

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

A RECEPTION STUDY ON *Akababi-ena-Lemat*
ENVIRONMENTAL RADIO PROGRAM: The Perspective of
Agricultural College Students

BY
SOLOMON KEBEDE

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Agricultural College Students

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BY

SOLOMON KEBEDE GEBREMESKEL

JUNE 2008
ADDIS ABABA

Candidate

Solomon Kebede
(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Approved by:

Advisor

(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Examiners

(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

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Abstract

Environmental degradation - resulting mainly from the public's low-level of awareness and usually manifested in the form of recurrent droughts - has become the major challenge to development endeavors poor countries like Ethiopia. Media outlets, in particular the radio, are crucial instruments in raising awareness of environmental issues.

The purpose of this qualitative reception study on *Akababi enna Lemat* Environmental Radio Program was to look into the reaction of the students of *Ardayeta* Agricultural College on the messages of the program. It also intends to examine the effectiveness of the program.

To achieve this purpose focus group discussions and in-depth interviews as well as preliminary qualitative content analysis were used as tools of data collection. The sampling technique used was mainly purposive. Four focus group sessions and in-depth interviews were conducted with thirty-four students and two journalists. Efforts are made to present the analysis thematically.

Results revealed that regular, occasional and non-listeners consider *Akababi enna Lemat* to be a useful program that appeals to agricultural college students and farmers. Most respondents preferred to listen to the voices of laymen at grassroots rather than the case in *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program where experts, officials and journalists dominate. Respondents also expressed discomfort when listening to journalists and experts using newly coined Amharic terms and inserting English words.

The transmission time of *Akababi enna Lemat* is inconvenient to the students while in college; but suitable to farmers and to these students after graduation. But all research participants have expressed concern over the limited geographical coverage of FM 97.1 channel that impedes the broader rural population from attending *Akababi enna Lemat*.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Introduction

“A Reception Study on *Akababi enna Lemat* Radio Program: The Perspective of Agricultural College Students” tries to explore how students of *Ardayeta* Agricultural College react to the messages of *Akababi enna Lemat* thereby identify the effectiveness of the radio program. The study tries to investigate how respondents (select students) perceive the contents of *Akababi enna Lemat* and negotiate with their lived experiences as well as how relevant the contents are.

The theoretical foundation of this study comes from the theory of reception analysis which portrays audiences as “disparate, fragmentary collection of individuals” and as active ones engaged in making their own stands as far as ‘text’ is concerned (Hutchby, 2006:8; Schroder, 2006; Staiger: 2006). In this case the researcher tries to put the different theories of audience research against the approaches of reception analysis.

This chapter deals with the background of the study, with a brief presentation of objectives, research questions, methods, significance, limitations, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Environmental Problems in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a country that periodically suffers from droughts that result from environmental degradation. Over the past few decades, severe droughts have caused the deaths of millions. The major cause of Ethiopia’s food insecurity is associated with severe environmental degradation manifested through recurrent drought and desertification. Researchers working on environment group Ethiopia’s environmental

problems in to two: problems related to resource management and conservation on one hand and environmental pollution on the other (Demel et al., 2003:11). However, the pressing environmental problems of the country are believed to be caused by poor and unwise natural resources management and conservation. These factors have their tremendous impact on cultivable land and forest resources- critical natural resources that are affecting Ethiopia's rural poor. (SIDA, 2003:22)

As many scholars put it, Ethiopia's deepening environmental crisis is attached mainly to the degradation of three natural resources namely, forest, water and soil. (Teferi, 1999:356; SIDA, 2003:22). In a country where subsistence agriculture is widely practiced, there is an over use of these natural resources for the production of basic needs such as 'food, fiber, energy, building materials and transport.' (Daniel, 1998:56) Daniel further describes how Ethiopian farmers take the brunt of the eventual effects of environmental degradation:

When climatic aberrations such as drought set in, they make the already precarious conditions in rural areas worse. With no alternatives of employment in non-agricultural activities in rural areas and little or no cash savings or stored grain, the rural population succumbs to hunger and famine. (1998:56)

1.1.2 *Akababi-ena-lemat* Environmental Radio Program

Though raising public awareness on environmental issues help combat the problem, studies indicate that there is very limited environmental education in Ethiopia (Shibru and Kifle, 1996). A study made by Daniel (2005) revealed that, unlike previous days, environmental education has become non-existent in the curriculum of colleges and schools.

This situation thus makes the media a significant tool in raising the awareness of people on environmental matters. The mass media which are widely considered as 'agents of change' are expected to employ different methods and be the ring leaders in what Kojo Yankah(1999: 50) described as "the consciousness raising effort" Even Article 4:10(6) of

the Environmental Policy of Ethiopia which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 1997 stresses on the role played by the media in raising environmental awareness (EPA, 1997).

According to a World Bank study (The World Bank Group, 2008); radio and television are considered the major media outlets in developing countries. The study also adds that as is the case in developed countries measuring audience size by considering the number of households with Radio/TV sets would undermine the number of audiences in poor countries. The study argues

Given that communal viewing and listening are far more common in poor countries than wealthy ones, the actual proportion of the population that consumes radio and television is likely to be considerably higher than the proportion that owns a set. (30-31)

In poor countries like Ethiopia Radio in particular tends to be an efficient means of mass communication when compared to other media outlets. As Laekemariam notes in the case of Ethiopia, where there is rugged topography, high prevalence of illiteracy and poor transport, radio is the preferred means of mass communication (Laekemariam, 2000:185). Moreover as most scholars agree radio is inexpensive with small capital costs and operating expenses. Also, from the perspective of the listener radio sets are cheap to buy (McLeish, 1999:5)

Radio Ethiopia went on the air for the first time on January 2, 1934. One of its earliest programs was the *Agriculture program* that focused in part on environment related issues. The program operated under different names during different periods including *Arsoader* [i.e., farmer], *Gibrina* [i.e., agriculture] and currently *Awedegeter* [i.e., rural forum]. Currently the Amharic service of Radio Ethiopia transmits environmental programs that are parts of its agriculture and population programs. Despite relatively long period of media presence in the country, environmental degradation still poses a threat to sustainable agriculture and forestry.

To the researcher's knowledge, Panos Ethiopia is the only non-state organization producing and transmitting an environmental radio program. Its weekly radio program

dubbed in *Amharic* as ‘*Akababi-ena-Lemat*’ (Environment and Development) has been broadcast on FM 97.1 for more than five years. *Akababi-ena-lemat* is a thirty minute program aired every Tuesday evening from 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

Some studies indicate that FM 97.1 which was launched in 2000 and run under the state owned Radio Ethiopia has coverage of up to 125 Kilometers from Addis Ababa.(Ellene et al ,2003:38; Gebremedhin,2006:75) But the researcher has witnessed significant number of audiences tuning to FM 97.1 in Assela town and its surroundingsⁱ.As indicated in the Article of Memorandum of Panos Ethiopia, *Akababi-ena-Lemat* program covers diverse issues on environment and reflects the views and perspectives of researchers, Civil Society Organizations and the community at large. Its overall objective, according to the same source, is “to create ecological sensitive and conscious society.” As an FM program aired from a station based in Addis Ababa, *Akababi-ene-Lemat* is believed to have audiences in Addis Ababa and its environs.

Conducting research on *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program would be significant, considering the grave environmental situations and the helping role of the media. This study will try to evaluate its effectiveness by focusing on select audiences (i.e., trainees of *Ardeyata* Agricultural College that came from different environmental situations). It will attempt to see how understandable, relevant and interesting the program is. The research will also try to show how successful the radio program is in achieving the objectives set by the owner of the program-Panos Ethiopia.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 General Objectives

The general objective of the study will be evaluating the effectiveness of Panos Environmental Radio program from the perspective of the audiences: trainees of *Ardeyata* Agricultural College.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives include:-

- to identify the sources of environmental knowledge of trainees
- to closely examine the reaction of trainees to the quality and content of the radio program
- to assess the problems of producers of the program concerning the production of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* at Panos
- to identify the expectations of audiences and producers as what the radio program needs to deliver
- to give recommendations for better and audience focused production and transmission

1.3 Research Questions

In order to meet the stated objectives of the study; the following questions will be raised;

1. Is the environmental coverage of *Akabbabi –ena –Lemat* easily understandable, interesting and relevant to students of agriculture and communities they represent?
2. Is the environmental coverage of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* in conformity with the environmental education that students of agriculture receive?
3. Is *Akababi-ena-Lemat* effective in providing environment education to audiences?

1.4 Methods of the Study

The research is aimed at investigating the reaction of audiences (agricultural college students) to *Akababi-ena-Lemat*, so the researcher would like to employ qualitative methods.

The study will be conducted in one location - *Ardayeta* Agricultural College. This college was selected based on an examination of feedback (letters and telephone records) at Panos that revealed the presence of relatively more feedback and interest from college students. Unlike many similar state-run colleges this one enrolls students from all over the country. This may ensure that a range of different environmental conditions is included (students from degraded areas and fertile ones). Qualitative research will not represent the whole of Ethiopia but it will compare the views of target audiences from different environments and ways of life. And this will make the research result more reliable.

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are the chief means of collecting data. Similarly, research participants were picked by employing Convenience and Snowball sampling methods. In such a way, the researcher managed to gather and record reactions of participants to a set of questions and issues after the participants listen to previously-aired programs. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the producers of the *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program.

Preliminary qualitative content analysis was also conducted which enabled to familiarize the researcher with the products of *Akababi-ena Lemat* radio program.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research may provide some understanding of how students of agriculture respond to environmental programs of *Akababi-ena-Lemat*. It will also provide valuable information to the producers of *Akababi-ena-Lemat*, in particular, and other environmental programs

on the needs of farmers and agricultural professionals so that they can produce audience-oriented programs. It also serves as a resource to researchers who will conduct audience research on radio environmental programs.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study has its focus on *Akababi-ena-Lemat* environmental radio program and its examination is mainly based on the responses of students of one agricultural college. Thirty-six respondents were incorporated in the study divided in to four focus group discussions and seven in-depth interviews. The selection and grouping of participants was made based on their area of residence [relatively fertile and degraded] and year of study [1st year and 2nd year].

The preliminary qualitative content analysis made was limited to a review of transmitted programs over a period of eight months. Thus this research by no means represents the whole audience of *Akababi-ena-Lemat*.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The four months period we were allowed to work on our thesis was very short. The limited fund provided by the university has its own setback on this work. It was one of the factors that made the researcher's travel to the research location a daunting task.

1.8 Organization of the study

This study has adopted the most common way of organizing a thesis that is dividing in to five parts. A brief discussion on environmental situations of Ethiopia, radio broadcasting with emphasis on *Akababi-ena-Lemat* as well as objectives, significance and limitations of the study are treated under chapter one.

Issues related to the various theories in audience studies from historical and practical perspectives are treated in chapter two. Chapter three is dedicated to a discussion of the

research methods employed in the study. Presentation of findings and analysis makes chapter four of this study while conclusions and recommendations are given in the last chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to discuss issues related to the environmental conditions of Ethiopia and media's role in awareness raising, the methods, limitations and expectations of the study as well as how the study is organized. The arguments put in this chapter have indicated the grave realities of the environment and the importance of awareness raising efforts among the Ethiopian public. In this regard the chapter puts *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program as worth investigating.

CHAPTER TWO: Audience Research

Introduction

Early audience studies came in to the media research scene in response to the needs of media industries that were eager to know the 'reach' and 'size' of their audiences. These early approaches in audience research have also helped identify the social composition and geographical distribution of the audiences. The interests and findings of the researchers, however, were influenced by the broadcasters and advertisers. (McQuail, 1997; Mytton, 1999: 16-17).

It was in the later periods that researchers began to work beyond describing audiences and deal with the issue of media's effect on people. Even by then scholars in the area did not seriously consider and investigate the role audiences might have in the communication process. (Baran & Davis, 2006:260) The focus of the researchers was the 'media messages' and the specific behaviors they might create, i.e., the direct effect the media have on people. This trend has regarded audiences as 'passive recipients' short of the ability to construct their own meanings than 'active readers'. (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003:240)

It was rather after the 1970s that more and more researchers tried to assert their findings that claim audiences to be interactive and autonomous with the capacity to select and use 'useful and meaningful' media products. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:77)

According to McQuail (1994: 328) historically media audience research has witnessed different phases which he argued have happened as a result of reactions to the social changes overtime. The following discussion (2.3 – 2.6) deals with a presentation of the phases in media audience research with their distinct approaches.

2.1 Defining the Audience

A close look at the history of the term audience reveals that it has been in use long before the introduction of 'broadcasting modes of accessing information'. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003: 4). The word at that time meant to describe a gathering of people to watch theatrical and musical shows or games in general. As McQuail puts it 'earliest notions of audience are of a physical gathering in a certain place'. (McQuail: 1997, _; Livingstone:2003,16)

With the advent of broadcasting the term came to stand for a host of meanings. Some writers like Totosyⁱⁱ defined the word as something referring to a gathering of individuals 'exposed to a particular text'. Totosy's audiences can be in a particular place as indicated in the former definition or dispersed in their respective homes when it comes to radio and television.

