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**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC
RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
TOWARDS CONSENSUS BUILDING: BURAYU CITY, OROMIA
REGIONAL STATE**

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**A Thesis submitted to School of Journalism and Communications in partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Public Relations
and Strategic Communication (Journalism and Communication)**

**June 2019
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia**

**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
TOWARDS CONSENSUS BUILDING: BURAYU CITY, OROMIA
REGIONAL STATE**

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**June 2019
Addis Ababa
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DECLARATION

By my signature below, I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university. I tried my level best to follow ethical principles throughout the work of this thesis and all source of materials used for this study have been duly acknowledged.

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Date: _____

APPROVAL

***Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communications;
Public Relations and Strategic Communication***

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Amenu Bekele Atomsa, entitled: ***“Government Relations and Strategic Communication towards Consensus Building: Oromia Regional State, Burayu City”*** which is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (in Public Relations and Strategic Communication) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

External examiner _____ Signature _____ date _____

Internal examiner _____ Signature _____ date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ date _____

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator

Abstract

Nowadays, peoples of this planet are different in attitudes, political ideology, religions, races, ethics, and identities that lead them to develop stereotyping behavior and prejudices among the communities of different ethical compositions. Thus, this study was designed to undertake the practices of Local Government Officials and effective Strategic Communication towards Consensus Building in Burayu City Administration, Regional State of Oromia. Constructivism Philosophy of ontology is appropriate research strategy for the study; due identify how social factors interact in the selected environment. Community and Social capital, as well as Communicative actions and public sphere theories were also be used as the base of related theoretical framework for this research and inquiry also tracked evaluative way of research design. Accordingly, the study employed qualitative approach, purposive and snowball sampling techniques had been used. In depth interview, Focus group Discussions and content analysis were used as the tools of data collections. Some key informants from city administrations, traditional leaders, religious leaders and Qeerroo (youth groups) were selected from the city for the successful achievement of the study and to improve the data validity as well. The data also analyzed and interpreted qualitatively. The study has successfully achieved the analysis of the local government official's practices and identified the current relationships of local community with peoples of ethical diversity as well as their future expectations were concerned. This research also revealed some of the challenges and constraints in developing consensus among the peoples of the city. Among them; environmental impact, identity within diversity, prolonged interest of the peoples, political impacts and ineffective way of communications had been suggested by the respondents as core problems for building consensus. Finally, the inquiry also exposed the performances of local government officials and their accomplishments through effective strategic communication in building community relationships, as well as and the community ought to respect the identity difference and promote tolerance to feel a sense of humanity are some operational and strategically recommendations forwarded to build harmonies and rapport among the heterogeneous societies.

Keywords: *Identity within Diversity, Respect and Tolerance, Trusts, Sense of Humanity, and Consensus*

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ACRONMYS

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| CA | City Administration |
| CB | Consensus Building |
| BCA | Burayu City Administration |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| GR | Government Relations |
| LGO | Local Government Officials |
| LLC | Limited Liability Company |
| MSSE | Micro and Small Scale Enterprise |
| P3 | Public Private Partnership |
| TMT | Top Management Team |

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Nations in all stages of economic, social, and political development rely on nation building to accomplish specific interest and national goals. Nation building is a strategic process that involves various resources and policies, and communication is one of the most important of those resources. A nation exists by the consent of its people and by recognition of a common heritage that is communicated by various social practices. As it is cited in (Burkart, R. 2004. p. 144,) Philosopher, Habermas intends to make “understanding” (and thus communication) discernable as a fundamental democratic process.

He wants to demonstrate that, as a measure for the solution of social conflicts, violence can be replaced by the rational consensus of responsible citizens. Creating Consensus without effective strategic Communication is inevitable and unthinkable. By scholarly definition, Frandsen (2018) cited in his article that strategic communication is purposefully communicating in advance to create relationship; and also latter redefined that ‘Strategic communication is the practice of deliberate and purposive communication that a communication agent enacts in the public sphere on behalf of a communicative entity to reach set goal’ (Holtzhausen and Zerfass’s 2013, p. 74).

