

**Media-interpersonal Communication
Nexus in the Fight against Population
Boom: with Specific Reference to**

**"Meftihe" Radio Program and
Community Agents
in *Derra* District**

By Rigbe Yohannes

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Abbreviations

CBRHA- Community Based Reproductive Health Agent

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

CSA- Central Statistical Agency

Dev-Com- Development Communication

E-E- Entertainment-Education

FP- Family Planning

HIV- Human Immuno Virus

MfM- Menschen für Menschen Foundation

STD- Sexually Transmitted Disease

Abstract

This study investigates the effects of combined messages of an E-E radio program and community agents in promoting family planning. It analyzes data gathered from audience members and community agents using conjoint and in-depth interviews. In addition, scripts of the radio program are analyzed. The concept this study evolves around is development communication, which refers to the application of communication in facilitating economic growth of a nation. Among the strategies of accomplishing such tasks is Entertainment-Education (E-E). E-E projects have benefited people in terms of reproductive health including the use of contraception. Interpersonal communication on the other hand, plays an important role in the process of opinion formation. Messages transmitted through the media are discussed in interpersonal communication, which leads to behavior change. According to the theory of the two step information flow, it is opinion leaders- those who are approached for advice and are considered as reliable- who are more exposed to the media than the rest of a community and are capable of convincing others to change their minds. Therefore, both media and interpersonal communication contribute their shares to the process. The outcomes of this research reveal that the combined messages of both the radio program and the community agents affected the audience members by playing reinforcing and compensating roles. Both presented similar messages that created awareness among the audience members by applying distinct techniques. At the same time the radio program and the community agents were compensating each other by accomplishing things that one is not able to perform. Thus, the community agents accomplished things that could be difficult for the radio program, and vice versa.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the idea of blending media and interpersonal communication in the fight against population explosion. It attempts to show how combined messages of Entertainment-Education (E-E) radio program and community agents contribute to promoting Family Planning (FP) issues. To this end, it analyzes data collected from audiences and community agents through conjoint interview (with married couples) and in-depth interviews. It also uses data from contents of the radio program. Information on global over population, and specifically Ethiopia, as well as the role of mass and interpersonal communication in tackling the problem are explored and discussed in this chapter.

Background of the Study

Population explosion has been the concern of human beings for many years. The world's current and projected population growth calls for an increase in efforts to meet the needs for food, water, health care, education, infrastructure, etc. In July 2009, it is estimated to be 6.79 billion (CIA, 2009).

According to a report by the United Nation Population Fund, the world's total population is likely to reach 10 billion by 2025 and could grow to 14 billion by the end of the next century, unless the use of birth control increases significantly around the globe (Kinder, 1998).

Over-population can be defined as “the condition of having more people than can live on earth in comfort, happiness and health” (Kinder, 1998:2). When there is over population in the world, there wouldn't be enough space or resources for everyone. The environment would also be polluted. In general, the world would be overloaded.

Global population boom makes sustainable development a challenge. It makes substantial contributions to the destruction of the environment, which in turn, has an impact on global economy. In the context of overpopulation, human beings would be faced with scarcity of resources such as food, land, water, etc. The situation is exacerbated in poor countries where most people are not self-sufficient in food. And that is why overpopulation is believed to be a great threat to the future.

In Ethiopia, the situation is severe. The United Nations 2008 revision of world population prospects report states:

During 2010-2050, nine countries are expected to account for half of the world's projected population increase: India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, the United States of America, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania, China and Bangladesh, listed according to the size of their contribution to global population growth (UN,2008:2).

According to the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency (CSA, 1998), in 1994 the number of people in the country stood at 53.1 million. It was also projected that the figure would go up as far as 79.2 million in 2008 and 129.1 million in 2030. It also shows that the July 1995 projection, that is, 54.6 million, would almost double in 26 years. Based on the results of the latest Census conducted in May and November 2007, the Ethiopian population has reached 73.9, showing a 2.6 percent growth every year (CSA, 2008:10).

Media, as in any other issues, could play roles in promoting family planning issues. They can alert the public to prevent potential problems from happening (Griffin, 2006; Davis and Baran, 1981). The media serve as agents of development by disseminating technical know-how, and encouraging behavior change. They also educate on health and population control matters among others (McQuail, 2008: 491). And by doing so, the media can contribute to development endeavors of a nation. And this is where the idea of development communication stands.

Behavior change models have been the dominant paradigm in the field of development communication. Different theories and strategies shared the premise that problems of development were basically rooted in lack of knowledge and that, consequently, interventions needed to provide people with information to change behavior (Waisbord, 2001:2).

Entertainment-Education (E-E) is among the different approaches of applying development communication. Its intention is to pass important messages, mainly health issues, by using entertaining methods. Waisbord said “Entertainment-education is not a theory but a strategy to maximize the reach and effectiveness of health messages through the combination of entertainment and education” (2001:13).

This strategy has been proved successful in many occasions. E-E projects focusing on family planning and reproductive health have helped in motivating people to use contraceptives, to prevent HIV infection by having fewer sex partners, and to use antenatal care services (Fossard and Lande, 2008).

On the other hand, there are scholars suggesting that entertainment-education messages stimulate people who are already predisposed to new practices and were on the verge of changing behavior, for example about the use of contraceptives. “They provide the push for those already inclined to act to behave differently” but combining media channels and interpersonal communication would have a stronger impact (Waisbord, 2001:15).

Blending media and interpersonal communication (community agents, family, friends, etc.) has been studied in different countries and proved to be effective in changing people’s attitude on a variety of issues including family planning, which in turn results in economic development. The experience of India, in this regard is a living example. Gupta states “India’s countryside is brimming with prosperity- all due to media and extension workers’ sincerity and hard work” (1994:31).

Statement of the Problem

This study aims at exploring the role of mixed messages of media (E-E radio program) and interpersonal communication (community agents) in preventing population explosion. Most studies conducted on the role of communication in promoting family planning focus either on media or interpersonal

communication by examining them separately. But since the contribution of the two of them merged is of paramount importance as has been observed in different countries, I have found this strategy crucial to the Ethiopian case and worth investigating.

In a research conducted by Tamiru (2007) in two sub-cities of Addis Ababa, positive correlation between mass media exposure and family planning attitudes was observed. But the researcher suggests that analyzing the contents of family planning messages could help in showing stronger correlation between media exposure and change of attitude in the issue. While another study by Hiwote (2007) confirms the positive role interpersonal communication plays in promoting family planning issues.

Considering the role of combined messages of media and interpersonal communication in promoting family planning issues as witnessed in other countries, and the fact that population growth is a severe problem for Ethiopia, this research takes a look at the impact of a weekly E-E radio program known as *Mefi* and community agents working around *Derra* district of the *Oromia* Regional State.

The paper presents analysis of data obtained from the audience and community agents through conjoint and in-depth interviews, as well as contents of the radio program using text analysis. It examines what the community agents do and looks into how the contents of the radio program are crafted. By talking to regular listeners of the radio program who are also beneficiaries of the service provided by the community agents, it investigates how the combined efforts affect them.

This study therefore, is intended to show what the particular radio program and the community agents perform in order to influence people in terms of behavior change. On the other hand, it looks deep into how the people understood the combined messages by taking few samples but detailed information.

Research Questions

In dealing with the aforementioned problems, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What role does the radio program *Mefithe* play in promoting family planning issues?
2. What are the methods used in crafting the program?
3. What impact do the messages of the community agents (interpersonal communication) have in the fight against over-population?
4. What effect does blending messages of the radio program and community agents have in promoting the issue?

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how the mixed messages of the E-E radio program *Mefithe* and community agents functioning in *Derra* district (interpersonal communication) influence people. Its intention is to assess how the messages were designed and how they were understood by the audience.

Specifically, the objectives of this research are:

1. indicating the role of Entertainment-Education radio programs in promoting family planning,
2. showing the role of community agents in promoting family planning,
3. examining the role mixing E-E radio programming and messages from community agents could play in the fight against population explosion, and
4. providing information that could be helpful in blending media and interpersonal communication.

Significance of the Study

The general contribution of this study is believed to be initiating media practitioners and other concerned bodies to realize the role of blending media and interpersonal communication in fighting population explosion, and maximize efforts using the right mechanisms. And by doing so, the problem of over population could be solved, and its contribution furthers not only to the country's economic development, but also to the rest of the world. Media practitioners could also see how audiences understand mediated messages and be able to present effective productions.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations who are interested in rural development could benefit from this paper by using it as an input in their search for better techniques of success for their projects. It could give them an insight on how to use both media and community agents effectively.

In addition, it will have a contribution to the media and communications field by adding to the literature of development communication, specifically to the fact that both media and interpersonal communication play their own roles in the flow of information that could lead to economic growth.

Research Assumption

This research assumes that both media and interpersonal communication have important roles to play at different stages in the process of behavior change. As most researchers of communication agree "it is not very rewarding to try to identify one channel as more influential or persuasive than another. All have a role to play, and different people prefer different channel mixes" (Davison et al., 1976: 126).

Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the impact of an E-E radio program *Mefihe* and community agents in *Derra* district on issues related to family planning. It analyzes information gathered through conjoint and in-depth interviews from members of the audience and community agents in *Derra* district. It also probes into contents of the radio program using qualitative text analysis.

In this research interpersonal communication is seen only in terms of community agents. Other types of person-to-person communication (family, friends, etc.) are not included in order to make the thesis clear and focused.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis has five chapters. The first is the introduction part which gives the overall idea of the research. Background information, questions raised and objectives of the research are included in this chapter. The second part is devoted to explain the theories and strategies used in undertaking the study by providing related reading materials. Chapter three explains about the methods applied to gather the data and how it is analyzed. In Chapter four the data is presented and analyzed. And the final chapter, chapter five concludes the general theme of the thesis by referring to findings from the data.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

Introduction

This chapter begins by discussing development communication, a concept that evolves around this study. Diffusion of innovations, which is the dominant theory in the field of development communication, is reviewed. Entertainment-Education being one of the strategies in diffusion of information is also presented. Magazine or variety programs are among the different types of E-E projects, and are explained here since the radio program under study *Mefithe* is an E-E variety type. The chapter covers also some aspects of mass communication, radio in particular. The role of interpersonal communication, specifically, opinion leaders and community agents is incorporated in this chapter. Combining media and interpersonal communication, the theme of this thesis, is also discussed.

Development Communication

Development communication (Dev-Com) refers to the application of communication means to bring about economic growth and change in the developing world. The concept has its roots in the belief that passing experiences of the developed nations through the media could help developing countries grow economically and was dominated by the theory of modernization. It was originally developed in the 1950's and 1960's to enable the post-colonial world "catch-up" and "resemble" western countries (Thussu, 2000:56).

Development communications are organized efforts to use communications processes and media to bring social and economic improvements, generally in developing countries. The field emerged in the late 1950's amid high hopes that radio and

television could be put to use in the world's most disadvantaged countries to bring about dramatic progress (Paterson, 2008:1).

Development: refers to something good, positive and constructive. Gandhi (1995: 30) wrote “It is a process of movement from a state of dissatisfaction to a state of satisfaction; it is dynamic and not static.” Development is a concept encompassing economic, social, cultural, educational and political aspects of a society (Gandhi, 1995: 30).

Communication: is the basis of all human activities because it is through communication that people share knowledge, information and experiences, and thus understand, persuade, convert or control their fellow human beings. And with out communicating with one another we can not be able to understand existing problems and assist development endeavors (Gandhi, 1995).

Thus, both **development** and **communication** have strong relationship enabling them to support each other in the process of fostering balanced growth (Gandhi, 1995).

Development communication is all about informing, motivating and influencing all sectors and levels of people of a developing country to use unfamiliar ideas, skills and instruments. Although its genesis is traced back to the early 1950's in the introduction and application of agricultural extension in most of the developing countries, its concept has gained prominence during the last two decades (Gandhi, 1995: 31).

Critiques of the modernization model who accept the dependency paradigm argue that real development can not be realized with out the participation of people of the developing countries at grassroots level and by just transferring new technologies with out considering the reality on the ground (Servaes, 1999:18-44).

The meaning of Dev-Com has changed since the 1950's. It has been viewed from different perspectives but development communication remains as a concept concerned with improving the living conditions of people in developing countries and strive to overcome social, economic and political problems. In general

terms, transmitting an idea in order to make people change their mind and bring about a better future is development communication. Waisbord (2001:28) says “development communications entailed a process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behavior.”

Although the idea of duplicating experiences of the developed countries in the developing ones has been criticized by the critiques of modernization paradigm, the fact that **diffusion of information and innovations** could solve the problems of underdevelopment is still dominant.

The Diffusion of Innovations

The diffusion of innovations theory was developed by Everett Rogers in the early 1960’s and has become one of the most influential modernization theories. Rogers formulated five stages through which an individual passes through before adopting new ideas. These are “awareness, knowledge and interest, decision, trial, and adoption/rejection”. According to him, those who adopt new ideas before the rest of a community act as models and initiate others to follow suit (Waisbord, 2001:4).

At first the concept was based on the early **magic-bullet effects** of media which focus on the idea that information directly obtained from the media can change opinion. However, Rogers and other subsequent scholars concluded that the media has a great importance in creating awareness about a certain issue, but person-to-person communications were crucial in making decisions to adopt innovations. This revision led to a **two-step information flow**, a theory formulated by Katz and Lazarsfeld. In this case, the public gets information from an opinion leader who first gets it from the media (Servaes, 1991:24).

The two- step information flow states that ideas often flow from the media to opinion leaders and then from these opinion leaders to less active sections of a community. Thus, both exposure to mass media and interpersonal communication, including field workers was confirmed to be effective in disseminating innovations and bring about behavioral change (Davison, et al., 1976:124).

In the process of diffusing innovation, new idea or practice such as a new hybrid crop variety or a certain health practice that could improve the lives of people is first introduced using the media. Then conversations held between family members, friends or with field workers lead to opinion formation and then to practice of the new idea (Becker, 1983:415).

Entertainment-Education

Entertainment-education (E-E) is one of the strategies of using communication for social changes. Singhal and Rogers (1999: 1) define E-E as the process of “designing and implementing media messages to entertain and educate, for the purposes of increasing an audience's knowledge about educational issues, creating favorable attitudes, and changing overt behavior.”

Entertainment-education is not a theory. It is a strategy that helps to effectively transmit health messages by combining entertainment and education. It was first developed as a communication theory in Mexico in the mid-1970s and has been used in 75 countries, including India, Nigeria, Philippines, Turkey, Gambia, and Pakistan (*Waisbord, 2001:13*).

This strategy has been used at different times and places to promote family planning. For instance, an entertainment-education radio soap opera introduced in Tanzania in 1993 was evaluated by means of a field experimental design and revealed strong behavioral effects on family planning adoption. In Ethiopia there have been different E-E projects on reproductive health matters which are said to be effective. Like any other media programming, E-E is important in disseminating messages that would result in peer conversations and contacts with field workers leading to behavior change (Interscience, 2000; Aderaw, 2008:3; Tafese, 2004:119).

E-E could have different formats like Dramas, Public service announcements (PSAs) or advertising spots, Popular music, Reality programming, **Magazine or variety programs**, Feature films, etc. (Fossard and Lande, 2008: 5).

Magazine or Variety Programs

Magazine or variety programs comprise a number of segments or formats, which the hosts merge together into a single presentation. They can be presented for radio or television broadcast or stage performances. It is a format designed to appeal to a wide range of listeners or viewers. The magazine format allows

audiences to catch up educational contents that are repeated in different pieces of a single program. A radio variety show presented from 2000 to 2003 in Ghana could be taken as an example in this regard. The program promoted breastfeeding with songs, dramas, comedies, call-in segments, quizzes, and discussions with nutrition experts (Fossard and Lande, 2008:7).

Mass Communication

Mass communication can be defined as “the process of using a mass medium to send messages to large audiences for the purpose of informing, entertaining or persuading” (Rodman, 2001:6). It is a process that “mass communicators” apply to send their “mass messages” to “mass audiences” using the “mass media”. It consists of mediated messages that are transmitted to large, usually widespread audiences (Vivian, 2003:350).

Major Tasks of the Mass Media

The mass media disseminates information on a variety of issues. Whether it makes people change their attitude or not, it is still one of their sources of information. Although the role played by opinion leaders in diffusion of innovation is crucial, people will have to know first about the idea from sources of information like media (Williams, 2003: 166).

Schramm (1964:126) puts three major functions of the media:

The first group tasks- “the watchman, the informing functions”- in this case the media provide information directly.

The second group tasks- “the decision-making functions”- here the mass media can only help the audience to make decisions. The media can only feed information that would enable the audience to have a clear discussion on it and then make decisions. Therefore, what the media plays is still a supportive role.

The third group of tasks- “the teaching function”- the media have a teaching role that could be performed directly or with the support of interpersonal communicators. For instance, the media could be employed in a classroom as part of educational experience under the guidance of a teacher; but in the absence of teachers or even schools the media can fill in. Similarly, it would be very difficult, for example, for radio to do the job a skilled field worker would do in demonstrating a new agricultural skill, but once the skill is acquired, radio can be of great help by supplying additional information, responding to questions, reporting results, etc.

In general terms, the mass media are “agents of social change” in terms of their involvement in a national development. They are specifically expected to help by contributing to the process of transiting to new customs and practices. And these behavior changes could substantially mean changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills, and social norms (Schramm, 1964: 114).

When it comes to rural development media contribute much towards an effort in increasing the per capita income, increasing productivity per person, increasing self-efficiency, increasing literacy and skilled human resources, providing greater information flow, increased transport and communication facilities, insuring adequate nutrition and food supply, greater industrialization, stable administration, as well as low birth and increased resources of family welfare (Gupta, 1994:34).