On the contrary, for others the audience might not be something that has physical characters. For this group it is rather a concept with varying nature. McQuail writes "...the term 'audience' has an abstract and debatable character and the reality to which the term refers is also diverse and constantly changing" (2000: 360)

There is also a view that considers only those people who actively engage with the media as audiences. According to this view "people are audiences when they are in an audience and in audience". For this group media events do not only entail people to be in attendance at a particular time but also to 'physically, mentally and emotionally engage with media materials, technologies and power structures' (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:6)

In his detailed discussion of the audience, McQuail gives a more comprehensive definition of the audience arguing that the term can be described in 'different and overlapping ways':

By place(as in the case of local media); by people(as when a medium is characterized by an appeal to a certain age group, gender, political belief or income category); by the particular type of medium or channel involved (technology and organization combined); by the content of its messages(genres, subject matter, style); by time(as when one speaks of the 'daytime' or 'primetime' audience, or an audience that is fleeting and short-term compared to one that endures. (2000: 360)

As far as this study is concerned

- the definitions that assume those who actively engage with mediated message as audiences; and
- McQuail's description which looks at the audience from different perspectives (place, people, type of medium, content of message and time) will guide this study whenever there is a reference to the term 'audience'.

2.2 Direct Effects Approach

The prevalent assumption among media researchers in the early 20th century about media effects was that the mass media were so powerful that they can serve as tools of persuasion (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:74-75). This premise considers audiences as only receivers of media messages as presented by the media outlet. On the other hand, there are others that acknowledge the researchers in this phase for not totally ignoring what they say 'responsible audience activity'. This group however criticizes the early researchers for undermining the audience's ability to 'selection, interpretation and use of media content'. (Baran & Davis, 2006: 261).

The theory that has evolved out of this powerful media perspective came to be known as the 'hypodermic needle' theory otherwise known as the 'magic bullet' theory or 'transmission belt' theory. This theory argued that all members of the audience receive media messages in a homogeneous manner and their reactions whether 'immediate or direct' happen as a result of the messages they have received. (Williams, 2003:171).

The direct effects perspective has its own limitations. Herbert Blumer criticized it by noting that the approach has 'ignored three factors' namely "the variability of media contents, the variability of people's responsiveness to media contents, and the independent connection of all forms of communication."(Blumer, 1959; cited in Staiger, 2005:44). Schramm also raised his skepticism about the direct effects approach saying that the audience might interpret the message in a different manner than the sender's intention (Schramm,1963; cited in Staiger, 2005:44). It was out of such skeptics that another rival audience research approach evolved as we see in the next discussion.

2.3 Limited Effects Approach

Later researches in to media effects came up with results that challenged the ideas of the hypodermic needle theory. The findings made researchers to believe that the 'effect' of a particular item or image was not solely the outcome of the content of that 'item or image'. According to these findings, audiences were regarded as 'individuals who could interpret what they saw and heard inline with their own already established beliefs'. In this regard the media were found to have fewer roles than previous assumption in changing behaviors but more in reinforcing existing beliefs. (Tudor, 1979; cited in Williams, 2003:174)

This theory gave emphasis to the role played by opinion leaders and argued interpersonal contacts as more important than the media in influencing audiences. As a result this limited effects model came to be called the two-step flow theory. (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003:241; Williams, 2003:174). Its worth noting here that the two-step flow theory like the hypodermic needle theory believed in the influence of media but the later tends in 'enforcing existing attitudes and opinions' not in changing them.

One of the critiques of this theory argued that the limited effects approach has undermined the complexity of the communication process and the manner in which influence occurs. According to Williams the theory considered influence as the authority

of one person over the other overlooking other factors that have the power on 'the flow of information' in any given social setting. He cited 'the power of political and economic institutions' as an example. The limited effects approach has also given vague explanations concerning the make up of the interface between the opinion leaders and audiences. The theory has also faced criticism for labeling 'the majority' of the audience as passive. (Williams, 2003:176)

2.4 Uses and Gratifications Approach

The 1970s was dominated by a new approach on the relationship between the media and audiences. This change came as a result of peoples increasing individual and social variation in behaviors concerning mass communication. As opposed to former theories this approach came to consider audiences as active with the capacity of picking preferred content and message from the media. (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989:187)

Among the proponents of this tradition Herta Herzog is considered as the inventor of the uses-and-gratifications theory. While accepting the active role of audiences, the uses and gratifications approach focuses its examination on 'the uses to which people put media and the gratifications they seek from that use'. (Baran & Davis, 2006: 262-263).

This theory shifted the attention of audience research from the media and media content to the audience's role with emphasis on how audiences use the media to please ones social and psychological desires. Some scholars also regarded the uses and gratifications theory as the first approach to place audiences at the heart when it comes to studying media effects. (Ross & Nightingale, 2003:29)

The uses and gratifications theory never escaped criticisms. Its attention on the individual as the 'unit of analysis' has made the theory to ignore the social aspect. The theory asserts that individuals consume media with purpose; critics however argue that attending media products is something that happens more casually and without planning. According to these critics, people might attend a certain media because of its prominence

or lack of access to or absence of alternative media outlets. (Williams, 2003:178-179) Other researchers like Baran and Davis (2006:275) also criticized the Uses-and-Gratifications theory for its failure to show whether there is effect or not in a given audience research.

2.5 Reception Analysis

The current phase in audience research has its focus on finding out what the audience did with media not what the later did to the former. Ross and Nightingale in their book *Media and Audiences* put this approach as the 'latest phase' where emphasis is given to 'agency rather than passivity'. (2003:76)

With the reception approach, exploring what audiences think of the influence the media have brought in their lives became the main interest of the researchers. This theory bases its argument on the premise that audiences 'interpret media messages' and this capacity is decided by a host of 'individual, social and cultural factors.' (Williams, 2003: 193).

In this phase of audience research the arguments endorsed by the preceding approaches that consider audiences as homogenous mass of recipients were challenged by the reception analysis approach which started to view audiences as 'a multitude of different groups with their own histories, habits, and social interactions.' Here the researchers are also keen to know the conditions with in which the reception of media messages transpires. The researchers also indicated that there are specific audiences for particular media products. This statement has come out of the notion that audiences are more powerful and have the freewill of choosing what and when they want to watch, listen and read a particular media output. (Williams, 2003:198-199)

Klaus Jensen writes audience and content analysis must remain the core investigations of a reception analysis if the study has to come out with convincing description of 'the reception, uses, and impact of media'. (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991:135). This is to mean

that media texts and their audiences are corresponding elements that any researcher engaged in reception analysis must pay utmost attention to.

Many scholars agree that Hall's encoding/decoding model has made the basis for reception theory. This was clearly observed back in 1978 in the audience study conducted by David Morley and Charlotte Brunsdon for *BBC TV news magazine Nationwide*. The approach adopted by these researchers was significantly influenced by Hall's encoding/decoding model. (Williams, 2003:195; Ross & Nightingale, 2003:36-39) Hall's model differed from other theories in that it made media effects to be dependent on the interpretation of audiences and 'thought processes.' It also focuses on the interaction between audiences and 'texts' as well as the social settings where such interaction takes place. (Williams, 2003:196)

Ian Hutchby (2006) in his book, *Media talk: Conversation, Analysis and the Study of Broadcasting*, identifies two ideas which he referred as 'key significances' of Hall's theory.

One key significance of Hall's theory, therefore, is the recognition that there may not be any necessary symmetry between the frameworks of meaning involved in encoding a particular text and those involved in decoding it....A second significance is the implication that either 'end' of the encoding/decoding circuit can be subject to empirical enquiry: we could go and do a study of how media producers encode their products just as much as we could look at how audiences actually decode them. (8)

As opposed to the uses and gratifications theory, Hall emphasized on the various social settings and backgrounds that determine and affect the audience's interpretation of 'texts'. In Hall's case "perception was not conceived in personal or psychological terms but social" (Williams, 2003:196).

The uses and gratifications as well as the reception analysis approaches have a shared view concerning the power of the audience which they say possess an 'interpretive freedom'. But they have underlying divergence when dealing with factors affecting interpretation.

The uses and gratifications theory seems to give much emphasis to individuals as far as interpretation is concerned. In this regard Morley says to this theory “differences of response or interpretation are attributed to individual differences of personality” (Morley, 1989; cited in Sterlitz, 2000:40). Williams writes “some say this [uses and gratifications theory] represents a retreat from the two-step flow approach.”(Williams, 2003:179)

Proponents of the reception analysis on the other hand regard the uses and gratifications tradition as ‘psychological’ which is incapable of seeing the media content or the audience in a broader ‘social context’. In reception studies pinpointing social dimensions and examining response or interpretation based on those dimensions remains to be an important task of the researcher. (Williams, 2003: 178-179 & Staiger, 2005:55). Similarly this study which tries to find out the responses of audiences of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program adopts the approaches of reception analysis using the methodologies discussed in the next chapter.

Though considered the latest approach in the study of audiences, reception analysis does not escape the attention of critics. Like the case with the uses and gratifications, reception theory is considered as an approach short of indicating the ‘presence or absence of effects’. The fact that reception studies depend on the ‘subjective interpretation of audience reports’ as well as their use of qualitative research methods which prevent the findings from describing causes were also listed as weaknesses of reception analysis. (Baran and Davis, 2006: 278)

In spite of the criticisms forwarded by some scholars; it seems, at least at this moment, reception analysis is to be the most applicable approach in media audience research. In support of this argument Staiger considers reception studies as something that has an important part in the ‘individual or social and political lives’ of humans. While acknowledging the difficulties seen in some reception studies in coming up with ‘specific

conclusions', Staiger underlines that in mass communication research "It [reception studies] is a particularly pragmatic field."(2006: 4)

When explaining the significance and uncontested place of reception analysis in current audience studies, Schroder writes:

"With more than 20 years' experience, reception research has now consolidated itself as an established research tradition, still developing but with a solid theoretical and methodological foundation, and accumulating record of substantial findings" (2003:141)

It is thus with these above considerations that this reception study on *Akababi-ena-Lemat* environmental radio program employed the approaches of reception analysis.

Inline with the researcher's choice of definition for the term 'audience' (2.2 of this chapter), scholars in reception analysis see audiences as "disparate, fragmentary collection of individuals, rather than the homogenous mass often envisaged by earlier approaches". In reception analysis audiences are portrayed as active ones engaged in making their own stands as far as 'text' is concerned that may enable them to 'question, challenge or reject elements of the text's message' (Hutchby,2006:8)

Mass communication experts like Baran and Davis advise researchers involved in reception studies to refrain from making their own statements about encoding or decoding. What they instead recommend is to make meticulous examinations on "the social and political context in which media content is produced and the everyday life context in which it is consumed." (2006:276).This statement thus shows the two elements to be dealt in reception analysis- content of media and the audience. As the discussion in the next chapter shows the methodological approaches used in the reception study of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program are geared towards examining the two elements - media contents (of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program) and its audiences (college students).

Conclusion

The discussions under this chapter tried to show how audience research progressed from the powerful media approach to the active audience premise. Of the theories discussed above the uses and gratification as well as the encoding/decoding models put the audience as autonomous concerning the question of how they use the media and how the media affect them. These are the models that give priority to the might of audiences (instead of 'the media and cultural industries') in generating 'media meaning and popular culture'. (Fiske 1986 & 1987a; cited in Williams, 2003:202-3).

To Cocteau and Haynes the concept of active audience is the underlying principle of current audience research. The authors argued that any effort to examine the effect of media has to first accept the hypothesis "...media consumption is often an active processing of information, not just a passive reception of media words and images". (2003: 247) And in conclusion the theoretical foundation of this study comes from the active audience theory which brings insight into how audiences understand and interact with the mass media.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology

Introduction

The different theories in the study of media audiences with their underlying principles were discussed in the preceding chapter. I have also put to which theory this study sticks to. The following chapter deals with a discussion of the methodology and the different techniques that are believed to serve the researcher to best investigate audiences of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* Radio Program based on the arguments made in the previous chapter.

3.1 Research Location

One important feature of reception study is that it prefers to pick a section of the general audience and make examinations on that selected group. Kevin Williams writes “It [Reception analysis] also pays much attention to one segment of the audience—women readers, viewers and listeners” (2003:205). In the same token this audience research targets agricultural college students as well as farmers as its research groups.

One location is selected for the research, namely *Ardayeta* Agricultural College. Selecting the research location subjectively is in the main interest of the researcher conducting this study.

3.1.1 *Ardayeta* Agricultural College

An examination of feedback (letters and telephone records) at Panos Ethiopia and a prior discussion with the producers of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* Radio Program revealed the presence of relatively more participation in and interest to the *Akababi-ena-Lemat radio program* from students of the *Ardayeta* Agricultural College. Situated 305 Kilometers south east of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, this college unlike many similar state-run colleges, enrolls students from all over the country.. This may ensure that a range of different environmental conditions is included (students from degraded areas and

relatively fertile ones) in the study. Currently the college has a total of 2051 students enrolled from first to thirdⁱⁱⁱ year.

Being promoted to college level in 2001, Ardayeta Agricultural College is now one of the 25 educational institutions run under the Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Development. Until June 2007 the college has awarded diplomas to 2866 graduates drawn from all regions of Ethiopia^{iv}.