Consensus is as a mechanism being advocated and rightly derivable from the interpretations of consensus social theories which were dominant in the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s. The concept of consensus building has to be supposed to represent a mechanism or an approach to be adopted towards resolving some of the many intractable conflicts that have devalued Ethiopian community development for many decades due to social heterogeneity and various political ideologies and passively practices of Government Relations activities in the country. However, consensus building is very essential to be seen through the strategic Communications in the daily activities of local leaders so as to create awareness among the communities of the environment. The key to peace in the conflict areas and misunderstanding, at least the government has to provide as well as facilitate the environment which will enable peace to be built by using strategic Communication.

The reflective model of communication management sees strategic communication as “engaged in constructing society by making sense of situations, creating appropriate meanings out of them

and looking for acceptable frameworks and enactments” (van Ruler & Verčič, 2005, p. 266). Taylor and Kent (2006) emphasize the importance of public relations in a sense ‘communication’ to the successful implementation of the nation-building objectives and state: “communication as a tool for nation building must be understood as that which creates and maintains relationships” (p. 357). This study explores the government dealings through operational Strategic Communication in the process of consensus building among the heterogeneous peoples of Burayu City, Government of Oromia Regional state.

1.1. Study Area

Burayu city is one the city administration among National Regional Government of Oromia states and intimately located around Addis Ababa city; the capital of Ethiopia. According to the city municipality office recently (2019) reported, large numbers of communities approximately estimated to more than three hundred and seventy five thousands (375,349) of peoples are living in Burayu city nowadays. It is located at 10 km from the Centre of Addis (Finfinnee) and located an altitude of 2450m – 2560m above sea level. It has a leaner shape and mean annual temperature of 14°C and mean annual rainfall of 1,188mm. The city serves as an administration and industrial center and gets grain products, livestock supply, natural resources (fuel wood, charcoal) as well as surplus labor from surrounding areas. (<https://www.coursehero.com>)

Accordingly the city administration has six city villages; named as *Gefersa Burayu*, *Gafarsa Nono*, *Melka Gefersa*, *Gefersa Guje*, *Leku Ketta* and *Burayu Ketta* are the major Villages of the city ruled by the city administration. Many nations’ nationalities and diverse peoples with diverse religion are living in the environment. For instance, Oromoo, Amhara, Gurage, Tigre, Walayita, Gamo, Dorzee, Silte, Hadiya, Sidama and different numbers of ethnic groups are dwelling in the city. The census of the city administration showed, residents are the followers of different religions; 36% of peoples are Protestants while 35% of populations are Orthodox and also 25 % and 4% of the residents are Muslims and Waaqeffataa respectively (BCA Office Report, 2019).