In principle, the mechanism of bringing about such changes using the media looks simple. What is expected from the media is to transmit messages about a need that is not met by current customs and practices. Then, audiences after becoming aware of the existing gap, invent or borrow a behavior that would enable them satisfy their needs and bridge the gap. But realizing this goal using the media says Schramm (1964: 115-122) gets difficult for some reasons that need to be taken in to consideration.

Cultural linkage: Customs and practices that need to be changed or reformed could be closely and strongly linked with other customs and beliefs like religion. And when the media tries to work on behavior change it has to think in terms of the change the intervention would bring about in the whole society. For instance, there could be occasions when a change in health practices may require even a change in religion if it is to be accepted.

Group relationships: When a media tries to change a society in terms of behavior, it should take group relationships into account. Even though it is individuals that must change, the attitude of the groups they live in has an enormous effect on them. Therefore, as the media must understand the cultural linkages, so also must they understand the social relationships, in order to realize the desired behavior change.

Modernizing skills: The need for people to learn new skills is another thing that could complicate changes in many occasions. And that is why any media message that preaches modernization and the need in changing behavior, also requires a program in teaching the necessary skills.

Radio

Radio is a popular mass media with the widest coverage around the world. The portability of radio makes it easier for us to use it on a daily basis. We can listen to it at any time doing almost any thing. Even though the arrival of other options like television and the internet makes it difficult for radio to be preferred, it caters to its audience during times when television is inappropriate and people are engaged with other activities (Nduatiand et al., 1997: 85; Wright, 1959:259; Vivian, 2003: 154).

The other advantage of radio is that it does not require special skills from its audiences. It also needs little or no payment comparing it with any other medium. It can be used in places where there is no electricity. In addition, radio transmission penetrates into many homes than television or newspaper. For these reasons, the medium of radio continues to be used in different parts of the world especially in developing countries for educational, entertainment and propaganda purposes (Fleur et al., 1982:92).

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is simply a conversation between people. Although such communication could be held between people who are “physically separated but emotionally connected like lovers on the phone”, in most cases it refers to the one that is held between those who are physically located in the same place (Vivian, 2003:348).

Interpersonal communication takes place between two people or within slightly larger groups. The conversations we have with different people starting from the long-term relationships among family and friends to the shorter ones with casual friends, counselors, or strangers on the road are all manifestations of interpersonal communication (Harless, 1985:11; Davison et al., 1976:118).

The advantage of person-to-person communication is that it provides an opportunity for an immediate clarification and feedback as well as intimacy and privacy (Nduatiand et al., 1997: 90).

Communicators of any interpersonal relationship need to adopt two kinds of interrelated rules in order to hold a successful information exchange process. These are:

Rules about structure: Such rules consider when and how communication needs to be taken place, and

Rules about content: are the ones that focus on what messages and subjects are acceptable to both parties.

Some rules could be already provided by a society, but many must be created by the communicators themselves as the relationship develops (Harless, 1985:11).

Opinion Leaders

Opinion leaders, as (Davison et al., 1976:124) put it, are “people who are approached for advice or information on a particular topic, or on a broad range of subjects.” In most cases they are similar with the people they influence, and they belong in the same social group as their “followers” but they usually are slightly better educated, could have a higher status, and could be more active in the community (Davison et al., 1976).

Because opinion leaders are said to be more exposed to the mass media, they are more likely than others to adopt new ideas. They also tend to have contacts outside their place of residence. They are likely to be respected by those they influence in a formal or informal way. Therefore, they have a potentially significant impact on the reception and interpretation of messages received and behavior change within a group (Hill et al., 2007:83).

Early development communication theory suggested that the media can directly guide people's thinking. But when the theory started to be practiced widely in the late 1950's, the role of other factors like opinion leaders was getting attention (Rennie, 2006:141).

Communication researchers now "recognize a multi-step flow, which implies that media effects are part of a complex interaction. On one level, opinion leaders have opinion leaders, who in turn have their own opinion leaders" (Rodman, 2001:380).

For instance a person might be his/her friend's opinion leader by telling him/her to buy a certain gadget. By doing so this person is influencing his/her friend's opinion on that specific item to be purchased. On the other hand, this person (opinion leader) might have his/her own opinion leader who knows even better about that specific gadget and therefore, affects his/her reaction towards information on a similar issue in the media. Similarly, other influences from family, friends, school, or church could affect how individuals will react towards mediated messages (Rodman, 2001:380).

Therefore, opinion leaders have the role of influencing behavior change by conveying messages from the media to other citizens (Murphy, 1977:252).

Community Agents

Community agents are individuals who communicate with people at the grassroots level on issues that are related directly or indirectly with economic growth. They are development aids who work at a village level. Community agents are opinion leaders in most cases having better knowledge of their environment and the capability to initiate discussions on themes that concern the community they live in. They support the mass media in bringing about motivation, action and change by being effective links for communicating at the grassroots level (Gandhi, 1995).

Community agents contribute greatly to a development process by:

- collecting information about new ideas and practices from the agency that assigned them and disseminating it to villagers. At the same time they gather feedback about problems and needs of the community and provide it back to the agency so that future activities could take lessons from it

- motivating and encouraging people to try new practices

- trying to understand the socio- cultural barriers that prevent the people from accepting the new ideas, and working to overcome them, and
- arranging financial or technical support from the agency that assigned them and showing residents how to benefit from the new practices (Gandhi, 1995: 36; Davison, et al., 1976: 64).

Media versus Interpersonal Communication

Media and interpersonal communication have basic differences and relationships when compared with each other.

Major Differences between Media and Person-to-Person Communication

Communications medium is “the means of conducting the message through the channel from sender to receiver” (Murphy, 1977:14). In most cases interpersonal communication needs no mechanical medium. It is the human body that produces sounds that provide words and sends messages using body languages. But there are occasions when messages are not transmitted firsthand and the use of devices like telephone is needed. While in mass communication the systems that provide information to mass audiences are the media (Murphy, 1977).

One of the qualities that make interpersonal communication better than mass media communication, according to Murphy (1977:16), is its fast and reliable feedback. Journalists working for radio or TV need feedback just as much as a conversationalist needs it, but they must wait for a period of time to get it. And even if they get feedback, it might not be as reliable and sufficient as the rich information lode that can be obtained in face-to-face communication.

In general terms, tuning in to radio or TV differs from talking with others in two very crucial respects (Casty, 1968:189):

1. A person could turn off a radio or TV, or put down a magazine if he/she does not like what it says and select another program or magazine. But doing this would not be easy if the person was talking with other people, or was overhearing them in the nearby, for instance at a place of work. Therefore, he/she often has to listen, at least for a while, even if he/she does not agree with what was being said.

2. Formal media is also different from personal conversation as it is not easy to give feedback to a media programming as it is to a person talking. Though it is possible to write a letter to a magazine or call up a radio station, it would not be as fast as responding in a face-to-face conversation.

Relationships between Mass and Interpersonal Channels

There are several theoretical models on the relationship between mass and interpersonal communication. Following are the major ones from (Hawkins et al., 1988:20):

Competitive or contrasting: This model argues that interpersonal relationships intervene in the flow of mass communication and damage its potential effects. Research findings based on this tradition favor interpersonal communication as the more “influential” or “preferred” source. Family and friends are believed to be more effective in influencing opinions and decisions.

Complimentary or convergent: This theoretical model views mediated and interpersonal channels as complementary, or convergent, rather than competitive with one another. For example, in the case of diffusion of innovations, the influence of interpersonal communication is said to be critical at the individual’s decision making stage in the process of adopting an innovation. On the other hand, mass media are decisive in creating awareness about the idea that is needed to be adopted.

Reinforcing: Theorists of this model point out that interpersonal communication strengthens messages transmitted through mass communication rather than complimenting with it. It says that the more people talk about a subject that was raised on the media, the greater will be the total impact of the media.

Media-interpersonal Communication Nexus

The combined influence of both media and interpersonal acquaintance in decision making has been observed on different occasions. The mass media play an important role in disseminating information. While interpersonal communication along with the media helps to make people be aware of and interested in new themes (Murphy, 1977:252).

Becker (1983) points out that mass media and interpersonal communication have their own contributions in most cases at different stages. Mass communication, in general, is said to be more influential in the early stage of behavior change process, while interpersonal communication is more influential in later phases of the process. Thus, mass and interpersonal communications support each other by playing a major role at different stages of change though both usually are important to some extent at all stages.

According to communication experts, some evidence suggests that fast adopters of new ideas in a community are the ones who tend to rely more on the mass media for information. Later adopters of such practices are the ones influenced relatively less by the media and more by those who already adopted the idea and by other opinion leaders (Becker, 1983:415).

Opinion leaders are more exposed to media and try to pass on their opinions to others; and these others are in turn opinion leaders of others and try to pass on the information. And it is just here in the process of give-and-take with “differences and clashes” of ideas that opinions are actually formed (Casty, 1968:189).