3.2 Opting for Qualitative Research

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the history of media audience research has made its eventual transformation from a powerful media perspective to active audience approaches. With this researchers began to look for methods that could offer ‘satisfactory’ justifications regarding media and audiences. The new method, according to Morley, adopted an approach that enables the researcher to make an insightful examination of the involvement and reaction of audiences with media. This approach [qualitative method], Morley argues, is one that attaches due importance to audiences. And when justifying why researchers started to adopt qualitative methods, Morley writes “There was a growing recognition that audiences should be allowed to express their thoughts and their feelings about media content in their own terms” (1980; cited in Gunter, 2000: 54)

While explaining the significance of qualitative approaches in audience studies, Mytton (1999:126) in his book *Handbook on Radio and Television Audience Research*, says it is clear from various studies that audiences might be influenced more by ‘the intervening influence of other people’ but not simply by the ‘media messages’ they receive. And he adds it is the qualitative research method not the quantitative one that can only reveal these influences in a lucid manner. Mytton thus argues:

This is partly because quantitative research tends to focus on individual behavior within a household or family, whereas qualitative research in focus groups puts the respondents into a social setting in which the

personal influences that operate in social settings are reproduced and can be observed.” (126)

In a move to show how qualitative methodologies are central in communication studies and best equipped to uncover the meaning making process Lindlof writes “If communication is primarily a matter of signifying meanings and purposes, then qualitative inquiry is interested in how signifying occurs and what it means for those who engage in it.” (1995: 22). Another mass communication researcher Moran, when explaining how qualitative approaches best suit audience studies, writes “A trend in audience research has been to use qualitative methodologies to uncover how audience members interact with the mass media” (1996:3)

It also seems plausible to quote the statement made by Schroder et al. (2003) as to what makes qualitative data gathering methods applicable in reception studies.

Reception research is premised on the belief that neither the semiotic analysis of media texts nor questionnaire-based analysis of media gratifications is capable of grasping the complexities of the media experience. Consequently, the prescribed methodological approach to reception analysis is some kind of qualitative interview, in which viewers [audiences] verbalize their experiences of media material. (122)

As a research on radio audience, this study tends to take up qualitative methods.

One of the characteristics and may be the strengths of qualitative research is its utilization of host of techniques of data collection which Rossman and Rallis call “methods that are interactive and humanistic” (1990; cited in Creswell, 2003:181). Accordingly the different methods that were employed in this study are presented in the following discussions.

3.3 Methods and Procedures of Data Collection

3.3.1 Focus Group Discussions

A more descriptive, simpler and comprehensive definition of focus group discussion, it seems, is provided by Lunt and Livingstone. As the authors put it “Briefly, the focus group method involves bringing together a group or, more often, a series of groups, of subjects to discuss an issue in the presence of a moderator.” (1996:80)

Larry Strelitz argues that application of focus groups in communication studies has a long history but their role as tools of investigating media audiences became widespread since the early 1980s. Since that time Strelitz noted “they [focus groups] have become closely associated with reception analysis”. (2005)

While sharing his experiences and observation about the contribution of focus groups, Strelitz (2005: 121) writes:

...group discussion on a particular topic or set of themes lies at the heart of focus group research. The interaction between respondents seen to produce data and insights that would not necessarily arise in individual interviews as the group discussion is seen to stimulate, elicit and elaborate responses from the interviewees

As opposed to the face-to-face interview, focus group does not follow a designed conversation between the researcher and the respondent. The existence of this ‘unstructured dialogue’ is considered as the ‘strength’ of focus group. This is because the interaction among group members in the focus group “produces information and insights in to the behavior and attitudes of people that would not be likely to emerge from a straight one to one interview.” (Mytton, 1999:128)

The issue of sampling in researches such as this one seems to get consensus rather than controversy. As Deacon et al. (1999: 54) argue what all sampling procedures in qualitative studies share is the fact that the recruitment of ‘sample units’ is conducted purposefully and based on the research agenda. Likewise scholars indicate that audience studies using focus group discussions have seldom succeeded in having groups

‘representative of the general population.’ This fact gives the researcher the privilege to select the appropriate participants instead of having them randomly. Thus they suggest researchers to pick participants from what they say ‘naturally existing groups or communities’. (Hansen et al., 1998: 265).

It seems that the notion of ‘naturally existing communities’ works for my study- a study that has its research groups from the *Ardayeta* Agricultural College. As to the sampling technique for the focus groups I preferred to employ a non-random one where the selection of the sample units is done purposefully.

Concerning the composition and nature of focus groups, overtime scholars have provided different alternatives leaving the decision of choosing to the researchers. In this regard the basic question for a qualitative researcher will be whether to have ‘groups who know each other’, or the ones ‘who are relative strangers’ or those belonging to different ‘socio-demographic background’. (Javidi et al.: 1991 cited in Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:82).

This research however would like to stick to the alternative that Lunt and Livingstone (1996:82) named as ‘naturally occurring groups of like-minded people.’ This way of selection is also supported by Jensen’s argument who favors the idea of adopting homogenous groups. He writes “In media studies, focused interviews with relatively homogenous groups have proven useful for gaining access to their distinctive experiences of media content...” (Jensen, 2002: 241). It is not advisable to form a group comprising participants who have varying and observable differences. In such cases the differences by themselves are “likely to make conversation difficult.” (Mytton, 1999: 130)

Recruiting participants for this study is principally conducted by looking for those who listen to the radio in general and *Akababi-ena-Lemat* radio program in particular. This method is also supported by Mytton who says “one very commonly used way of organizing groups is to divide them by whether they use the product or service being researched.” (Mytton, 1999:130)

Snowball sampling which according to Jensen employs early contacts to get additional research participants were used in this research (Jensen, 2002: 239). The sampling procedures I applied in the study are mixed that include convenience and snowball which according to, Deacon et al. (1999: 54), are frequent in focus group studies. However, my sampling techniques basically are non-random.

When it comes to deciding the number of focus groups one has to employ in a research process, many scholars take the objectives of the research and availability of resources as determining factors. In cases where focus group discussions serve as the main instruments of data gathering, (which also works for this study), "...it would generally be difficult to justify fewer than six groups". (Hedges,1985 and Morgan, 1988 cited in Hansen et al., 1998 : 268).

Hansen et al. (1998) further write:

"The single main factor (cost and resources notwithstanding) in deciding on the number of groups must be the types of comparisons across different groups and population characteristics specified by the objectives of the research." (269)

In line with the above arguments, I decided to recruit focus group participants along lines of status of environment/ geographical location (*those coming from much degraded and less degraded environments*); and level of education (*Year One and Year Two*). I did make four focus group discussions that have 34 participants. I have also conducted in-depth interviews with research participants as supplementary to the FGDs, which makes the 4 FGD sessions quite enough for the study. As to the number of participants in each group, I took Mytton's suggestion which takes six to ten as an ideal one though he finally opts for eight saying "eight seems to be the ideal number in most current practice" (Mytton, 1999:130)

As researchers in media and communications recommend the researcher is usually expected to act as a moderator of the focus group discussions. This seems to come out of the conviction that the researcher is the one who best knows the nature and objectives of the study. The moderator needs to be wary of not dominating the proceeding. (Hansen et al., 1998: 272) Accordingly my role as a moderator did not go beyond inspiring and helping the discussions run smoothly. I was also expected to make sure that the discussion is progressing as per the topics listed in the interview guide and whether all members of the focus group have got fair chances to air their views.

Most scholars agree on the importance of recording focus group sessions which they argue helps to ease the moderator's burden of note taking in detail. The recording also provides the researcher with an accurate and comprehensive account of what was said and happened throughout each session. (Strelitz, 2005; Mytton, 1999: 133). During each focus group session in this study I started by asking participants if it's OK for them to record the discussions and explaining why I wanted it on tape. Then I requested each of them to introduce themselves which will help me identify their names against their voices while transcribing and writing the findings.

3.3.2 Individual In-depth Interviews

In most cases the term 'In-depth Interviews' is used substituting 'individual interviews'. It seems the word 'in-depth' is added to deliberately imply the benefit a researcher gets by using this approach which is a means of creating better understanding about an issue under investigation. This benefit comes due to the nature of individual interviews that allow an interviewee to make additional reflections with the prospect of building up 'an argument or a narrative in an hour than any group member does in the same amount of time' (Schroder et al., 2003: 153). In the same manner, individual interviews give the researcher the privilege of raising more and specific issues during the session.

Also in situations where the researcher confirms anonymity to the informant, individual interviews are best tools to discuss rather sensitive and controversial issues as opposed to the focus group interviews which may be characterized by the presence of 'spiral of

silence'. The individual interview is also a means to avoid the prospect of 'group pressure' which scholars take as a likely limitation in the case of focus group discussions. (Schroder et al., 2003:153)

While describing the nature of the in-depth interview, Lindolf writes "These interviews resemble conversations between equals. Most of what is said and meant by both interviewer and interviewee emerges jointly in interaction." (1995:5)

'Social interaction' as is the case in focus group is not the feature of in-depth interview as it emphasizes the individual. As Mytton argues individual interviews are relevant means of data collection in media research and in particular while studying radio audiences "In many cultures, radio listening has become very much an individual rather than family-based or group activity." (1999:141)

In-depth interviews are also instrumental in corroborating the findings of the focus group sessions. This view is shared by Morgan who says "one pays the price for relying on group interaction in that compared to the one-to-one interview; one has less control in managing what data is actually collected." (1988; cited in Strelitz, 2005)

One of the many reasons that demand a qualitative researcher to conduct an in-depth interview is when it is impossible to get enough participants for a focus group discussion (Mytton, 1999:142). Hence the data I collect from the producers of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* were through in-depth interview. And in the case of the other research groups; after an examination of the participation at each focus group discussion, I selected 5 respondents from the 4 groups for an individual in-depth interview.

3.3.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

It is unthinkable for a researcher in media reception studies to embark on the task of focus group and in-depth interviews without having a prior knowledge of the media output under investigation. This initial acquaintance with the 'media product' helps the researcher to have a valuable and 'focused' dialogue with the research groups during the data collection. (Schroder et al., 2003:154-155)

An examination of the media output [content analysis] became a necessity due to the purpose of reception analysis that requires 'a comparative examination of the audience data as well as content data' (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990 cited in Strelitz, 2005:121). This argument is further substantiated in one of Jensen's articles where he notes the significance of textual analysis in reception studies saying that "Reception analysis shares an interest in cultural codes as expressed in media texts with various forms of *textual analysis*." (1988:3)

The need for conducting content analysis also arises from the premise that any media reception study has to consider the content as much as the audience. (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991:135)

Conducting the content analysis might also help the researcher to give objective assessment of the selected programs and corroborate the results with the responses of research participants regarding the content of *Akababi enna Lemat* (See Chapter 4.5.2)

It needs to be noted here that in a qualitative content analysis of this kind, the required analysis is only at elementary level in a way that familiarizes the researcher with the media product. As Schroder et al put it "it is often wiser to abstain from a detailed preliminary textual analysis; and just to familiarize oneself with the text sufficiently to be able to pursue the cultural or political research questions that motivates the project" (Schroder et al.: 2003, 126). In the same manner this study has made reviews of *Akababi-ena-Lemat* programs aired between the months of March 2007 and September

2007 which is equivalent to about 18 hours of audio production. The researcher deliberately selected this period as his discussion with the coordinator/producer of *Akakabi ena lemat* revealed the year 2007 to be the period where the producers started to ‘not only stick to the annual plan and entertain variety of environmental issues’. A rough examination of the programs aired over this period might enable the researcher to how different environmental issues were presented on *Akakabi ena lemat*.

3.3.4 Sample programs

Twelve *Akababi-ena-Lemat* programs were selected and recorded to be taken around by the researcher during the data collection process. These copies of the sample programs taken by the researcher were the ones more recently aired. This was done because it is believed that participants of the focus group and in-depth interviews might easily remember when the researcher makes them listen to parts of selected programs and react actively. This proved right for those regular listeners.

The researcher asked research participants to listen to part of the programs that might enable them refresh their memories. The listening also helps the researcher to ask some appropriate questions and to inspire even the none regular listeners to react. (See annex 2C)

Conclusion

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews are the main tools of data collection in this research. This decision emanates from the set objectives and purposes of the research project that in a way determines the research method which in this case is using qualitative methods of inquiry. I have also made a short description of the research location, sampling techniques and procedures used. These components of the methodology were employed in the data collection phase to come up with the findings put in the following chapter. It seems worth noting at this point that as it is the case to all qualitative methods, generalization would not at all be the intention of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: Presentation and Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter provides the presentation and analysis of findings of this study by exploring how select students of *Ardayeta* Agricultural College react to *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program. Based on the discussions in the foregoing chapters that adopt the theory of reception analysis and qualitative audience research method; this chapter mainly tries to identify whether the research participants listen to the program, how much the program has shaped their understanding of environmental issues, how understandable, interesting and relevant the program is to their respective environmental concerns.

The analysis and discussions under this chapter are meant to be in conformity with the objectives of the study as well as the set of hypothesis discussed in all the preceding chapters of this study.

The presentations of direct quotes of research participants are made based on the degree of relevance and representation of the responses as well as the relative articulation respondents have.

4.1 Research Participants

Thirty-six individuals were interviewed for this research. Of these respondents 34 were students of *Ardayeta* Agricultural College who participated in the focus group discussions, while the remaining 2 were journalists who make the in-depth interview part of this study. Of the students 16 were from degraded areas while 18 participants were recruited from those relatively fertile areas.

It is important to note here that students coming from all regional states of the country except the Afar region were represented in this study. In addition to their environmental

compositions which at least represent two different environmental settings, the age range of the participants was between 19 and 50.

