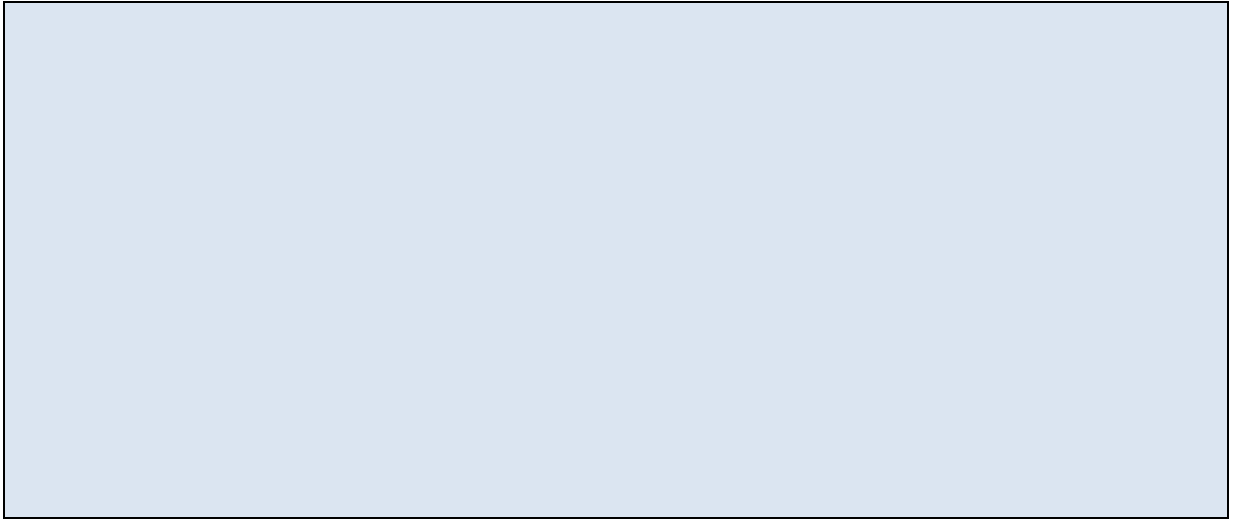
- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| ☐ | 1 Yes |
| ☐ | 2 No |
| ☐ | 3 I don't know |

10.2.1 Please explain your answer?

--

Part 11

11.1 I have reached the end of my interview. Do you have any suggestions or comments you would like to add about Walta ethnographic films?



11.2 Thank you for participating in this interview. The results of this research will be available in Addis Ababa University, Social Anthropology Department Library.

“In appreciation of your time, I have a 25.00-Birr telephone air time voucher for you.”

“Have a nice day!”

Annex II- Attribute Dimension Grid

Title of the film.....

Cultural event.....

Production year.....

Producer.....

Production manager.....

Director.....

Anthropologist.....

Scriptwriter.....

Editor.....

	Attributes	Researcher's comment
1.	Appropriateness of sound	
2.	Narration	
3.	Ethnographic basis	
4.	Explicit theory	
5.	Relation to printed materials	
6.	Voice: point of view	
7.	Holism: behavioral contextualization	
8.	Physical contextualization	
9.	Reflexivity: the ethnographer's presence	
10.	Whole acts	
11.	Narrative stories	
12.	Whole bodies	
13.	Whole interactions	
14.	Whole people	
15.	Distortion in the filmmaking process	
	Inadvertent distortion of behavior	
	Intentional distortion of behavior	
	Explanation of distortions	
16.	Culture change	

Annex III- Image

Source: Taken from internet

Access date: April 10, 2020

Link: <https://www.manchesteropenhive.com/view/9781526147295/9781526147295.00019.xml>



**Annex V-Walta's Ethnographic Films Evaluated
by the Researcher**

Table 2: List of Walta's ethnographic films evaluated by the researcher

No.	Title of the films (Cultural events)	Society	Production year	Director	Producer	Average langeth
1	'Quwen' Weeding Ceremony'	Gambella/Nuers	1999 E.C.	TadesseBelachew	Walta	30 min
2	'Doniga's Death & Kingship'	Doniga	2000 E.C.	GetuBelachew	Walta	30 min
3	'Funeral Ceremony of Tembaro'	Tembaro	2001 E.C.	GetuBelachew	Walta	30 min
4	'QuluQonta's Different Culture'	QuluQonta	2001 E.C.	FekaduDemessi	Walta	30 min
5	'The Ston of Faith in Benishangule'	Benishangul Berta	1996 E.C.	Fantahun H/Mariyam	Walta	30 min
6	'Marriage in Anuk'	Gambella/Anuks	1999 E.C.	TadesseBelachew	Walta	30 min
7	'Kicha Dispute Resolution'	Guragi	2001 E.C.	TesfayeMamo	Walta	30 min
8	'Afar Culture & Myth'	Afar	1996 E.C.	Fantahun H/Mariyam	Walta	30 min
9	'Death & Kingship of Hadiya'	Hadiya	2001 E.C.	GetuBelachew	Walta	30 min
10	'The Art of House Building in Wolaita'	Wolaita	2001 E.C.	FekaduDametai	Walta	30 min
11	'Birth Ceremony of Gedio'	Gedio	2001 E.C.	TesfayeMamo	Walta	30 min
12	'Ged Fedise Weeding Ceremony in Somali'	Somali	1999 E.C.	TesefayeMamo	Walta	30 min