Generally speaking, almost everything people learn from the mass media is affected in one way or another by a conversation they hold with other people (Davison et al., 1976:124). This is because the media facilitates social interactions by giving people topics to talk about. For instance, media messages could give members of a family some common ground of a certain issue which helps their interpersonal communication and understanding (Becker, 1983:416).

The “mix” of mass media and interpersonal channels that people use as sources of information depends on many factors: the educational background of the individual, the availability of media or human

sources, the content of the information and its importance to the individual. For example, studies of consumer behavior indicate that person-to-person channels play a great role in helping people to decide among products, while mass media sources seem to be more important in providing information about specialized matters like population growth, and also about current affairs (Davison et al., 1976:125). There are also occasions when people are already informed about a certain topic but it was not until the media called these issues to their attention that they began to think and talk about them, which in turn leads them to develop attitudes toward the issues (Becker, 1983: 408).

Numerous attempts have been made in different parts of the world to use combinations of channels in disseminating information that could bring about behavior change. One example is provided by “farm radio forums” that were first developed in Canada. In this case groups of farmers were assembled to listen to radio broadcasts and they discussed on the contents afterwards. Similar techniques were also used in Italy, Japan and other developing countries like India, Nigeria, and Brazil. In Italy, television programs were used in a similar manner, while in other countries groups have been assembled to discuss the contents of newspapers and other print materials.

All these “media forums” are said to be successful in informing people and influencing their attitudes and behaviors, although it was only in India that the effects have been tested systematically. In India the agriculture sector showed a remarkable growth after farmers were provided with mixed messages from the media and extension workers (Davison et al, 1976:127; Gupta 1994:30).

Another example is regarding family planning issues. A research conducted on national family planning programs in several countries results to the general conclusions that the mass media can increase the level of knowledge and awareness about family planning issues among the audience but communicating with field workers, peers, and others is more effective in changing attitudes toward a sustainable use of contraceptives (Wright, 1986:169).

Summary

Development communication is a concept stating that communication, if used properly, can be a tool for development. The dominant paradigm in this field is diffusion of innovations theory. This theory refers to the process of disseminating new ideas and practices through the media or interpersonal communication so that people will bring about behavior changes that could result in economic growth. Among the strategies of accomplishing such task is Entertainment-Education. E-E has different formats including magazine or variety programs. Using E-E radio programming, especially in rural areas where radio is popular than any other medium, has proved to be helpful on several occasions in making people form opinions about different issues like reproductive health. But on the other hand, blending such programs with messages from interpersonal communication, specifically Community Agents was found to be effective in influencing people change their behaviors on different occasions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is crafted to investigate the role of combined messages from E-E radio program and community agents in promoting family planning. The purpose of this section is therefore, to indicate the methods applied in collecting and analyzing the data in undertaking this research. Qualitative methods used in developing the data, specifically conjoint interviews, in-depth interviews and text analysis are clarified below. The research design, which is case study, is also explained here. In general, this chapter gives a clear idea of the procedure pursued in gathering and analyzing the data.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research method is applied in this study in order to better understand and explain the situation from the perspective of audiences and community agents. The motivation for doing so is, as Myers (1997) puts it human beings have a unique ability which is talking and qualitative research methods are great in helping researchers understand people from the perspectives of the social and cultural contexts they live in.

Qualitative method refers to different interpretive techniques that need “to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Maanen, 1983:9).

Qualitative research provides a complete and detailed description, while quantitative is expected to classify features, count them and make statistical representations (Neill, 2007). The central concern in qualitative research is not establishing relations of cause and effect but exploring the different ways that

“people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals” (Deacon et al., 1999:6).

People make interpretations of their daily lives in different ways. And it is through these interpretations that human beings make sense of their lives. The task of qualitative studies, which is basically the task of social science, therefore, is to study these interpretations. Such interpretations are then reported in a systematic manner that would enable them to be more understandable and useful among people (Stempel and Westley, 1981:359).

The aim of this thesis is not to count the number of people who changed their behavior in terms of using contraceptives with the combined influence of the E-E radio program and community agents. Instead, using qualitative data sources it tries to explain and describe the phenomenon. It presents detailed information on what messages are disseminated and their impact on audiences. And this is done by taking a case that is appropriate in this regard. Therefore, the research design applied here is **case study**.

Case Study

Case study is a research design in qualitative research. In case study the researcher investigates a single case or multiple cases using detailed data collected through a variety of sources of information such as interviews, focus group discussions, observations, audiovisual material, documents, etc., and then reports case-based descriptions. It looks intensely at an individual or more participants only in that specific context without trying to discover a universal truth. Researchers in this case, do not look for cause-effect relationships but focus on exploring and describing the phenomenon. The cases selected for a study could be more than one, a multi-site study (multiple case study) or a single one, a within site study (single case study) (Yin, 2003: 39; Creswell, 2007 :73; Becker et al., 2005:2).

Case study can be defined as:

A strategy of research that aims to understand social phenomena within a single or small number of naturally occurring settings. The purpose may be to provide description through a detailed example or to generate or test particular theories (Bloor and Wood, 2006: 27).

In this study *Derra* district is taken as a case. *Derra* is chosen because it is one of the places where people are aware of Menschen für Menschen Foundation (MfM) and its radio program *Mefitihe*, broadcast in *Amharic* language. They are also beneficiaries of the services provided by Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) assigned by MfM.

Derra is found in the *Oromiya* regional state but bordering the *Amhara* region, which makes most of the people residing there to speak *Amharic*, and listen to the radio program transmitted in *Amharic*. Based on the results of the 2007 Ethiopian census, the *Oromia* regional state shows a 2.9 percent yearly population growth, with a total of 27.2 million people. For these reasons the district is chosen as an appropriate single case in this study.

Data Collection Methods

The sources of data used in undertaking this research are **target audience members** in *Derra* district, **Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs)** functioning in the district and **scripts of the radio program *Mefitihe***. Subjects are selected purposefully from *Derra* district, specifically from *Gundo Meskel*, the town of the district and three suburbs namely *Degolo Michael*, *Wore Bui*, and *Cheka*. Similarly, the program scripts are chosen purposefully based on their contents.

The methods pursued in collecting the data are **focus group discussions (conjoint interviews), in-depth interviews and text analysis.**

Focus Group Discussions

The purpose of focus group discussion is “to understand what people experience and perceive about the focus of inquiry, through a process that is open and emergent” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:103). It is a group conversation brought together by a researcher who intends to find out what they think, feel, or know about his/her focus of inquiry.

In a well organized group discussion participants have an opportunity of listening to each other’s contributions, which in turn could “spark new insights” or help them to think clearly. Therefore, information that may not be raised in individual interviews may emerge in group discussions. Such processes give people the chance “to think aloud about their private perceptions of issues or events, sometimes coming to new understanding through their interactions with others in the group” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:104).

According to Kitzinger (1995:3), focus groups were originally used in communication studies to explore media effects. They are popular methods for assessing health education messages and examining behavior of audiences.

A typical focus group consists of six to eight people. But there are particular situations where the most appropriate number of group members to be interviewed is only two. These are known as ‘conjoint interviews’ and have been used successfully in some recent qualitative family research studies. Interviewing married couples on issues that concerns both partners, for instance reproductive health, is believed to generate a more accurate picture of the matter (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:105). Hence this type of group composition, that is, **conjoint interview** is applied in this study.

Conjoint Interview Procedures

Participants of the conjoint interview were purposefully selected using snowball sampling technique from the town *Gundo Meskel* and the three rural villages in the surrounding areas- *Degolo Michael*, *Wore Bui*, and *Cheka*. The researcher had to find married couples who are beneficiaries of the service provided by the CBRHAs and at the same time are regular listeners of the radio program *Mefithe*. These couples in turn found other subjects who also did the same.

During the discussions, I played the role of a moderator by trying to show interest in the topic under discussion and encouraged the couples to talk more on the matter by using verbal and non-verbal methods of inquiries. The discussions were all recorded using a tape recorder and then transcribed in order to easily categorize the themes and analyze them.

Table 1 summarizes the demographics of conjoint interview participants.

Table 1: Profile of Conjoint Interview Participants

Couple	Sex	Age	Residence	No.of participants
1	F	25	Suburb	2
	M	44		
2	F	23	Town	2
	M	25		
3	F	19	Suburb	2
	M	24		
4	F	28	Town	2
	M	29		
5	F	30	Suburb	2
	M	42		
6	F	33	Town	2
	M	42		
Total				12

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interview can be simply described as a conversation that is held between “a researcher (someone who wishes to gain information about a subject) and an informant (someone who presumably has information of interest on the subject)” (Berger, 2000: 11). Open-ended questions are asked in order to enable the participant describe processes and outcomes from his/her perspective. Like in focus group discussion, the goal here is to deeply explore the interviewee’s point of view, feelings and attitudes on the theme of a research (Guion, 2006:1).