Though it is hardly possible to say the study was gender sensitive, efforts are made to incorporate more women which in this case is 7 female students out of the total 34 student respondents. The representation of females in the study seems reasonable when compared to the number of female students in the college^v. Female students make approximately 20.6% of the research group in this study while they comprise approximately 17.6% of the total number of students in the first and second years.

Another interesting point about student respondents in this study is their tendency and rather insistence to see most of the questions/issues from two angles. In most cases they first react from their perspectives and move on to see the same issue from the farmers'/rural communities' angle. To the researcher's understanding this might have happened because of two reasons. It might be because of their family background, i.e., 31 of the 34 respondents were born and bred in rural settings either in agricultural or pastoralist families. Secondly the students know that upon completing their studies they will be living and working among rural communities. This is therefore to note that some of the discussions in this study have given some weight to some of the responses from research participants that are of relevance to rural communities.

4.2 Sampling and Engaging with participants

4.2.1 Sampling

As it is true to qualitative research methods (Deacon et al., 1999:54) the selection of research participants was made purposefully and based on the research agenda. When it comes to the nature and composition of focus groups, the researcher used 'relatively homogenous groups' which has been proved effective in getting audiences' own experiences concerning media content (Jensen, 2002:241; Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:82). The research participants in the four groups were grouped based on their environmental conditions and year of study in the college.

The researcher started recruiting respondents by looking for those who listen to *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program and then those who listen to the radio in general. This technique of selecting research participants based on whether they use the subject under investigation seems quite common. (Mytton, 1999:130). Six to ten is the recommended range for the number of participants in a focus group. Accordingly the number of respondents in each focus group of this study lies between seven and ten.

Seven individuals were selected for in-depth interviews. Out of these two were the producers of *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program whom the researcher met in Addis Ababa. The rest five were students who were picked by the researcher based on their active participation in the focus group discussion and their revealed interest in environment and media. The researcher used in-depth interview as another chief means of data collection because recent studies on radio audiences have come to show the more 'individual' nature of listening rather than 'family based or group activity' (Mytton, 1999:141)

4.2.2 Researcher's role

In all the focus group discussions I acted as a moderator. Before the discussion begins I did make sure that all participants are comfortable with my audio recording and photographing (see Annex 4) of the sessions. All have agreed to my requests. My role as a moderator was mainly raising issues in their sequences (see Annex 2a &b), inspiring participants to respond and making sure every member of the group has got fair chances to speak.

4.2.3 Interview Setting

Three of the FGD sessions were held in the College's Guidance and Counseling office. The counselor, Alemeneh Berhanu, is credited for establishing the college's environmental club where over 80 of the students are members (Interview with Alemeneh). The same office is used by the club members for various meetings. Alemeneh has also told the researcher that most students have been to his office many times. All research participants also gave their consent to the researcher when he mentioned that office as one of the venues for the FGD.

One FGD (with 1st Year students from degraded areas) was conducted in a class room as 5 out of the 9 participants wanted it to be where they had their last lecture before lunch.

In-depth interviews with the 5 students were conducted in the students' lounge (with 2 respondents), in the dormitory (with 1 respondent) and in an open field (with 2 respondents). The session with the journalists working on *Akababi-ena-lemat* was conducted in their respective offices.

4.3 Participants' Awareness of Current Environmental Situations

As indicated in Chapter two of this study, media effects can not be understood as things that come only as a result of the media messages audiences receive. In support of this view mass communication experts recommend a means of examining other influences that might have their roots in the 'social experiences' and 'attitudes' or 'beliefs' of the audience. (Klapper, 1960 cited in Ruddock, 2000:40; Abercombie, 1996:140 cited in Hanes, 2000) For example, Kunczik (1992:35-36) notes the living environment and life experience of an individual are things that determine the effect of the information one receives from a media outlet.

Considering the points noted by the above scholars, the researcher during his field work has posed questions to research participants that investigate their level of understanding of environmental issues. The researcher also believes that such questions would help identify the sources of environmental knowledge of audiences.

Results from the Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews revealed forest resources to be the highly endangered part of the environment. This concern was pronounced more in the two focus group discussions held with students from fertile areas. It seems these participants (18 students) rated forest as the most endangered natural resource in their respective localities. One may get surprised on hearing such reactions from students coming from areas with relatively better forest coverage in the country. Asked why they all feel the same about the dwindling forest resources, most replied that unlike the damage inflicted on other resources, the destruction of forests were something that are observable. They thus relate to the changes they observed since their childhood days. Alamine Sulyeman a second year student from Benishangul Regional State, a region considered to be endowed with forest resources, shares his experience at his birth place.

Alamine (from Assosa, Benishangul): *I don't know. May be the situation of the soil, water and other resources in my area is getting bad from day to day. But how can I prove that. When it comes to forests, I can see and tell the difference from last summer even when I go back to Benishangul for the coming summer vacation. When I was a child some 20 years ago, everything was covered with forest except for our homes and some small farms. Eventually everything started to clear away. Now it is common to see barren lands in my area.*

On the contrary 7 out of the 16 students from degraded areas did not consider forest as the most affected part of the environment in their localities. These respondents argued that it was only from elders and at times from the media that they knew that their surroundings used to be covered by forest. So they said it will be inconvenient to comment on a resource which is almost nonexistent currently. A typical mention here is Tensae Hailu a first year student from Sekota area in northern part of the Amhara Region, a place which belongs to the degraded areas of the country. She is 19 and has lived all her life in the place where she was born.

Tensae (from Sekota) *All I know about the environment in my surrounding since my childhood is hilly lands that get green when the rainy season comes and become dry and rocky as it stops raining. How can I tell you whether the forest coverage in my area is improving or diminishing? I saw dense forest for the first time this year when I joined this college [Ardayeta].*

When asked about the situation of the natural resources other than forest, the respondents noted that since all the other resources have direct relations with forest, they too are getting affected in the same manner.

An exception here is the response from Getahun Negussie – a 19 year old first year student from *Guelele sub-city of Addis Ababa*. Unlike other respondents Getahun's environmental concern around his area is air pollution followed by river waters.

Respondents were also asked about what they think are the causes for environmental degradation in their localities. All research participants mentioned lack of proper protection and management of the environment by the government as the main cause. According to the participants the government should enact laws against those who damage the environment and encourage those who rehabilitate and protect the environment. The level of awareness on the part of the public concerning environmental issues is also mentioned by most respondents as an additional cause for environmental degradation. In this regard they underlined on the role of media in raising the public's awareness on environmental problems. Fifty year old Shiferaw Yohannis, a second year student from Dabat Woreda of North Gondar of the Amhara Region, is one who lamentably expresses what he says the 'little attention' given to environmental matters by the Ethiopian media.

Shiferaw (from Dabat) *I don't understand why the media and in particular radio stations are not producing programs on environment alone. Damages to the environment are taking place in rural areas where people have radio sets to listen to. For long I have been working in the Woreda agriculture office which is located 600kilometers north of Addis Ababa before I joined this college last year. By then I have been a regular listener to the radio but didn't know a single program dedicated to environmental matters so far. There was Awede-geter program on Ethiopian Radio that more deals with agricultural issues than*

environmental ones. The one you [the researcher] are studying has a small coverage and couldn't reach the wider rural communities. It was since last year that I started to listen occasionally to Akababi ena lemat. Before that I don't even know whether such a radio program exists.

This view is also shared by a study conducted by Eyob (2006:83) where he finds out that “Radio Ethiopia does not have a single environmental program dedicated to serve farmers as target audiences”

Argaw Ashine who is coordinator of the Environment Media Project at Panos-Ethiopia and who has prior journalism experiences working at Radio Fana says *Akababi ena lemat* is the first and only Radio program entirely dedicated to the coverage of environmental issues.

As to the sources of environmental knowledge student participants of this study mentioned the courses they take in the college to be the main source of environmental information. Only two students who have been working in Woreda agricultural offices before joining the college said that they used to take series of trainings on matters related to environmental protection and had sufficient knowledge before coming to *Ardayeta*. Most respondents described the media, in particular the radio, to be their second source of environmental information while few mentioned school mini-media as their second while placing radio third.

4.4 Media Access, Which Radio, Which Program and When?

The students have access to Television channels through a TV set found in the students' lounge- the only TV set the students are allowed to watch. They attend news and entertainment programs of Ethiopian Television and other free to air channels provided by the *ArabSat*.

Ten student respondents reported that they have no radio set with them. Surprisingly all the seven female students belong to this group making the number of male respondents

with no radio sets only 3. The researcher was curious to know whether the same holds true for the rest female students [the ones not included in the study] and asked the participants whether they know a female student owning a radio set. All including the 7 female^{vi} participants could not think of a female student with a radio set. But this doesn't imply that female students don't listen to radio programs. All female participants said that they will go to the staff lounge where there is a radio with good reception of FM stations and attend the programs they want to listen to.

All student participants said that they mostly attend to Radio followed by television. Regarding the print medium all said that though they have the interest to read newspapers and magazines, they have no way of accessing them and don't attend. Concerning their access to print media this is how a freshman student described.

Getahun (Addis Ababa): *I have now with me copies of three weeklies which I bought in Addis when coming to this college last October. I don't think others have a more recent newspaper. We are almost secluded from the outside world. There is no regular transportation that links us even to Asassa- a very small town 20 kilometers away from here except on Tuesdays- a weekly market day. Even there [Asassa] you don't see any newspaper or magazine circulating. The only things that keep us informed about the outside world are radio and television and may be our mobile phones though there are problems of network.*

As the study is a research on radio reception, respondents were asked to which radio channel they usually tune in and which programs were their favorites. All said that they find it easy to tune and listen clearly to Ethiopian Radio. They also noted that the programs aired on weekends which are mostly entertainment are their favorites. Concerning programs with contents of environmental issues most said they listen to at least one of the bi-weekly *Awede-geter* programs of Ethiopian Radio. This response by the research participants seems to be in conformity with the notion that there are specific audiences for particular media products. (Williams, 2003:199) The fact that they are listening to *Awede-geter* program might be because of their field of study-agriculture. This is also supported by the active audience theory which associates media use and preference with the perceived pleasure, purpose or wishes of the potential audience member. (Mc Quail, 1997:70)

When it comes to FM stations all participants of the study revealed their interest to listen to FM programs. They, however, say it won't be easy to listen to an FM station in Ardayeta College.

Berhane (Boki-Tiko): *Whenever you want to listen to one of the FM radio channels, you have to either walk to a nearby hilly location with your radio set or stretch a longer electric wire that ends at the top of the three storied building to connect it to the antenna of your radio set found in your bed room. I always do one of these things as I have been a regular listener of most programs on FM97.1*

Here it seems important to raise the argument raised by the critics of the Uses and Gratifications Theory saying that people not always attend to certain media with purpose. In their view attending to media might arise from the prominence of the media outlet or people's access to or absence of alternative media outlets. (Williams, 2003:178-179). In the same token the media preferences reported by respondents in this study might be affected by the kind of media outlets available to them.

Other students mentioned the radio in the lounge that has a good reception of FM channels as an alternative. This group however commented that the choice of the channels depends on the interest of the cashiers sitting next to the radio set.

Other radio stations mentioned by respondents include the Voice of America (3 respondents), Radio Fana (2 respondents), FM 102.1 (1 respondent) and BBC World Service (1 respondent).

4.5 Akababi enna Lemat

4.5.1 Who is Listening?

Only 7 of the student respondents said that they attend to *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program on regular basis. Eleven participants said they occasionally listen to the program. The rest 16 participants said that they came to learn about *Akababi-ena-lemat* only when the researcher talked to them.

The seven regular listeners have to either carry their radio sets to a nearby hilly location every Tuesday evening or bear the task of stretching a long conductor from their radio antenna the terrace of the building. Out of these seven regular listeners four^{vii} were attending *Akababi-ena-lemat* because they said they have been listening to the program even before joining the college and could not afford missing whatever the challenge of reception is. The rest three started listening after joining the college.

For the occasional listeners the problem of not having clear reception/signal around the students' residential quarter is described as the main reason for their occasional tuning to FM 97.1 on which *Akababi-ena-lemat* is aired. Moreover these 11 occasional listeners mentioned the airing time of *Akababi-ena-lemat* which is on Tuesdays from 7:00 PM to 7:30 PM as inconvenient for listening. They said had *Akababi-ena-lemat* been a weekend show, they would have attended the program regularly.

The 16 respondents who claimed to have no knowledge of the existence of a program named *Akababi-ena-lemat* along with their respective FGD members were made to listen to sample *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs taken by the researcher to the research location. After listening to the samples they recommended *Akababi-ena-lemat* to be aired on Radio Ethiopia which they argued has a much wider coverage of the country than the FM 97.1 channel so that the rural community could get access to the messages. According to some sources with its medium wave transmission, Radio Ethiopia covers 80% of Ethiopia's landmass.(Gebremedhin,2006:16;Eyob,2006:16) The concern of these respondents [both who listen and don't listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat*] is to enable farmers across the country attend to *Akababi-ena-lemat* which they think is more relevant to rural communities.

Chaletu: *(Borena, Oromiya) The programs we just listened to are more important to farmers in my area and elsewhere in the country than those living in the cities. I don't think the programs are reaching the right listeners.*

Alamine: *(Assosa, Benishangul) While listening to the programs I was thinking of the people in Benishangul. It will be good if the whole farmers of Ethiopia could listen to it. I even recommend the programs to be translated in to other languages land*

aired so that people in rural areas could easily understand them.