Qualitative in-depth interviews enable a researcher to get deeper into the perspectives of respondents. They are different from surveys because the questions are open-ended and are not formulated prior to the interview session. Typically the interviewer prepares a check-list of the main themes of the research and raises follow-up questions during the actual interview (Alasuutari, 1998:141).

Using in-depth interviews, researchers can find out about people’s ideas, thoughts, opinions and attitudes. It also enables them to know the motivating factors behind such attitudes. If they ask the right questions, researchers can discover about participants past activities, some thing that is difficult to accomplish, unless observation is made for a long time (Berger, 2000:112). To this end, **in-depth interview** was used to obtain information from both audience members and CBRHAs in doing this research. Undertaking in-depth interview with individual audience members was needed to make them speak feely in the absence of their spouses. These individuals are not the ones who took part in the conjoint interviews.

In-depth Interview Procedures

In-depth interviews were made with participants both from audience members and CBRHAs. Snowball sampling technique was used to find residents of the district who benefit from CBRHA services and listen to *Mefihe*. While participant CBRHAs were contacted with the support of staff members of MfM, *Derra* Integrated Rural Development Project.

In this case I played the role of interviewer, asking direct questions and follow-up questions when it was necessary. All in-depth interviews were recorded using a tape recorder and transcribed, which made it easier to classify the themes for analysis.

Following are tables summarizing the profiles of both audience members and participant CBRHAs.

Table 2: Profile of In-depth Interview Participant Audience Members

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Residence
1	25	M	Suburb
2	58	F	Town
3	33	M	Suburb
4	42	F	Town

Table 3: Profile of In-depth Interview Participant CBRHAs

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Residence
1	25	F	Suburb
2	30	M	Town
3	32	F	Suburb
4	36	M	Town

Text Analysis

Text analysis which is also called qualitative content analysis refers to examining the relationship between the text and its likely meaning to different audience members. It pays attention not only to the text, but also to the audience and contextual factors, by recognizing the fact that media texts are open to be interpreted in different ways among different audience members (Macnamara, 2006:6).

Text analysis is required to fully understand the potential meanings, both manifest and latent, or surface and deep, among audiences and their likely effects. By analyzing both the surface meaning, which can be detected by just reading the text and not assuming anything that is not actually said, and the deep meaning, which is interpreting what was implied, the researcher can reach at the intensions of the messages and possible effects on audiences (Macnamara, 2006: 15; Jensen and Jankowski, 1995: 122).

Text analysis is usually time-consuming because the researcher does intensive readings and interpretations. For this reason, qualitative content analysis mostly involves small samples of media contents. Samples are chosen by taking the different themes to be investigated into consideration (Macnamara, 2006: 17).

Text analysis plays a major role in media studies. Although it can be used as the main and only method of producing qualitative data, in most cases it is triangulated with other data collecting procedures in order to further comprehend how messages were understood by audience members (Jensen and Jankowski, 1995: 133). In this study, **text analysis** is applied to enrich the data obtained from audience members on how the messages of *Mefithe* radio program were understood.

Text Analysis Procedures

Mefi is a magazine type E-E radio program with segments that can be identified as short dramas, spots, discussions or interviews and testimonials. The messages were first categorized into two broad themes. These are messages that focus on preventive measures (the use of contraceptives) and those focusing on the consequences of having large family. The major themes are then further classified into different sub-themes based on the type of the contents they possess. These are traditional and religious ideologies, economic/health hazards, reality testimonials and contraceptives. Based on these classifications 4 out of a total of 52 programs were chosen for analysis.

Narrative descriptions of the selected scripts were undertaken based on the specific themes classified. Both surface and deep meanings- what was actually said and the assumed or implied messages are analyzed by taking into consideration how the intended messages were understood by the audience members.

Data Analysis Methods

The data gathered using conjoint and in-depth interviews is analyzed by first classifying it as feedbacks of target audience members and feedbacks of Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs). All the feedbacks contain messages that can broadly be identified as contraceptive methods (preventive measures) and consequences of over population. The feedbacks are then divided into their respective sub-categories. In addition, *Mefi* radio program scripts are analyzed. Finally, a discussion incorporating all the outcomes and other related research findings is provided.

The feedbacks of target audience members are summarized into sub-themes of traditional and religious ideologies, economic/ health hazards, reality testimonials, contraceptive methods and proximity. On the other hand, the feedbacks of the CBRHAs are sorted out by focusing on the points they raised as important in facilitating their services. The sub-themes are choosing the right time, providing with all the options, presenting appropriate role models and encouraging feedback.

The roles of the blended messages of both the radio program and the community agents (interpersonal communication) are discussed by labeling them as reinforcing and compensating.

Ethics and Validity

The conjoint and in-depth interviews participants were asked for their approval to record the interviews on tape. I also confirmed to them that their names will not be identified. But the participants asserted that they would not mind if their identities were revealed saying that they were only telling what they really felt. After considering the fact that the topics discussed could bring no harm to them, the real names of the participants are used in presenting their feedbacks.

I have tried to present as genuine reports as possible based on my understandings of the ideas and opinions of the interviewees. Before the actual interviews were held, the couples were also made to listen to parts of the program from a laptop computer in order to help them recall how they felt while it was transmitted.

Summary

This chapter gives a highlight of the methodology used in writing this thesis. Qualitative method is used, case study being the research design. The necessary data was collected using conjoint interviews, in-depth interviews and text analysis. The procedures of gathering and analyzing the data are also discussed in this chapter. The conjoint interviews were held with married couples in *Derra* district, who are beneficiaries of the service provided by CBRHAs and at the same time regular listeners of the radio program. In-depth interviews were made with individual audience members and CBRHAs. Text analysis was also necessary because messages are open to be interpreted in different ways by audience members. Hence, analyzing the texts helps to clarify how the intended messages were understood. Analysis and discussion of the data are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter the data collected using conjoint and in-depth interviews from both audience members and Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) is presented. In addition, the selected scripts of *Meftihe* radio program are analyzed. The roles of blending the radio program and CBRHAs in promoting family planning are also discussed by making inferences from the findings, and incorporating other related research findings and theories. Before analyzing and discussing the data, a general picture of the radio program *Meftihe* and community agents working in *Derra* district is provided.

Context of the Study

The messages disseminated through the radio program *Meftihe* and the Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) are part of the efforts exerted by Menschen für Menschen Foundation (MfM) to promote reproductive health issues. MfM started functioning as a non-governmental organization in 1981 in Eastern Ethiopia, *Erer* valley. Since then the Foundation has been chaired by Karlheinz Böhm, and is now functioning in different parts of the country.

MfM works on rural development activities, promoting family planning issues being one of such efforts. The organization advocates the issue by transmitting radio and television programs and assigning Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs).

***Mefi*he Radio Program**

*Mefi*he is a radio program produced and presented with the support of MfM and had been running on Radio Ethiopia for one year and three months starting from the end of 2007 to the end of 2008. It is a 20-minutes program broadcasted every Sunday afternoons in *Amharic*. It focuses on reproductive health issues. The program is a magazine type presenting variety of formats. It has short dramas, discussions/interviews/ testimonials and spots.

Dramas of the program focus on a variety of reproductive health issues. The dramas are single episodes with specific themes. Among such dramas is the series entitled *Yedoctor Kidus Mastawesha*, which means, *Dr Kidus' Diary*. Testimonials of famous as well as everyday people were presented. Discussions and interviews were also held with everyday people, professionals and famous personalities who could give influencing messages.

Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) in *Derra* District

The Community Based Reproductive Health Agents assigned by MfM function in different parts of the country. The CBRHAs started functioning in *Derra*, *Oromia* Regional State in 2003. They are chosen due to their opinion leaders like characters, that is, they are comparatively better informed, and are accepted by their society as reliable sources of information. They are also given trainings on reproductive health issues by the organization.

There are 139 CBRHAs functioning in *Derra* district where the population is said to be 181,661 (CSA, 2008:67). Their job is to provide information about reproductive health issues to residents of the district at a grassroots level. They give home-to-home service in distributing contraceptives and disseminating information on the issue. They also teach at public gatherings of different types.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from target audience members and CBRHAs through conjoint and in-depth interviews is categorized into two major themes. These are the ones focusing on preventive measures and those on the consequences of having large family. These themes are further divided into different sub-categories. They are presented first under the feedbacks of target audience members and then feedbacks of CBRHAs.

Feedbacks of Target Audience Members

The responses given by audience members who participated in conjoint and in-depth interviews are summarized into sub-themes of traditional and religious ideologies, economic/health hazards, reality testimonials, contraceptive methods and proximity.

Traditional and Religious Ideologies

Married couples and individuals who are beneficiaries of CBRHA services, and are at the same time listeners of *Mefithe* radio program forwarded some traditional and religious ideologies as reasons that prohibit them from practicing family planning. They indicate that the messages they received from both CBRHAs and the radio program helped them in changing their minds about the use of contraceptives.

Bogale is married and has eight children, a boy and seven girls. He says that one of the reasons that made him and his wife to have all these children was their need of a baby boy. And after they got their 8th child, a boy, they started to use birth controlling method. According to him, having a son is a blessing. But the couple had another reason which he says prohibited them from using family planning methods. He explains:

..I used to think that preventing pregnancy means going against the will of the Lord. And I was afraid of committing a sin. But now I understand everything. Even our religious fathers are in favor of family planning. I now think that a sin is committed if a person brings children to this world when he/she is not capable of providing their daily bread and raising them properly. And I also now believe that whether it is a boy or a girl it doesn't matter, as long as God gives me a blessed and healthy child. I wish I could turn back the time... but then again I love all my children...(Bogale, 14/4/09).

Bogale further points out that although the dramas in *Mefithe* radio program portray such messages, it is the CBRHAs whom he thinks are capable of changing people's attitude. The reason, he says, is because they can present living testimonials from their neighborhood. Because they know each and every person in the village, they can pick a family who has only 2 or 3 daughters and is happy in life because of them. They convince them by showing how girls could be good at their education and be productive citizens if they are provided with the opportunity.

Economic/ Health Hazards

Economic and health factors are compelling reasons for using contraceptives, according to the interviewees. Lemma and Meseret are wedded couple for over a year now. They are young and have no child. They say the information they gained from the CBRHAs and the radio program has made them even more cautious of having children before becoming financially stabilized. Even though they knew about family planning and were determined to use it before even listening to messages of *Mefithe* radio program or CBRHAs, the combined messages helped them by filling some suspicious gaps.

..I have learned from both the radio program and CBRHAs that it is of no use to have children with out first standing on a firm financial ground. But for me the radio program is more appealing because of the way it is presented. For instance,

when characters in a drama resemble us, rural people, by speaking colloquially, it makes us engage emotionally and become interested. I remember a drama presented about a couple who had 5 children, and the wife was only 20 years old. The husband was reluctant to use contraceptive because he wanted to have even more children... (Lemma, 17/4/09).

Lemma's wife Meseret also remembers the drama well.

And it all resulted in health complications to both the children and the mother. The children were malnourished. Because they did not have enough money all of their children were not allowed to go to school. So I think family planning is the key to the happiness of family members...(Meseret, 17/4/09).

Another *Derra* resident, Aftamnesh, has three children. She has no plan of having more kids. All she wants is to raise them properly. She states that she learned from both the radio program and CBRHAs about the need of preventing unwanted pregnancies. But for her it is the CBRHAs who teach her efficiently. She can ask them anything she does not understand and they provide her with the answer. Even when there are things that were not clear for her while listening to *Mefitihe*, the CBRHAs are the ones who explain it to her. She does not have to wait till the CBRHAs give lessons. She can contact them at any time- during coffee ceremonies, church or other community gatherings, or even at their places of residence.

Reality Testimonials

Reality testimonials give the audience the chance to learn things from experiences of other people; day-to-day or famous personalities. Getachew and Senait are married couple with no child. It has been three years since they got married and they do not want to have children until they save enough money that

would allow them have a better life. According to them, the people who presented their own experiences on the radio program are good examples of showing why people need to use contraceptives.

Senait remembers a program about Derartu Tulu, a renowned athlete. Derartu came out of a big family with 14 children in it, and had to spend a difficult childhood. But because she was strong enough she become a successful athlete. “People could learn a lot from Derartu’s life” she said. Getachew and Senait commend such reality programs saying that they found important lessons from them. On the other hand, they believe that CBRHAs offer excellent examples that could reflect the need for the use of family planning methods by referring to families they know in the neighborhood as role models.

Contraceptive Methods

The audience members gained important messages about the use of contraceptives from both the radio program and CBRHAs. But they say that CBRHAs have given them detailed explanations on the subject. Geto and Tsehay, married couple, believe that it is easier to grasp the idea when CBRHAs demonstrate the use of contraceptives. First they inform them about their options and the distinct features of each of the methods. Then they advise them to go to a health station and contact a professional who would help them pick contraceptive that best suits them. And even after that the CBRHAs go back to check on how their clients were doing. The CBRHAs also distribute condoms and pills, which makes it easily available for anyone who wants to use them.

..It is easier to understand what you see and at the same time hear than just listening about it on the radio. So, for me CBRHAs are more successful in demonstrating contraceptive use and making me choose what is better for me. It is after they told us about our options that me and my wife went to the health station and decide on what is best for us...(Geto, 17/4/09).

Teferi and Emamu, another couple recall that they heard about the use of emergency pills for the first time on the radio program, *Mefiite*. At that time they thought it was a wonderful thing and they wanted to learn more about it. And they asked the CBRHAs, and now they know how and when to use it.

Proximity

Proximity is mentioned by the audience members as the main factor in facilitating information exchange with the CBRHAs. The fact that CBRHAs are people who live among the society and they meet on different occasions enables them to ask what ever queries they have regarding family planning. On the other hand, they say that when ever they had questions regarding an issue that has been transmitted on the radio program, they could not ask the producers immediately. Although they knew that they could write letters they preferred asking CBRHAs to explain it to them to writing letters or making phone calls.

...I found information about how to prevent unwanted pregnancy from both CBRHAs and Mefiite radio program. But the CBRHAs provide me the lesson face to face by coming to my home. They encourage me to ask them everything I don't understand and they respond to my questions...(Getachew, 16/4/09).

Feedbacks of Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs)

In order to hold a successful information exchange process, the Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs) provide their services by taking some issues into consideration. These are: choosing the right time, providing with all the options, presenting appropriate role models and encouraging feedback.

Choosing the Right Time

The CBRHAs raise the issue of timing as one of the factors that contribute to facilitate the interaction with their clients. Since, the residents may not have time to just sit and listen to them; they have to use different social events as venues of information exchange. They give home-to-home service and teach over coffee ceremonies or religious and other types of gatherings, including markets and schools. They also discuss with religious fathers on the matter and convince them to teach their respective followers individually.

The CBRHAs have also the responsibility of distributing condoms and pills. Those who have already decided to use either of the two methods can go to the house of any CBRHA in the village and take it. The CBRHAs themselves also distribute the contraceptives to their clients by going to their homes.

...I have a house-to-house visit program every Saturday and Sunday. I might find either the husband or the wife or both. Sometimes I even ask the children to partake in the discussion. I also go to different public meetings and teach at the end of the meeting or while they are taking a break. I have changed many people this way...(15/4/09).

Providing with all the Options

The CBRHAs try as much as possible to inform their clients about all the alternatives regarding contraceptives. According to the CBRHAs, sometimes people may express discomfort about a certain type of contraceptive but they get excited about another one. And that is why the CBRHAs need to be careful not to leave out any detail that could be helpful in making their clients accept the method. They also demonstrate the procedures in order to help them understand better. They tell their clients that all the family planning methods are effective if used properly, and that they need to go to a health station to decide which one is appropriate for them.

...I tell them about all the options of family planning. Most of the times they ask me about the characteristics of the different methods and I try to explain it to them based on the training I received from Menschen für Menschen Foundation. After that I advise them to go to a health station and consult a physician so that they could be able to decide on the method they want to use... (Tamene, 15/4/09).

Presenting Appropriate Role Models

The CBRHAs believe that presenting a family in the neighborhood as a case in point to clarify about the use of family planning is effective. They tell their clients that it would be better to raise one or two children by providing them at least with their basic necessities including education than raising six or seven children without giving them anything they want.

...I tell them about their neighbors who have 2 or 3 children and raise them well. I say 'look at their children, and what they wear, and that they all go to school.' We talk about how the lives of those particular family members are changed and how happy they are. I tell them if they educate their children and raise them properly, they will in turn support them when they grow up. And because they want to live a better life just like their neighbors, they agree to try using contraceptives...(Shegaw, 14/4/09).

Encouraging Feedback

Encouraging feedback is one of the ways the CBRHAs deem as helpful in bringing behavior change among their clients in terms of using contraceptives. They say if they do not get feedback from their clients and the communication is only one way, then their messages could not be effective. Sometimes, they say, the clients just pretend to understand and agree with what they were told without really believing in it. In such cases the clients may just want the CBRHAs to leave them alone. Therefore, the CBRHAs encourage their clients to speak freely about what they understood, and ask questions.

...There are people who refuse at first thinking that it is committing a sin. And such individuals sometimes say that they would go to the health station and start using contraceptive. They say this in order to avoid arguing with me. But I get friendly and try to make them speak their real feelings. After that I tell them that using contraceptive is not interrupting or aborting an established pregnancy, it is preventing it from happening in the first place. It may not be easy sometimes to convince such people. But after repeated sessions I do get through to them. There are also occasions when I get the assistance of religious fathers...(Tamene, 17/4/09).

***Meftihe* Radio Program Scripts Analysis**

The selected scripts of *Meftihe* radio program are categorized under two broad themes- preventive measures and consequences of having large family. These major themes are further classified into traditional and religious ideologies, economic/health hazards, reality testimonial and contraceptive methods. Narrative description of the scripts based on these specific themes is provided below.