The idea of transmitting *Akababi-ena-lemat* on a channel with national coverage is something the producers would like to do. However they said finding an air time on national transmissions are not as easy as the FM ones. They also argue that as the pioneers of the program went in to agreement with the broadcaster to air it on FM97.1, it needs drafting of a new agreement, also the availability of airtime need to be checked. The coordinator underlines that if Panos-Ethiopia has to switch *Akababi-ena-lemat* to a station with a national coverage, it should not commit the same mistake.

Argaw : *We have to conduct a baseline survey about potential target audiences. Then we have to get the airtime that could most suit our target audience. We have to also set the objectives of the program. The problem of trained manpower should be addressed, so that Akababi-ena-lemat can entertain as many voices as possible. I don't think this will be an overnight job. It needs time. I also know from experience that the task of securing an air time on national services wont be easier as the FM ones. It is unusual to see independent producers or NGOs like us airing their own productions on national channels.*

The theory of reception analysis depicts audiences as having the freewill to decide what and when to watch, listen and read a certain media product (Williams, 2003:199). All student respondents suggested that the convenient time for college students to listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat* would be in the mornings of weekends. This view of the students is also supported by their responses to the question which radio programs they usually attend to. The list of their preferences in this case shows most of their preferred programs to be the ones that are aired on weekends. But most of the respondents argued that if *Akababi-ena-lemat* is meant to reach the rural community, the present transmission time should be kept unchanged as it will be convenient to farmer listeners. This is also supported by another study that found out programs transmitted in the morning to be inconvenient to farmer listeners (Eyob, 2006:81). The respondents added the current transmission time will also become convenient to them when they become agricultural professionals after leaving college.

But the owners of the program admit that they have never thought of shifting the transmission time of *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Argaw: *Baseline survey was not conducted on the preference of audiences before launching the program. It was launched with people who have a media background and didn't consider that as important. Even now we are not thinking about that. But what I believe is it won't be easy to find youth listeners during the day time so the options are either mornings or evenings. And weekends are most preferred ones.*

Considering the current signal coverage of FM97.1, Argaw is also of the view that the messages of *Akababi-ena-lemat* don't seem to reach the potential listeners.

Concerning their reaction to the duration of each weekly program, most respondents said 30 minutes is reasonable for them to stay at a place and follow the programs. Some said that they will find it difficult to say 30 minute is too long or short. For this group it is the 'beauty' of the programs that keeps them listening.

Getahun (Addis Ababa): *I may keep on listening to a good program for an hour with out feeling that I have spent so much time. But when it is something boring, it makes me restless with in minutes and I either tune to another station or go out.*

The producer feels the 30 minute duration is long for a program focusing on environmental issues. His effort to air two 15 minutes programs two times a week was aborted previously.

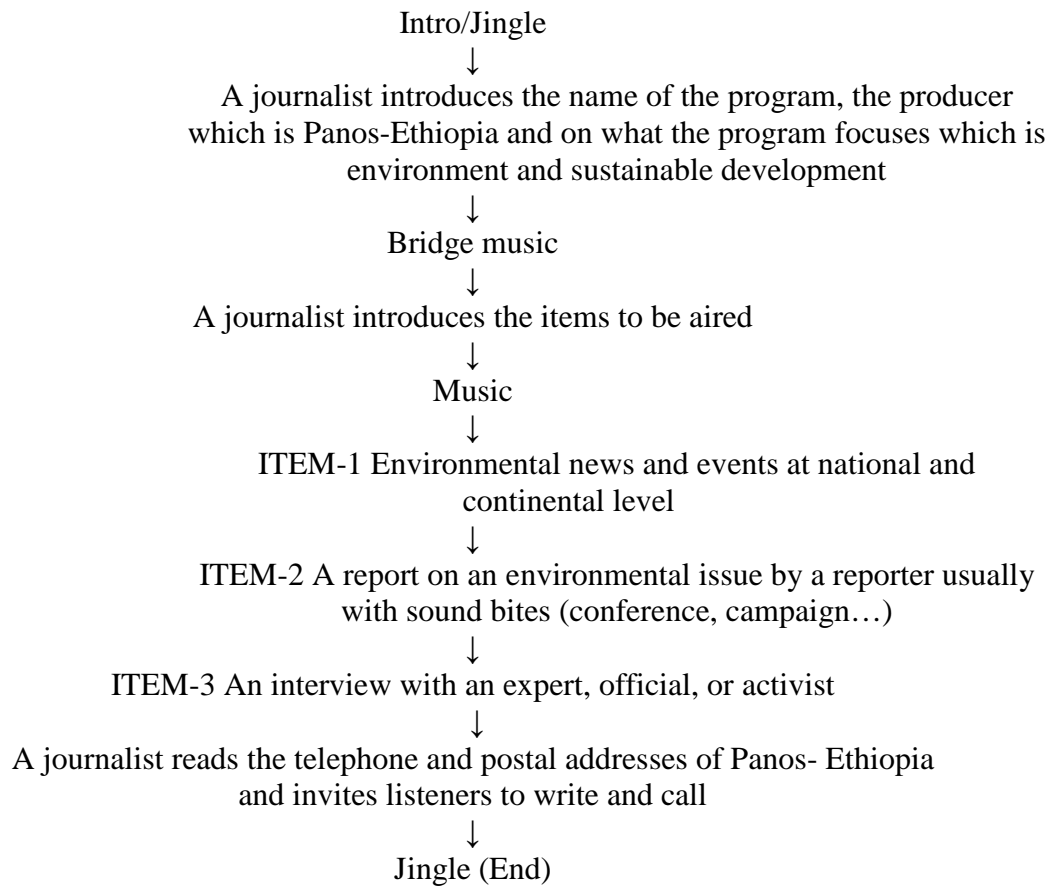
Argaw: *Environment reporting by its nature tends to be boring. We are mostly dealing with hard stuff. You can provide the audience a relatively quality program with variety of issues in 15 minutes. But the broadcaster didn't allow us referring to directives that say 30 minute is the minimum air time one can buy. Actually they have recently decreased it to 20 minutes.*

4.5.2 Content

The in-depth interview sessions the researcher had with the two producers of *Akababi-ena-lemat* revealed that the program entertains various environmental issues that are of concern to urban as well as rural communities.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Akababi-ena-lemat is basically a magazine format program. In most cases the program comprises three packages (items) that usually have the following structure of flow.



In this study content analysis is made to help the researcher conduct fruitful and ‘focused’ dialogue with respondents. (Schroder et al., 2003: 155). It is also out of the conviction that reception studies that give emphasis to the audience also need to look at the content of the media.(Jensen & Jankowski,1991:135) It was with this understanding that the

researcher tried to make a rough examination of *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs transmitted between the months of March and September 2007 which is equivalent to about 18 hours of audio production. A total of 36 programs with 54 packages dealing with various environmental issues were aired.

Thirty of the 54 packages were made of interviews and out of these 25 interviews were ones with experts and officials. The remaining 5 sound bites were of celebrities and youth who are living on transplanting and selling of trees. And only one of the interviewees happened to be a rural community member. He is a man^{viii} from the *Menja* ethnic group of the south regional state.

Out of the 17 Panel discussions aired 15 have parliamentarians, environment officials or experts as panelists. There are no voices of ordinary people. The remaining two discussions were on the prime minister's discussion with representatives of pastoral communities held in Addis Ababa. It seems difficult to consider the appearance of these representatives in *Akababi-ena-lemat* as voices from the grass roots because the delegates are usually elites in their respective areas.

To give a more vivid picture of it 87% of the programs selected for the qualitative content analysis of this study have the voices of experts and officials as inputs while 5.5% goes to the voices of celebrities and ordinary people combined. The rest were entirely commentaries read by journalists that deal with discoveries in environment sciences, information on climate change and the activities of organizations working on environment.

It seems that the programs transmitted during this period have dealt with wide-ranging issues^{ix} of environmental concerns. But issues related to forest and water seem to take more airtime.

Except for some issues that have global and national concerns, most programs have their focus on Addis Ababa.

Respondents' View

Despite the information the researcher had at the beginning that confirmed the existence of a number of audiences in Ardayeta, the fact on the ground proved that only seven regular and 11 occasional listeners to *Akababi-ena-lemat* exist at the time of the data collection. One reason given by research group participants was the existence of more listeners from those in the third year who by this time (April-May 2008) are on their internship assignments in rural localities.

The seven regular listeners claimed that they have found *Akababi-ena-lemat* to be a program that covers various environmental and development issues.

Bereket (Awassa, South) *I just like the variety of the issues they transmit in just one program. In one program they may tell us about deforestation, urban sanitation and recycling of wastes. The other week they may come up with an interview with a scientist about indigenous trees, news on a technology to protect the environment, a conference on water resources. Different issues in a condensed manner.*

Adane (Dahna, Waghemera): *It was since last year that I started listening [Akababi-ena-lemat]. Unlike other radio programs they don't deal with a single subject for long. Instead they make you know about different matters in half an hour.*

To some regular listeners scientific discoveries and studies seem to get much coverage.

Gezahegn (Sebeta, Oromiya): *I'm not sure but for me it is common to listen to the journalists reading articles taken from scientific publications every week.*

Berhanu (Boki-Tiko, West Hararghe)

Most interviews they make are with researchers concerning their findings or other relevant issues. I don't remember hearing, except on one or two occasions, ordinary people talking on Akababi-ena-lemat. Those from rural areas in particular are missing.

Argaw Ashine who is coordinator of the Environment Media Project at Panos-Ethiopia and also producer of *Akababi-ena-lemat* since 2003 shares the view of these listeners saying that the voice of experts is the most used element in *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs.

Argaw: *Out of the sound bites we use, the interviews and presentations of experts are the dominant ones. I agree in principle with the idea of incorporating the voices of others like those at grassroots level but we have problems implementing it.*

According to Argaw the limited resources Panos-Ethiopia has at its disposal is preventing producers to travel, reach rural communities and make their voices heard. Only two journalists including him are involved in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat*, another impediment to reach rural communities, adds Argaw. It seems the fact that the experts in most cases are stationed in Addis Ababa coupled with the minimum cost incurred to reach them makes these professionals the preferred components of *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs.

In each Focus Group the researcher has made participants listen to sample programs. This in particular has enabled those who don't listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat* to be active participants as the listening made it simple to respondents to react to the questions related to the content of the program.

Most respondents said that the messages of the programs are in conformity with what they already know from their life experiences and their schooling. Some also noted that they have gained knowledge from the programs.

Concerning what kind of messages they want to get from of *Akababi-ena-lemat*, most student respondents opted for facts on environmental conditions and success stories of people who have changed their environment for the better.

Addisu (from Sekota, Waghamera):

You may talk about the importance of protecting the environment, how much it is degraded or how to improve it.

But without supporting them with facts, how can the listener trust you?

Tsari (from Oddo-Shakiso, Guji):

I feel good when I hear some one successful talking on the radio about his achievements. Most people like me try to compare themselves with that individual and want to emulate. And this brings change in the minds of listeners.

There are also some students who feel that apprehensive messages about environmental conditions would make listeners to take environmental issues seriously.

Rediet (from Jijiga, Somali):

I don't mean that fictitious messages that make listeners panic need to be transmitted. What I mean is people will give attention when they are told what grave consequences would await them if they are not protecting their environment. And this should be based on evidences.

Berhanu (Makalle, Tigray):

I think it is good to inform people about the consequences of not caring for the environment. There is no point telling the community about deforestation unless you tell them what consequences they will be facing... like famine. Then they will stop cutting trees

Over all it seems the respondents like to listen to people who are closely attached to the issues being aired rather than journalists, experts or officials doing all the talking.

Redeat (Jijiga, Somali):

I want to listen to a farmer who has rehabilitated his environment or speaking how he is affected by the scarcity of grazing land for his cattle.

Abebaw (Gasima, Waghamera):

Farmers speak in all originality. They don't care to articulate. They are honest and tell you what they really feel who ever you are. I like to hear that and I think most farmers want to listen to farmers on the radio.

Language Usage and Interpretation

When conducting radio audience studies, it seems imperative to know whether respondents speak and understand the language used by the radio program under investigation which in this case is *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Akababi-ena-lemat is an Amharic program and the researcher didn't find any respondent having problems understanding Amharic. Out of the 34 respondents 20 have Amharic as their mother tongue while the rest 13 speak Amharic as their second language. (See Annex 1) The fact that *Ardayeta* Agricultural College is run by the Federal Ministry of Rural and Agricultural Development presupposes the students enrolled to be speakers of the official language of the federal government-Amharic. Besides all announcements in the college whether written or via the mini-media are made in Amharic.

To student listeners of *Akababi-ena-lemat* the languages used by the journalists of the program are clear, audible and easy to understand. Asked about their familiarity with newly coined terms that are mentioned on the radio as substitutions to the English terms like biodiversity and population(see Annex), they argued that they face no problem of understanding since these terms are also used in the college. But some raised their concern to other listeners like farmers who have never been to colleges and who might find it difficult to understand the whole context due to the insertion of one or two such terms in a program. The following excerpts from two respondents may be a representative opinion.