Traditional and Religious Ideologies

Traditional and religious ideologies are incorporated in the selected editions of the program in different ways. The traditional influence that pushes people to have many children is illustrated using a spot. While, avoiding the use of contraceptives due to religious factors is reflected in an interview segment.

The spot is about married couple who have five daughters. When the wife wanted to use contraceptive after their first child was born, the husband refused insisting he wants a boy. Then she gave birth to twin girls. And even after that the husband did not show interest in using contraceptive because he and his mother wanted a baby boy in their family. Finally, they ended up having five daughters, which resulted in a serious health complication on the mother. Their financial status deteriorated and the husband's mother died with out realizing her dream of having a grandson.

The spot has a message that tells people to use contraceptive and limit the number of their children by putting aside any reason that may seem legitimate and could make them do otherwise. It shows the negative consequences of having large family. It is intended to help people see themselves from that perspective and prevent it from happening to them.

The segment of the program that transmits a message regarding religious factors that prevent parents from using contraceptive is an interview with a reproductive health professional. The professional talks about the fact that giving good care to two children instead of having five and not being able to even feed them could be condemned neither by God nor by humans. The point she makes is what God or human beings do not like to see is the agony of children with out the care they deserve to receive.

Economic/Health Hazards

The economic and health harm that could be caused due to unlimited number of children is reflected in a short drama that evolves around a couple who live in a rural part of the country and have five children. The husband wants to have more children. The wife is only 20 years old. One day she went to a health center because one of her sons was sick due to malnutrition. A nurse she met there advised her to tell her husband to use condoms. And this resulted in a quarrel between the couple. The drama shows how the couple and their children were affected because they did not have enough money to cover their living costs. Finally, the husband changed his mind after accepting advice from a neighbor. Such dramas made the audience members interested because they were entertaining and had characters who spoke colloquial used by rural people.

Another short drama presented under the series *Yedoctor Kidus Mastawesha* tells the story of a couple who did not agree on the number of their children. They have two children and the woman does not want to add more saying their income had to increase first. The couple invited a doctor they are acquainted with - doctor Kidus, to help them negotiate. The doctor tries to help them see the reality by telling them not to bring more children to this world if they can not afford to give them comfortable life. He talks about the consequences of not using contraceptives by mentioning the problem of street children as a case

in point. The couple were then convinced and their 3rd child was born four years later after they were financially strong, and consulted a health professional about the mother's health condition.

Reality Testimonials

Reality testimonials refer to the programs that present everyday people and famous personalities to tell their stories in a way that gives a lesson. The parts selected in this regard are interviews with couples who use contraceptives and those who do not, interview with a woman who lives in a rural area and gave birth to 14 children, the story of a renowned athlete, Derartu Tulu who came from a large family, and the opinion of health professionals.

The interview with the woman who gave birth to 14 children shows the sufferings caused as a result. The woman says the society she lives in believes that having as much children as possible is a blessing. But she advises others to learn from her mistake. She talks about the health damages occurred to her and her children. This mother lost her four children due to malnutrition.

The interview held with parents who plan the number of their children and those who do not shows the difference in their living standard by comparing the two. After presenting testimonials from the two perspectives, the producers invited professionals to give explanations on the matter.

The last part of the program chosen to show this aspect is the story read about Derartu Tulu. Derartu grew up in a family of 14 children. Not all of her siblings were lucky enough to be sent to school. The difficulties she had to face while growing up are depicted in the program. But because she was strong enough she turned out to be a successful athlete. The program shows that there are a lot of other women who do not get the chance to use their talents.

Contraceptive Methods

The use of contraceptives is incorporated in different parts of the program. A spot that promotes the use of emergency pills, and professional explanation about the use of contraceptives in general are selected for analysis.

The spot explains when and how to use emergency pills. The tablets can prevent unwanted pregnancy in cases of involuntary sexual intercourse or sexual assault/ rape, or if proper contraceptive method has not been used. It also explains about the fact that it provides no protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV. The message it transmits is people should not think that it is too late if they had an unprotected sex and that there is a solution that helps to prevent pregnancy.

The other program is an interview held with three medical doctors. The doctors talk about avoiding illegal abortion and instead using different kinds of contraceptives like condoms or pills.

Discussion of the Findings

This part of the chapter discusses findings by examining the roles of the combined messages of the CBRHAs and *Mefi* radio program in promoting family planning issues. In doing so, this discussion refers to the themes involved in presenting the data. In order to enrich this session, other related research findings and theories are incorporated.

The Roles of Blending *Mefi* Radio Program and CBRHAs

Messages of the CBRHAs and *Mefi* radio program have contributed to the knowledge and behavior change of the audience members in two major ways. Based on the information the audience members and the CBRHAs gave, as well as the analysis of program scripts, the CBRHAs and the radio program played roles that can be labeled as **reinforcing** and **compensating**.

Reinforcing Roles

The messages of the radio program and that of CBRHAs were observed to be reinforcing each other on different occasions. Similar messages that created awareness among the audience members were transmitted through the radio program and the CBRHAs. The differences were the methods applied. As Becker (1983) points out mass and interpersonal communications support each other by playing a major role at different stages of change though both usually are important to some extent at all stages.

After informing their clients about the choices of contraceptives, the CBRHAs advise them to get professional support on the type of method they want to use by going to a near by health station. The role of the CBRHAs is therefore, to help their clients accept the benefits of using contraceptives and let them know about the different options from which they can choose with the guidance of a professional. The clients then feel confident because they would make an informed choice with the support of a professional. Similarly, the radio program invited health professionals to give explanations on the issue. This way the audience feels that the message transmitted to them was accurate and reliable.

CBRHAs and the radio programs send messages that could convince the audience to practice family planning. Both presented role model individuals who benefit from using contraceptives and limiting the number of their children.

Traditional and religious factors that could prevent people from applying family planning are pointed out in both messages. Both clearly indicated the fact that raising fewer children properly is preferred by God as well as human beings than creating agony by bringing more children than one can provide for. On the other hand, they both showed the negative consequences of giving birth to many children due to various traditional misconceptions such as viewing boys as preferred to girls.

The effects of having large family on both the economy and health of family members are also reflected on the messages of the radio program as well as the CBRHAs. The CBRHAs teach their clients by lauding families who limit the number of their children and are financially strong, healthy and happy as exemplary. Since these role models are taken from the neighborhood, it easier to make the people relate

themselves with the reality. Such ideas are incorporated on the radio program through dramas and spots. The characters in the drams speak rural-like colloquial to attract the attention of rural audience.

The radio program and CBRHAs gave clarifications on the different types of contraceptives. The audience found the information from both sources but needed more explanations from the CBRHAs. For instance, the idea of emergency pills was new to the interviewees when it was transmitted on the radio program for the first time. And after that they had to discuss about it with the CBRHAs. Similarly, the audience members had to confer first with the CBRHAs and later with health professionals about the different types of contraceptive methods before starting to use them. A research conducted on national family planning programs in several countries revealed that the mass media can increase the level of knowledge and awareness about family planning issues among the audience but communicating with field workers is more effective in changing attitudes toward a sustainable use of contraceptives (Wright, 1986:169).

Compensating Roles

Messages of the radio program and CBRHAs are witnessed to be filling each other's gaps. As Schramm (1964:126) states the media have a teaching role that could be performed directly or with the support of interpersonal communicators. For instance, the media could be employed in a classroom as part of educational experience under the guidance of a teacher; but in the absence of teachers or even schools the media can fill in. Similarly, it would be very difficult, for example, for radio to do the job a skilled field worker would do in demonstrating a new skill, but once the skill is acquired, radio can be of great help by supplying additional information.

CBRHAs, in their effort to convince their clients, bring in their discussions testimonials from families in the neighborhood. For instance, they talk about families who limited the number of their children in accordance with their income, and are happy and healthy because they can afford to full fill at least the basic needs of their children. And the CBRHAs said that such methods were usually effective because their clients witness the truth by actually looking at it. But the radio program can not perform this. Instead it brought people who told their own stories. E-E could present role models who can show the audience how to adopt healthy behaviors (Fossard and Lande, 2008). In addition, the radio program brought testimonials of famous personalities, something that was not accomplished by the CBRHAs.

The radio program used entertaining methods like dramas which made the audience interested in what was being said. The role of the radio program in this case is more than just amusing the audience. It also can lead to emotional reactions, which in turn make people to think about their own attitudes and behaviors (Fossard and Lande, 2008). While the CBRHAs can not play such roles, but instead tried to make contacts during social gatherings or coffee ceremonies, and make the discussions as interesting as possible.

The radio program did not do more than just telling its audiences about the need to practice family planning, and religious, traditional or other factors should not prevent it from happening. While the CBRHAs use religious fathers to support them in convincing the society. They also teach during social gatherings that took place in connection with religious events near churches and at homes and help the people understand that it has nothing to do with religion.

The CBRHAs inform their clients about the different methods of contraceptives by demonstrating how each of them work, which made it easier for the clients to understand. While the radio programs try to describe the methods but it is not easy to do so. Thus, the CBRHAs accomplished things that could be difficult for the radio program, and vice versa.

The radio programs presented new information about the emergency pills. The audience members said that it was their first time to hear about it. But the CBRHAs after that gave further explanations about the new emergency pills. This fact shows that like any other media programming, E-E is important in disseminating messages that would result in contacts with field workers leading to behavior change (Interscience, 2000).

The CBRHAs encouraged feedbacks from their clients. They also made follow-ups on the progress of their clients. This is something that can not be realized by the radio program. Although it encouraged feedback using letters or phones, the audience members preferred asking the CBRHAs who are easily found in their village to writing letters or making phone calls. This is one of the qualities of interpersonal communication; there is fast and reliable feedback (Murphy, 1977:16).

Summary

This chapter presents the data gathered from audience members and CBRHAs through conjoint and in-depth interviews. In addition, text analysis of the selected radio program scripts is provided. The data obtained from audience members is categorized into themes of traditional and religious Ideologies, economic/health hazards, reality testimonials, contraceptive methods and proximity. Analysis and discussion are then made accordingly. Similarly, responses of the CBRHAs are classified based on the factors they consider as imperative in facilitating their services. Choosing the right time, providing with all the options, presenting appropriate role models and encouraging feedback are the themes that were sorted out in this regard. The scripts of the radio program were analyzed and discussed by classifying their contents into religious and traditional ideologies, economic/health hazards, reality testimonials and contraceptive methods.

The discussion part of this chapter explains the roles of both *Mefi* radio program and CBRHAs in promoting family planning by presenting evidences from the data. It also incorporates other related research findings and theories that support the outcomes and are discussed in chapter two of this thesis. The next chapter, chapter five, summarizes the core points that were discussed in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Concluding Remarks

Development communication is a concept dealing with the application of communication in bringing about behavior change that could result in economic growth in developing nations. The idea has gained prominence during the 1950's and 60's in an effort to help the post colonial countries resemble and catch up with the developed ones. It has been practiced by disseminating new ideas and innovations that could lead to economic growth and help people change their behaviors accordingly.

Entertainment-Education (E-E) is one of the strategies of disseminating new ideas that could help facilitate development. E-E uses a variety of entertaining programs to make audiences understand the messages and change their behaviors. It has different formats and one of them is a variety or magazine type program. Magazine format programs entail short items such as series or serial dramas, spots, interviews or discussions, music, testimonials, etc. E-E can entertain the audience and at the same time make them think about their own behaviors.

In the early days, especially during the Second World War, communication theorists believed that messages received through the media have direct effects on the audience in making them change their behavior. And this is called the magic bullets effects. But scholars in the field later revised this concept saying that the media has a great importance in creating awareness about a certain issue, but person-to-person communications were crucial in making decisions to adopt innovations; the two-step information flow. The contribution of opinion leaders was inevitable in this regard. Thus, combined messages of media and interpersonal communication play their own roles at different stages of opinion formation.

Numerous efforts have been exerted in different countries to benefit from mixed messages of media and interpersonal communication. Studies conducted on these attempts revealed that both have various roles to play at different stages of behavior changes. In Ethiopia, studies discovering the separate roles of media and interpersonal communication in promoting family planning have been carried out. The intention of undertaking this research was therefore, to assess the roles of blended messages of an E-E radio program and opinion leaders- community agents.

The data used in undertaking this research was collected from audience members of a magazine type radio program *Mefitihe*, who are at the same time beneficiaries of the service provided by Community Based Reproductive Health Agents (CBRHAs). In addition, information was gathered from the CBRHAs themselves, and selected scripts of the radio programs were examined using text analysis.

The outcomes of this study reveal that the combined messages of both the radio program and CBRHAs affected the audience members by playing roles that can be labeled as reinforcing and compensating.

Similar messages that support one another were presented by the CBRHAs and the radio program. Both gave emphasis to informing about the contraceptive methods and the consequences of not using them. The difference is the ways the messages were presented. At the same time the radio program and the CBRHAs were compensating each other by accomplishing things that one is not able to perform. In the case of the radio program entertaining messages were transmitted using dramas and spots. Testimonials of famous personalities were also presented. On the other hand, the CBRHAs were able to give convincing evidences by showing experiences of role model families from the neighborhood. Thus, both the radio program and the CBRHAs were contributing to the process of opinion formation by providing similar and supplementing messages using different techniques.

The two-step flow of information was evident on different occasions where the audience members held discussions with the opinion leaders/CBRHAs before reaching at decisions. There was an instance when the audience members gained new information about emergency contraceptive pills for the first time on the radio program. After that they held further discussions with the CBRHAs before deciding to use them.

It is also difficult to conclude that the combined messages by themselves have led to behavior change because there were participants who said that they knew about the issue and have already changed their behaviors before even listening to messages from the radio program or the CBRHAs. In such cases, what the merged messages did is strengthen the already held stands and fill in some unmet gaps.

Therefore, the mixed messages of the radio program and the CBRHAs contributed their shares at different stages of the process of behavior change. Repeating the messages using a variety of strategies facilitated the process of opinion formation.

Implications of the Outcomes

The outcomes of this research clearly depict the roles of blended messages of the E-E radio program and the community agents in the fight against population boom. They provide insights that could be useful for other projects that plan to implement different channel mixes in behavior change processes, not only in promoting family planning but also other issues that could impact the economy of a nation directly or indirectly. Such efforts need to take into consideration the different roles both media and interpersonal communication play. What types of information and how they should be communicated should be given emphasis in designing such projects.

This study portrays the roles of mixed messages from both opinion leaders and media by specifically looking at an E-E radio program and community agents. Other forms of person-to-person communication such as with family and friends as well as other types of media programs are not incorporated here in order to make it clear and focused. Therefore, other studies need to look into the other types of interpersonal communication and media programs in investigating the effects of media-interpersonal communication nexus.

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Appendix

Moderator's Conjoint and In-depth Interviews Guide

Themes of Conversation

- Messages of *Mefi*he radio program
- Messages of CBRHAs
- The roles of the combined messages

Major Questions

- Tell me what you think about the radio program?
- Does it have any impact on your life? If so how?
- Which parts of the program do you remember most? Why?
- What is your opinion about the messages provided by CBRHAs?
- Do the messages have impact in your life? If so how?
- What do you say is the purpose of disseminating such messages using both the radio program and CBRHAs?
- Which one do you prefer? The radio program or CBRHAs? Why?

Moderator's In-depth Interview Guide/ with CBRHAs

Themes of Discussion

- Messages of CBRHAs
- Techniques of message dissemination

Major Questions

- What tasks do you accomplish?
- What are the things you do to convince the residents to use contraceptives?
- What effect do your messages have?
- What do you say is the purpose of combining your messages with the radio programs?

Summarized Sample “Meftihe” Radio Program Script

This edition of the program kicks off by explaining what family is. It says that family is the subset of a social setting in a nation; and family planning is a means through which parents limit the number of their children so that they could bring them up with love and great care. The story goes on explaining about how children in developing countries are treated. They are assigned to herd cattle and work on farms at their early childhood. Parents in poor countries completely forget their responsibility of bringing children up with care and love; rather they focus only on the support they obtain from them.

The program also talks about early marriage, which is dominantly practiced in developing countries including Ethiopia. The average age for women in developed nations to establish marriage is 25 years and it reduces to 17 in Ethiopia. And this has negative impact on family planning of Ethiopian families.

According to the program, the average number of children a woman gives birth to is 5.4 children, while the number reduces to 2.7 in developed nations. This leads both the mothers and the children to be physically weak. Therefore, most often newborns in developing nations die from lack of breast feed, as well as care and love from their mothers.

The program brings the case of Woizero Teyiba, a resident at Arsi zone of Oromia State to show the consequences of having large family. Woizero Teyiba lost four of her fourteen children. She reveals that her husband strictly rejects the use of contraceptives. The program tries to show the desperate condition Woizero Teyiba was found in.

The other part of the program that is incorporated in this edition is a spot about emergency pills. The spot explains when and how to use emergency pills. The tablets can prevent unwanted pregnancy in cases of involuntary sexual intercourse or sexual assault/ rape, or if proper contraceptive method has not been used. It also explains about the fact that it provides no protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV.

After the spot a short drama with a central theme of using contraceptives is transmitted. The drama starts with a husband and wife fighting. From the words they speak one can easily learn that the wife is repeatedly attacked and abused by her husband to the extent of having sex that is not consensual and she has become a mother of many unplanned children.

In the drama the husband appears to reject all forms of contraceptives including condom and even hates the health professional, Seble who teaches the wife about family planning. He considers Seble as a devil meddling in his marital affairs. The wife insists on using contraceptive to prevent unwanted pregnancy, but the husband continues to be stubborn and didn't oblige to her request, he even insult and batter her every time they raise the issue. One day the husband battered and sent her out because they could not reach consensus on the issue. Finally, a neighbor who is beneficiary of family planning approached the husband to advise him and help the couple to make peace.