Temesgen (from Hareto, East Wollega): *Though Amharic is my second language, I can understand those new terms that are related to agriculture and environment for the only reason that I learnt them in this college. Think of the various illiterate listeners including those that have Amharic as their mother tongue, I don't think they understand them. Even for me if you ask me about other Amharic terms used in health science, I can't understand them.*

Chaltu (from Borena, Ormiya): *Previously when I hear new words on the radio, I start to lose interest. These words were not familiar to me. I*

started to know about the meanings of these words after I joined this college. I know for sure the farmers won't understand these words. I don't even think my friends there [in Borena] who are high school graduates understand these words.

It seems the producers of *Akababi-ena-lemat* acknowledge the concerns of the respondents and add to the list a number of terms which have no equivalents in the Amharic language.

Argaw: *For those terms that have substitutes in Amharic we mention the term first and elaborate on what they imply. But the worst comes when we or the experts have to use a jargon that has no corresponding term in Amharic. Take for example English terms such as bio-fuel, bio-diesel and bio-gas; how can you find an Amharic term for each of them? In such cases the only option we have is to use the English terms as they are and explain immediately what they mean. But concerning terms like bio-diversity, we prefer to use the Amharic one which is "Sine-mehidar" and make explanations. And while working on hazardous chemicals, the expert tells you about the "PH content" and "residue" for which you have no Amharic term so far?*

Scholars in the study of media and audiences argue that producers of 'media texts' may think that they are producing messages with clarity and simplicity but these messages won't be 'simply dumped in to the minds of passive audiences.' What the audiences do according to these scholars is to infer from the media texts various meanings. (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003:267) This view is also supported by the active audience theory which is discussed in chapter two of this study. In the researcher's opinion the producers' use of unfamiliar words and phrases is to affect the interpretation of listeners of *Akababi-ena-lemat*. This might make the audiences to understand the media texts differently from the intention of the producers of *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

According to the producers the problem of mixing English words and phrases as well as jargons are to come in most cases from the interviewees. Argaw relates the cause of this problem to the education of the environmentalist that took place abroad and in foreign languages.

Generally, scholars in broadcast recommend producers to abstain, as far as possible, from using words or phrases that listeners might not understand. The result of inserting such words or phrases will only make audiences lose their focus to the program. In Boyd's words "while they [listeners] are puzzling over its meaning the information that follows will vanish in to the ether" (2001:62)

4.6 Application of Media Message/Information

One respondent from Arsi said he has witnessed hundreds of youth in his town rallying to plant trees after listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat's* programs. He noted that due to a series of programs transmitted on *Akababi-ena-lemat* the youth in *Sire* area were inspired by the messages and organized a tree planting campaign.

Mekonnen (*Sire, Arsi*): *It was a year ago and I was back to my parents [in Sire] for vacation. I saw all my friends engaged in transporting seedlings to fields. They told me that they started preparing holes two months ago. I asked them who is behind the initiative. All told me that the programs aired on Akababi-ena-lemat radio program dealing with the alarming rate of deforestation and the possible methods of rehabilitation. I even participated in the campaign. But to our disgust, the producers of Akababi-ena-lemat didn't come to report despite the series of letters sent by some of our friends to Panos Ethiopia.*

Another respondent cited the behavioral changes he **achieved** as an outcome of *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Berhane: (*Boki-Tiko, West Hararghe*): *Before I joined this college, the source of my knowledge about environmental issues was Akababi-ena-lemat. The program helped me to visualize the idea of environmental protection beyond tree planting activities. I remember a program they once transmitted on drinking water and how the wastages from households affect the whole water supply. And from that time on I started to care for every drop of water.*

Of the regular listeners one was bold enough to say that he has never thought of implementing what he listens on *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Getahun (Addis Ababa): *Honestly speaking, I don't remember a particular activity I performed as a result of a program transmitted on Akababi-ena-lemat. This doesn't mean that I was opposing their teachings or didn't like their program. As I said before, I always like to listen to the program but couldn't remember a time where I did something to implement what they said on the program. By the way is it a must to implement what you listen on the radio? I just take it as a source of information.*

Given the power of audiences as forwarded by proponents of the theory of active audience, it is difficult to assume media as sole sources of change. It however seems reasonable to agree with the view that says “the media are more likely to reinforce than to change” (Servaes, 1999; cited in Eyob, 2006:71). Likewise student respondents said the programs on *Akababi-ena-lemat* have served them as reminders of environmental issues they already know. They also claim that the messages they listen on the radio may inspire them to relate the issue with their environmental situations and act accordingly.

Teshome (Kibremenigist, South): *I didn't actually listen to Akababi-ena-lemat except on two or three occasions in the past. But whether I listened on this program or other programs like on awede-geter^x program of Radio Ethiopia, I just start to think of the realities in my birth place. I try to imagine how the farmers will benefit if they were to follow the teachings of the radio programs.*

Chaltu (Borena, Ormiya): *I am not a listener but if the message is convincing, I think I will be influenced by the messages and perform what they [the media messages] want people to do.*

The researcher was interested to know why, unlike other listeners, the regular listener from Addis Ababa didn't try to implement the messages he was receiving from *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Getahun (Addis Ababa): *If I were someone living in rural localities where there is enough land to conserve, I would have performed that. I was*

living with my parents in a city, where I cannot act independently.

In the researcher's opinion the above response by the research participant is just a showcase of what most participants feel about environmental protection. To the participants, when the issue of environmental protection is raised, the first thing that comes to their mind is the seasonal greening campaigns often organized by some groups including government offices. For them, relating environmental issues with wider level activities like pollution and residential and personal hygiene is far from their experience. One of the producers of *Akababi enna Lemat Girum Belay* mentions a deep rooted outlook on the part of the urban dwellers that associates environmental protection with tree planting as an impediment to his reporting specially when trying to get interviewees.

Girum: *When you tell them [residents of Addis Ababa] that you are working for a radio program that covers issues of environmental protection, they start saying 'what do you get from me, I don't have a plot to plant trees or I am not a farmer?' All they expect is that I am going to ask them about tree planting or farming. There are people who immediately turn off their radio sets upon hearing the word environment at the beginning of Akababi enna Lemat program. They don't think the issues are relevant to their lives. It was only when we recently aired programs on the shortage of water supply in the city that people begun calling and appreciating us.*

The researcher believes it would be difficult to ascribe audiences' supposed implementation of media message as something that comes as a result of the media output alone. This view becomes more valid when one identifies that the audiences have other important sources of information which in this case is respondents' lessons from class. In conjunction with the discussion put in chapter two of this study, it is important to consider the media as "influences working amid other influences, in a total situation" (Kapper, 1960; cited in Ruddock, 2001:40).

All respondents agree on the importance of the relevant messages they receive from media outlets in reinforcing the knowledge they acquire in the college. The respondents added the messages will in turn be taken by them to the farmers where they are going to meet and work with.

4.7 Relevance

It is worth mentioning here that of the 34 respondents only three have their background from non-agricultural families. Also four of the respondents are employees of Woreda (local) Agricultural offices.

The four regular listeners of *Akababi-ena-lemat* who reported attendance to the program before coming to Ardayeta argued that *Akababi-ena-lemat* became more relevant to them after becoming students of agriculture.

Gezahegn (*Sebeta, Oromiya*): *Almost all issues aired on the program have got some relations with the courses we take at least in the common courses.*

Getahun (*Addis Ababa*): *The idea of becoming a student of agriculture has never crossed my mind before. But I don't know I was listening to this program for long. And up on joining this college the first thing I did was to check whether I can listen to FM 97.1 on my radio receiver. Because I knew that I am now in a place where Akababi-ena-lemat will be more relevant to me than ever.*

Mekonnen (*Sire, Arsi*): *While in Sire I used to listen to FM 97.1 being in any place I like. But here you have to change your place or extend a wire from the antenna. I may do this on other days to listen to music but on Tuesdays I have to I have to tune in to FM 97.1 by any means. I don't think I will do this to get a signal, if I were a student of engineering.*

The rest three regular listeners who started attending to *Akababi-ena-lemat* after they came to Ardayeta claim that it is the relevance of the issues transmitted on the program to their lives back home and in the college that keeps them listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

To the 11 occasional listeners the contents of *Akababi-ena-lemat* have some correspondence with their lives. Shiferaw Yohannes is a second year student from North Gondar and has 20 years of experience working with farmers. He came to listen to the program for the first time in his friends' room accidentally.

Shiferaw (Dabat, North Gondar): *I just walked in to say hi. And the radio was on, though no one seemed to listen. I sat and listened. It was all about the issues that I knew. I couldn't manage to attend Akababi-ena-lemat for many occasions after that. The 4 or 5 times I listened proved that they are relevant to me in particular.*

Following their listening to sample programs, one of the questions posed to research participants was whether they find the programs to be relevant to their lives. All responded that the programs have messages which appeal to them as students of agricultural college.

All listeners (both regular and occasional) have admitted that they usually find the lessons they got from their teachers to be in conformity with what they hear on *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Getahun (Addis Ababa): *I remember the program I heard on Akababi-ena-lemat last year. It was on bio-gas and bio-fuel. That was my first information on the matter. Then I was admitted to this college and our teacher in our first semester class told us the same thing though this time in detail. I don't know why but it felt good.*

4.8 Environment reporting at Panos-Ethiopia

The need to assess the situations at Panos-Ethiopia where the media outputs of *Akababi-ena-lemat* are produced arose from the requirements of reception studies. Mass communication experts like Baran and Davis (2006:276) warn researchers involved in reception studies not to make their own statements about encoding or decoding but rather

to meticulously examine the situations in which the media messages are produced as much as the audiences.

Panos-Ethiopia's Environment Media Project was launched in November 2002 by a group of people who were participants of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in South Africa. As none of these individuals have media background they did not come up with a clear understanding as what will be the target audience of *Akababi-ena-lemat*. (Interview with Argaw: Coordinator of the Environment Media Project at Panos-Ethiopia and producer of *Akababi-ena-lemat*). What the founders have set at that time was designing the goal of the radio program which according to the Article of Memorandum is "to create ecological sensitive and conscious society"

It was in the year 2005 that the producers began to have a clear objective and target audience. According to Argaw public awareness creation about environmental issues among the community and in particular the youth became the objective of *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program since that time on. To Argaw, though he still admits the presence of confusion as who belongs to the target group, professionals working on environmental issues, students of agriculture and Development Agents make the main part of the target audience.

In the early days of *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs were produced sticking to the annual plan designed at the beginning of each year. This plan was produced based on thematic areas which are divided in to ecological issues such as water, forest and soil. According to Argaw strictly following the annual plan has eventually proved to result in the transmission of programs that are unattractive and 'full of rhetoric with rare human element'. After 2005 it seems the producers have began to be flexible and started to cover wide ranging issues including topical ones. A rough examination of the programs transmitted in 2007 shows that other than the subjects listed in the annual plan, topical issues as well as those done with the initiative of the producers have taken fair share of the programs.

Currently two producers and one sound technician/editor make the production team of *Akababi-ena-lemat*. Every week the producers are expected to come up with at least a report not exceeding 10 minutes, and have to compile environmental news and events for the 5 minutes package which usually comes at the beginning of the program. This covers both national and Africa wide issues. One article taken from an environmental magazine or a website will also be read in the weekly program. They are also to conduct an interview or discussions as needed.

The two producers say that they have no regular editorial meetings. But the final say as far as content is concerned lies in the hands of the coordinator (Interview with Argaw and Girum) who is also a producer. The other producer is free to propose any idea he thinks will be part of *Akababi-ena-lemat* and discuss with the coordinator. (Interview with Girum)

Since the end of 2007 an editorial advisory board was established to support and direct the works of journalists working on *Akababi-ena-lemat*. This board was composed of representatives from academic, environmental organizations as well as activists.

Argaw: *Though the contribution is limited; the board members in some case have helped us see the issues we cover from different angles and take their inputs. The members were even instrumental in finding us resource persons. Actually they were supposed to meet every month but this is not happening as they have their own commitments.*

4.8.1 Skills/Education of Journalists

At the time of this study there are only two journalists working on *Akababi-ena-lemat*. One of the producers who is also working as Media Program Coordinator^{xi} at Panos-Ethiopia, has diploma in Radio Journalism, a BA degree in Development Studies and now a post graduate student in Development Studies. Prior to joining Panos-Ethiopia in August 2003, he has been a radio journalist for six years. Concerning trainings he says he

has received a 2-weeks intensive training on environment reporting in Kenya. Argaw noted that the training which was provided by Reuters Foundation has helped him raise his reporting skills. Other than this he says he has never received any training and does not believe there is any on environment in Ethiopia.

Argaw: *You might have heard about environment training workshop organized for journalists working for such and such media, but they all are briefings on issues of environment. If you go there you will get the journalists being trained along with a conservation expert or an environment impact assessment professional. The trainings are not well tailored in manners that try to answer the questions of journalists such as how to report on environment. There has never been training on environment reporting in this country.*

Asked about why there are no initiatives to train journalists working on environment, Argaw associated it with what he said the little attention given to environmental issues which is manifested in resource allocation to the sector.

Argaw: *If you ask me which sector is now dominating in the availability of trainings HIV reporting leads all followed by gender. This has to do with the abundant resources available to the sectors and the number of bodies making interventions.*

The other producer has his 12+2 level diploma in journalism from a private college which is no more operational at the moment. He has worked for a year as a reporter/producer on *Akababi-ena-lemat*. He admits that except his schooling he has no journalism experience before joining *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

Girum : *I learnt all about reporting working at Panos . At the time I get employed here, the whole nation was on the millennium campaign of planting trees and I was mostly covering that. Of course I take orientations from the producers before going to locations.*

Both producers are of the opinion that absence of tailored trainings on environment reporting is affecting their performances. All they are doing is reporting environmental issues in the way that other issues are reported.

4.8.2 Relations With the Broadcaster(Radio Ethiopia)

The broadcaster-Radio Ethiopia- holds the authority to suspend or cut the contents of a program supplied by Panos-Ethiopia. The Media Coordinator mentions three occasions where already produced *Akababi-ena-lemat* programs have faced suspension.

Argaw: *We conducted a panel discussion on food security and water resources of Ethiopia. The whole theme was about answering the question why Ethiopia became food insecure while at the same time holding the nick name ‘The Water Tower of Africa’. There were hydrologists and other pertinent professionals as participants. The panelists finally associated the problem with the policies which they said promote household food security as opposed to the one that used to be implemented by the former regime. After listening to the program, the person in charge told me that it will not be aired as it is against the editorial policy of the station.*

Researcher: *Did you produce the program with out consulting the editorial policy of Radio Ethiopia?*

Argaw: *I already know the editorial policy. There is no statement that prohibits the transmission of programs critical of policies. The thing is it depends on who is the person in charge. Though I don’t right now remember the content of the program we had a program aired that was very critical of government policy. You know it was another official.*

Argaw also cites another case where part of the *Akababi-ena-lemat* program was made not be on air due to reasons that have nothing to do with the editorial policy of the station.

Argaw: *The flourishing flower industry was talk of the town. And at the same time there were rumors that the chemicals used in the green houses are affecting the health of employees. We followed this story and managed to be in the farms where we meet victims. We recorded their testimonies and came up with a program. We also included in the program the fact that government ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture and Customs Office responsible for monitoring the entry of hazardous chemicals. But men at Radio Ethiopia told us to cut that story out. And their reason is simply –the program discourages investment flow to Ethiopia.*

Another challenge faced by the producers of *Akababi-ena-lemat* is the attitude journalists and officials in government media have towards issues of environment.

Argaw: *Working on environmental issues is considered as a low profile task among journalists themselves. Hosting music shows is taken as a more skillful task than environmental reporting. I at times ask myself do the practitioners know what*

the government development policy says? The Ethiopian government is preaching agricultural led industrialization. Paradoxically government media bosses do not consider environment reporting as an important component of development. To them talking about environment is boring.

It is interesting to note here what the editorial policy of the Ethiopian state owned media (2002) says. In general government media outlets have three responsibilities; namely : to introduce and explain policies, strategies and activities of the government, to be medium for the active involvement of the public in the development and democratization of the country and to serve political parties working in line with the law and in a peaceful manner.

Out of the resources allocated to the environment media project, more than half goes to the broadcaster as an air-time fee. To Panos this is unfair since Radio Ethiopia is allowing air time for free to other shows like music.

Argaw: *The regular music shows are on air for free. They even make money. Sixty percent of the income from the promotions aired on music shows will go Radio while the producers of the show take the rest forty percent. And we are paying money to create awareness about environment and development among the public.*

4.9 General Rating by Research Participants

In every Focus Group discussions as well as in-depth interviews of this study listening to sample programs followed by questions has been the last part of the sessions. And the last question of all was “If you were to evaluate *Akababi-ena-lemat* Radio program, *where do you put it and why?*” (See Annex 2C)

Almost all respondents gave it ‘excellent’ and ‘very good’ marks. All the regular and occasional listeners said they believed that the program will be a very important program to farmers as it has been for them.

The 16 respondents who don't listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat* said that they rate the program as 'excellent' and 'very good' because they have not listened to a program that is relevant to their lives and professional carrier and think that they will start listening in the future.

It must be noted here that all(listeners and non-listeners of *Akababi-ena-lemat*) have once again mentioned their concern on the limited coverage of the radio channel *Akababi-ena-lemat* program is using and recommended to be on either Radio Ethiopia's or Radio Fana's national broadcast so that more rural communities have the opportunity of listening to it.

Conclusion

In this chapter I did make an attempt to present and interpret the reaction of research participants to set of questions concerning *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program. Inline with the research questions and objectives of this study, the findings and interpretations were presented categorized under thematic areas. Results of the interpretation are found to be inconformity with the basic tenets of the theory of active audience which were also adopted as the theoretical foundation of this study. In other words, the respondents do not display homogeneity in their reception of messages of *Akababi enna Lemat* radio program; they rather develop meaning by actively relating to their lived experiences and social settings. And out of the discussion in this chapter, conclusions and recommendations are made in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research has tried to make its enquiry as how listeners of *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program react to the messages of the program thereby evaluating the effectiveness of the program itself. It is also worth reminding here that whenever answering research questions, most respondents tend to consider farmers or the localities they came from.

It seems plausible to generalize from the reaction of research participants– students of Ardayeta Agricultural College- that *Akababi-ena-lemat* is a program that appeals to students of agriculture and farmers. The majority of the respondents belong to those who don't listen¹ followed by who listen occasionally². The factor for their not tuning in to FM 97.1 seems to be the bad signal in the *Ardayeta* college compound. Also the fact that most have come from areas with no access to FM transmissions has limited their information about FM programs. The fact that most respondents are listening to at least one of the bi-weekly programs on environment and agriculture aired on the national radio implies their interest in environmental programs.

As indicate in chapter one of this study the number one victims of environmental degradation in Ethiopia are farmers (Daniel, 1998:56). And despite their differing listening behaviors towards *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio environmental program, all respondents want the program to reach all rural communities across the nation - places

¹ 47.1% of the research participants

² 32.4% of the research participants

where they will also be stationed after graduation. This makes the need to air *Akababi-ena-lemat* in rural communities important.

Only 7 out of the 34 respondents listen attentively to *Akababi-ena-lemat* though there are additional 11 listeners who occasionally tune in to the program. The majority of the respondents who don't listen to the program have shown interest to attend after listening to the sample programs. But the problem of getting good signal has become a barrier to those who need to attend. The respondents would like to attend to *Akababi-ena-lemat* in the future, provided there is a good signal in their places of work and residence.

It is the signal strength of Radio Ethiopia's national service that made respondents tune more in to it. And on the contrary it is mostly the weak signal of the channel FM 97.1 that discouraged most from attending *Akababi-ena-lemat*.

The research participants have their college education as the main source of their environmental knowledge followed by the media in particular the radio. All respondents however agree on the insignificant attention paid by the media to the coverage of environmental issues.

Irrespective to the environmental situations the respondents belong to, most have rated forest resources to be the most dwindling natural resources. Surprisingly more pessimistic views about the future of the environment were aired by those who came from areas with relatively better forest coverage. It may be because they are witnessing the destruction of natural resources unlike those from degraded areas that couldn't easily observe the physical dimension of the damage.

Most respondents have agreed lack of proper management and protection of the environment by the government as the main cause of environmental degradation. All respondents reported that media have the power to create awareness about environmental protection saying that the country's media outlets that could reach the majority rural community have failed to provide that service.

To the research participants the day and time of transmission of *Akababi-ena-lemat* (Tuesdays from 7:00 -7:30 PM) is inconvenient with their activities. But they considered it to be the right time of the day if farmers are to listen to it.

All respondents have identified themselves with the contents of *Akababi-ena-lemat*. They said the program appeals to their carriers as agricultural professionals and their lived experiences as most of them are individuals coming from farming families. It also seems that *Akababi-ena-lemat* is effective in its coverage of wide-ranging environmental issues.

The production of *Akababi-ena-lemat* has very much relied on inputs from experts and academicians which will be of less interest to the illiterate section of the community. And most issues aired on the program were found to be the ones associated with events in Addis Ababa. As the producers argued most feedbacks come from people working on environment that shows the low level of participation on the side of listeners from the grassroots. Most respondents said they would like to listen to the voices of ordinary people though they consider professionals' voice as an important component.

The idea endorsed by the theory of active audience that considers the effect of media messages as something happening and working along a host of influences (Williams, 2003:135) seems to prove right in this study. The study shows the difficulty of considering *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program as the only factor for the attitudinal changes respondents claimed to have. Only few respondents admitted that they have applied the messages they received from *Akababi-ena-lemat*, and all have acknowledged the program's role in reinforcing their environmental knowledge and educating the farmers.

According to the program producers the target audiences of *Akababi-ena-lemat* are the youth. But most feedbacks are coming from either experts who want to offer more

explanations on transmitted subjects or individuals interested in environment who want to know more about an issue. Feedbacks from the youth are at a lower level. This seems to be related with the frequent appearance of experts and officials in *Akababi-ena-lemat* which might discourage the youth to participate.

The theory of active audience suggests that audiences are entitled to construct meanings either in the same way as intended by the producers or differently from the producers' intention. And one of the factors affecting this relationship is the producer's "craftsmanship" (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 267) The problem of using jargons and newly coined Amharic terms by interviewees and journalists is felt by respondents and the producers of *Akababi-ena-lemat* alike. The difficulty to understand will be serious when it comes to farmers who in most cases are alien to such terms.

5.2 Recommendations

Most of the current development challenges of Ethiopia have their roots in degradation of the environment. And *Akababi-ena-lemat* is a radio program that aims at creating "ecological sensitive and conscious society". The Environmental Policy of Ethiopia has clearly identified the role played by the media in raising environmental awareness. Again the state broadcaster—Radio Ethiopia— is given the responsibility of popularizing government policies among the public. Helping the already produced messages of *Akababi-ena-lemat* reach the wider public will among others allow Radio Ethiopia do its most important task.

The results of this study indicate that *Akababi-ena-lemat* is the only environment focused radio program to date that has relevance to agriculture professionals and rural communities. It is thus suggested to move *Akababi-ena-lemat* to a national channel to reach significant part of the public. But the decision to switch need to come after addressing at least the following issues:

- identify the right broadcaster(at the moment Radio Ethiopia and Radio *Fana*) concerning the issue of editorial policies, concern for environmental issues and airtime fees
- recruit trained and committed environmental journalists
- conduct a study on potential audiences
- check the availability of airtime that is inline with the findings and recommendations of the study

The current broadcaster (Radio Ethiopia) and the producer of *Akababi-ena-lemat* (Panos-Ethiopia) have to work on establishing smooth relationships based on mutual understanding. It would be beneficial for the parties to craft and agree on a contract that also guides the program contents of *Akababi-ena-lemat*, of course based on the editorial policy of Radio Ethiopia.

The findings of this study also suggest that the program has to incorporate the voices of people at grass roots who have direct attachments with environmental issues raised by *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program.

The producers need to develop a method to popularize newly coined Amharic words as well as foreign terms of environment science that have no equivalent terms in Amharic to the audience before using them. The producers need to always explain the newly coined terms and jargons immediately after mentioning them. Concerning interviewees, before every interview the producers have to remind the experts that their listeners are people who mostly understand Amharic. It is also recommended that journalists in consultation with professionals working on environment have to come up with a style book for environmental reporting.

It is also in the interest of this study that a more comprehensive research based on quantitative inquiries be made on audiences of *Akababi-ena-lemat* to be able to come up with results that can be more representative of the general audience of the program.

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APPENDICES

ANNEX 1: List of Research Participants

Second Year Students from Degraded Areas

No	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Residence	Mother Tongue	Akababi ena Lemat
1	Shiferaw Yohannes Lesanework*	Male	50	North Gondar , Dabat Woreda, Amhara Region	Amharic	Occasional
2	Fekadu Negussie	Male	20	Semada Woreda, Amhara Region	Amharic	Don't listen
3	Sisay Mekonnen	Male	19	Dabat Woreda, Amhara Region	Amharic	Don't listen
4	Addisu Hussien	Male	46	Sekota, Waghumera Zone Amhara Region	Amharic	Occasional
5	Adane Getahun	Male	23	Dahna Woreda, Waghumera Zone, Amhara Region	Amharic	Don't listen
6	Abeje Demessie	Male	21	Debre Tabor, South Gondar Zone, Amhara Region	Amharic	Occasional
7	Abebaw Desalegn	Male	19	Gasima Woreda, Waghumera Zone, Amhara Region	Amharic	Regular

First Year Students from degraded Areas

No	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Residence	Mother Tongue	Second Language	Akababi ena Lemat
1	Redeat kifle	Female	20	Jijiga, Somali Region	Amharic		Don't listen
2	Tensae Hailu	Female	19	Sekota, Amhara Region	Amharic		Occasional
3	Senayet Abera	Female	19	Methara, Fentale Woreda, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Don't listen
4	Chaltu Kefiyalew	Female	19	Borena Zone, Oromiyaa Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Don't listen
5	Miko Dinku	Male	26	Asha Woreda, Somali region	Amharic		Occasional
6	Nure Zein	Male	19	Awash	Amharic		Occasional
7	Berhanu Berhe	Male	19	Makalle, Tigray	Tigrigna	Amharic	Don't listen

8	Chaoul Kong	Male	21	Gambella	<i>Nue'er</i>	Amharic	Don't listen
9	Getahun Demmise*	Male	19	Guelele sub-city, Addis Ababa	Amharic		Regular

Second Year Students from Fertile Areas

No	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Residence	Mother Tongue	Second Language	<i>Akababi ena Lemat</i>
1	Berhane Fekadu	Male	19	Boki Tiko, West Hararghe, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Regular
2	Temesgen Mamo	Male	20	Hareto, East Wollega, Oromiya	Oromiffa	Amharic	Occasional
3	Berhanu Mesele	Male	35	Boto, Gamu Gofa Zone, South Region	Amharic		Regular
4	Teshome Aberu	Male	34	Kibrengist, Guji Zone, Oromiya Regional	Amharic		Occasional
5	Tirualem Tadelle	Female	19	Gambella	Ormiffa	Amharic	Don't listen
6	Aleganesh Kassahun*	Female	22	Gechi Woreda, Illubabor Zone, Ormiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Occasional
7	Gezahegn Bushura	Male	20	Sebeta Woreda, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Regular
8	Tsari Bedecha	Male	29	Oddo-Shakiso Woreda, Guji Zone, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Don't listen
9	Alamine Suleyman	Male	22	Assosa, Benishangul Region	Arabic	Amharic	Don't listen
10	Mekonnen Beyene*	Male	19	Sire Woreda, ,Arsi Zone, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Regular

First Year Students from fertile Areas

No	Name	Sex	Age	Place of Residence	Mother Tongue	Second Language	<i>Akababi ena Lemat</i>
1	Jafar Abdulahi	Male	20	Harar, Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Regular
2	Agmas Ayehu	Male	20	South Wolo Zone, Amhara Region	Amharic		Don't listen
3	Bereket Kelil*	Male	19	Awassa, South Region	Amharic		Regular
4	Andarge Akloke		19	Fogera, South Gondar	Amharic		Don't listen
5	Alemayehu Girma	Male	19	West Harerghe Zone	Amharic		Occasional
6	Rahel Belete	Female	19	Arbaminch, South Region	Amharic		Occasional
7	Wondesha Mosisa	Male	21	Jimma , Oromiya Region	Oromiffa	Amharic	Don't listen
8	Arebu Nura	Male	19	West Hararghe, Oromiya	Amharic		Don't listen

*These are students selected for in-depth interview sessions

Journalists

No	Name	Sex	Years of Service at Panos	Responsibility	Educational Status
1	Argaw Ashine	Male	8 years (Since 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Media Program Coordinator at Panos Ethiopia including Environment Media Project ➤ Producer of <i>Akababi-ena-lemat</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diploma in Radio Journalism ➤ BA Degree in Development Studies ➤ prospective post-graduate student in development studies
2	Girum Belay	Male	One Year(Since May 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reporter / producer of <i>Akababi-ena-lemat</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diploma in Journalism (10+2)

ANNEX 2a: Interview guide for FGD and In-depth Interview with students

Part 1: Biographical Information

1. Name/Code_____
2. Age_____
3. Gender_____
4. Year in College_____
5. Place of residence_____
6. Status of Amharic :
 - a, Mother tongue
 - b, 2nd language
 - c, 3rd language

Part 2: Knowledge of local Environmental Issues

1. Which part of the environment is more affected in your area?
(*list them in sequence*):
 - a, soil
 - b, forest
 - c, water
 - d, air
2. Why do you think the above component/s of the environment is/are affected?
3. How does the status of these components affect your life?
4. What will be the future of the environment in your locality? Will it improve or get worse?
5. What solutions do you suggest to environmental degradation? (E.g. Prayers, better management, policy, more media work...)

Part 3: Access to media and use

1. How is your access to the media?
 - a, Radio
 - b, TV
 - c, print media
2. Which programs/ columns do you attend often?
3. How do you get information about environmental issues?

Part 4: FM 97.1 Radio and *Akababi ena Lemat* Program

1. Whose radio do you usually listen to?
 - a, your own radio
 - b, friend's radio
 - c, college's radio
 - d, Other_____
2. When did you start listening to FM 97.1?
3. How often do you listen to FM 97.1?
 - a, almost daily
 - b, about 2/3 days a week
 - c, once a week
 - d, other_____
4. Which radio programs are your favorites? (*list them in order of importance*)
 - a, environment
 - b, sport
 - c, health
 - d, news
 - e, other_____
5. What are your main reasons for the above priority
6. Do you listen to the *Akababi-ena-lemat* Radio Program?
 - a, Yes
 - b, No
7. If you are listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat* program, who is the owner (producing agency) of the program?
8. What comes first to your mind when you think of *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program?
9. Why are you listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat* program?
10. How often do you listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat*?
 - a, regularly
 - b, not regularly
11. When did you start listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat*?
12. How do you use *Akababi-ena-lemat* program?
 - a, as a source of entertainment
 - b, as a source of information and news
 - c, as any other radio program
 - d, don't know
13. What features of the program interest you most and make the program particularly relevant to you? Why? (*Could be more than one answer*)
14. How are your needs met in the radio program (refers to the issues you think were made particularly for you)?
15. What do the programs lack/miss to meet your demands, (if they do)?

16. In what condition are you listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat*? (*While studying, eating, sitting in your room...?*)
17. Was there a time where you decided to stop listening to *Akababi-ena-lemat* program?
 - a, Yes b, No
18. If your answer to the above question is yes, what were your reasons?
 - a, the broadcast time is inconvenient with your own activity
 - b, overlap of the program with other program(radio or TV) c, Irrelevance of the program to personal activity(interest)
 - d, other _____
19. Is the bi-weekly *Akababi-ena-lemat* programming enough? For how many days a week do you like to listen to *Akababi-ena-lemat* program?
20. What is your reaction to the duration of *Akababi-ena-lemat* program? Should it be extended (longer than the current) or reduced (shorter than its current duration)?
21. Are you comfortable with the timing of the program contents? (Are they compatible with the seasons/farming calendars of farmers ...?)
22. Are there any programs that inspired you? Can you try to remember one or more programs?
23. Which issues do you think have got more coverage on *Akababi-ena-lemat* program? (*List in your own sequence*)
 - a, water & irrigation b, soil c, agriculture d, forest e, other _____
24. How relevant are the above issues to the environmental realities of your locality?
25. How easily/clearly do you understand the language/words used by the journalists and interviewees (experts, farmers...)?
26. Whose language do you understand better: the journalists' or the interviewee's?
27. Among the interviewees whom do you find easy to understand: Professionals/experts or farmers?

28. To what degree do you think has the *Akababi-ena-lemat* program helped you know the causes and solutions for some of your environmental issues?
29. Have you ever heard from your teachers what you have heard from the radio program?
30. If your answer to the above question is “YES” , then What do you feel when you hear again the same issue (aired on radio) from your teachers?

31. Does the content of the *Akababi-ena-lemat* program conform to what your teachers and other professionals telling you?
32. 32. Do you discuss the issues raised by the *Akababi-ena-lemat* program with your friends or teachers? If so, how often?
33. Have you ever tried to put into practice the information you have got from the program? (E.g. stopped cutting trees, planted trees, construct terraces...)
34. How do you generally evaluate the coverage of environmental issues on *Akababi-ena-lemat* program?

ANNEX 2b: Interview Guide for all FGDs on Interpretation of Messages (after listening to two sample programs)

1. What are the programs about?
2. What meaning did you make after listening to the programs? Why?
3. Were they interesting to you? Why?
4. Are they in conformity with what you already know?
5. How does each program appeal to your own life experience as a human being and as an agricultural college student/ a farmer/ an extension worker?
6. To whom do you think the programs need to be presented? Why?
7. What kind of messages do you want to get from the programs on *Akababi-ena-lemat*? (*Facts, people's experience, educative, entertaining, apprehensive messages...*)
8. If you were to evaluate *Akababi-ena-lemat* radio program, where do you put it and why?
 - a, excellent
 - b, very good
 - c, goodd, fair
 - , poor

ANNEX 3a: Guide for In-depth Interview with the coordinator/producer of *Akababi-ena-lemat*

I. PART ONE

1. Name _____
2. Position _____
3. Responsibility in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat* _____
4. Educational background _____

II. PART TWO

1. For how long have you been involved in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat*
2. When and how did you start airing *Akababi-ena-lemat* on FM 97.1? What were its objectives?
3. How do you get program ideas?
4. Are the issues nation wide or do you focus on specific areas of the nation?
5. What are the sources of the commentaries/scripts you read on *Akababi-ena-lemat*? Do you edit scripts/stories you take from other sources (newspapers, magazines, websites...) so that they can appeal to radio audience?
6. Do you use newly coined *Amharic* words/terms (such as *sine-mehedar*¹, *sine-tewaldo*¹, *sine-hizb*¹...) in your commentaries?
7. Do you edit interviews you have had with experts that use English words and terms?
8. Do you make efforts to have sound bites of farmers? How do you balance farmers' voice with that of professionals?
9. What format do you commonly use while producing *Akababi-ena-lemat* (*prioritize if you are using more than one format*)
 - a, Lecture /straight talk b, interviews/discussions
 - c, drama d, music e, jingles/slogans f, feature
 - g, magazine (containing a number of issues in the form of interviews, music, straight talk...)
 - h, infotainment

10. Do you think the issues you raise relate to the reality of the society?
11. Have you ever thought of changing the transmission time of *Akababi-ena-lemat*? Why?
12. Are there plans to air *Akababi-ena-lemat* more than once a week or to increase or decrease the duration? If there are, how did the idea come?
13. How do you get feedback about *Akababi-ena-lemat*?
14. What kind of comments do you get?
15. How many letters do you get on average weekly?
16. What kinds of messages are sent via letters?
17. Are there specialist environmental journalists or beats in your institution?
18. In which part of the country do you have more listeners?
19. If you are one who is not trained in the fields of environment/ agriculture or related areas, what challenges are you facing in doing programs on environmental issues?
20. Have you ever received media related trainings? And in particular on environmental reporting?
21. Do you think lack(if there is any) of training on the field affecting the performance of your producers?
22. Who decides the contents of *Akababi-ena-lemat*?
23. Has the owner of the station (Radio Ethiopia) editorial power/right over your productions? Are there cases where you were forced to drop an already produced program/s as a result of exercising this 'editorial power/right'? Please mention.
24. Any challenges you are facing in dealing with the Ethiopian Radio?
25. Has there been any assessment such as audience research concerning *Akababi-ena-lemat*?

ANNEX 3b: Guide for In-depth Interview with the producer of *Akababi-ena-lemat*

I. PART ONE

1. Name _____
2. position _____
3. Responsibility in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat* _____
4. Educational background _____

II. PART TWO

1. For how long have you been involved in the production of *Akababi-ena-lemat*
 2. How do you get program ideas?
 3. Are the issues nation wide or do you focus on specific areas of the nation?
 4. What are the sources of the commentaries/scripts you read on *Akababi-ena-lemat*? Do you edit scripts/stories you take from other sources (newspapers, magazines, websites...) so that they can appeal to radio audience?
 5. Do you use newly coined *Amharic* words/terms (such as *sine-mehedar¹*, *sine-tewaldo¹*, *sine-hizb¹*...) in your commentaries?
 6. Do you edit interviewees you have with experts that use English words and terms?
 7. Do you make efforts to have sound bites of farmers? How do you balance farmers' voice with that of professionals?
 8. How do you get feedback about the programs you produce from the audience?
 9. What kind of comments do you mostly get?
 10. In which part of the country do you have more listeners?
 11. If you are one who is not trained in the fields of environment/ agriculture or related areas, what challenges are you facing in doing programs on environmental issues?
- Have you ever received media related trainings? And in particular on environmental reporting?(Please specify)

ANNEX 4: Focus Groups in Session (partial view)

First year students from degraded areas



2nd year students from degraded areas



2nd years students from relatively fertile areas



1st year students from relatively fertile areas





END NOTES

ⁱ The research location of this study is *Ardayeta Agricultural College* in Arsi around 305 KM south east of Addis Ababa. On his way to Ardayeta the researcher had the opportunity to visit roadside towns where residents are listening to programs aired on FM stations based in Addis Ababa.

ⁱⁱ <<http://clewebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/totosycv.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Third Year students are the ones expected to pass their final year before graduation being engaged in practical assignments in rural localities. So this study doesn't incorporate third year students as research participant.

^{iv} Twenty Five Years of Fact About Ardayeta, (A pamphlet Published by the Research and Publications Department of Ardayeta Agricultural College)

^v There are 1219 students in the first and second years out of which females are 214.

^{vi} All female students live in one apartment. In the researcher's opinion the 7 female participants have the advantage to know if there are any colleagues tuning to a radio channel.

^{vii} These are students who came from localities in Addis Ababa, Sebeta, Arsi and West Hararghe where FM channels are popular.

^{viii} This program aired on May1, 2007 featured how community based forest protection and rehabilitation is working in the *Menja* ethnic community. The guy interviewed was a scout on assignment to protect encroachment by others.

^{ix} The programs deal with clean up campaigns, bio-fuel, tree-planting, genetic engineering, indigenous knowledge in environmental protection, alternative energy sources, overgrazing, urban agriculture and food security, impact of pesticides, rivers and lakes, waste disposal and river pollution, surface and ground water resources, awards to environment activists, pastoralist communities, climate change, desertification

^x It is a bi-weekly radio program aired on the national service of Radio Ethiopia focusing on agriculture and environment

^{xi} There are three radio programs produced by this Media Program Division of Panos –Ethiopia; namely *Akababi ena Lemat* (on environment), *Mestawet* (on HIV) and *Yehewanua Dimtse* (on Gender).