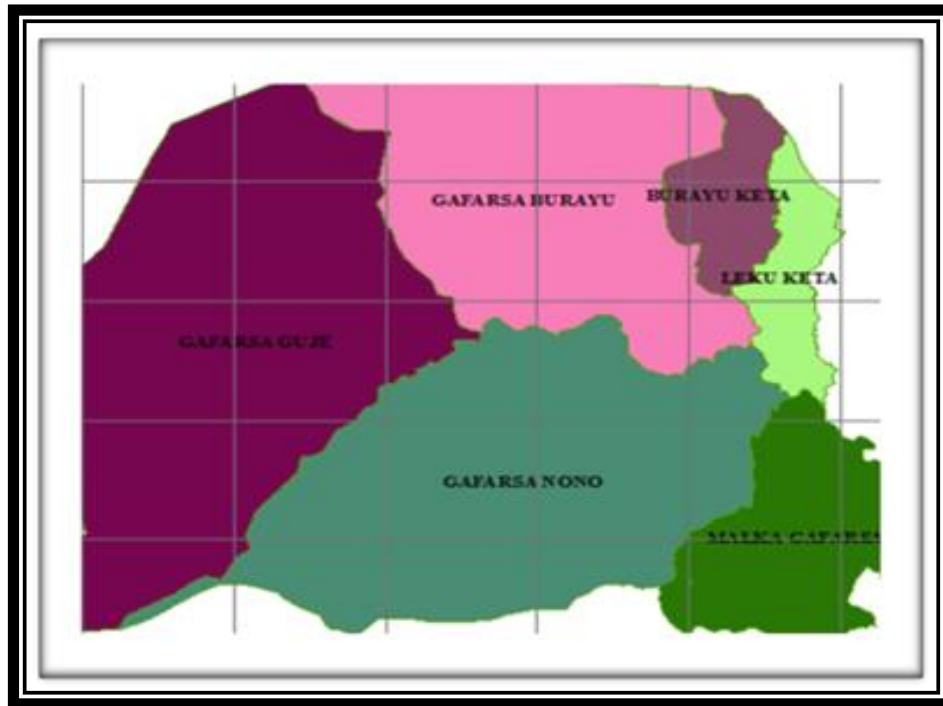


Fig.1. Geographical Boundary of Burayu City Administration, adapted from City administrative office.

1.2. Statement of the Problems

Consensus can be defined as a general or wide spread agreement among all the members of a group of diverse stakeholders. It is not about achieving unanimity, rather it is more of a nearly unanimous agreement. The issue of creating Consensus and Mutual Understanding through strategic Communication for social relationships; as well as Government Relations should be mandatory for any nations of this world. American Political Scientist Robert Putnam's studies have concentrated on democracy and society at large, and he argues that society today has seen a decrease in a sense of community. Despite technological development and the new media, and in fact partly because of them, people today have fewer interpersonal relationships than ever before. There has been a generational shift, and people have become isolated; they no longer belong to clubs and associations or do things together, but instead they even bowl alone (Putnam 2000). Putnam argues that people of today have lost a sense of community, which makes collaboration and relationships difficult to establish and maintain.

As empirical studies conducted in organizational settings, they were less interested in consensus formation, but instead focused on the degree of consensus in the top management team (TMT) and its relationship to organizational performance, without considering the nature of the development of consensus (Hrebiniak and Snow, 1982; Bourgeois, 1980). Now days, the issues of diversity in culture, languages, social status and political ideology of the community is a big controversial issues in our country (Ethiopia). For developing relationships, comparable zones of meaning are to be constructed, meant as comparable “social realities”, in order to be able to coordinate efforts Robert L. Heath, (1994, p. 45). In (2001) also he followed the same line, arguing that “shared meaning” is a vital outcome of public relations or Communication and the constituting variable of relationships. Shared meaning is constructed through dialogue (Heath, 2001, p. 31), which he sees as “statement and counterstatement that constitute the process and shape the content of rhetoric” (Heath, 2001, p. 32).

It is absolutely true to say that peoples of this world are mainly focusing on and talking about their norms, promoting their culture, and giving more values to their identity. That is blameless idea and it should be encouraged positively everywhere. However, the problem is sometimes when one group of peoples could not understand the others interests and willingness just equally with their own interests. Hence, undermining other’s difference may put the peoples into conflict with other groups and ethnic clash as well as identity based conflict in the heterogeneity nature of communities. And the availability of attitudinal and ethnic difference has been occurred and practiced highly in every parts of the country, Ethiopia. Particularly, these diversities seldom caused a conflict in the area selected for this study (Burayu City). Obviously, our peoples of this planet are different in attitudes, politics, religions, races, ethics, and identities and this can easily lead the peoples to develop stereotyping behavior among the communities of different ethical compositions. As well as it creates ideally discriminated and hopeless peoples in the country and expanding hostility due to the diversity of perceptions and attitudes of the societies.

Burayu City is one of the rapidly developing City Administration from Oromia Regional State and a place where peoples of different ideology, social status and heterogeneity of attitude and perceptions are involved. As a result of this, it was purposefully selected for the study aiming at building consensus among the diversified community through communicating with the peoples of different positions and officials or parties for the purpose of reducing tensions, bringing

common understanding, solving the diversity handling problems and creating and achieving togetherness. Accordingly, this issue was seriously focused by the researcher since the relevant study has not been done by other researcher to manage different ideology, social status, and heterogeneity. So that the inquirer motivated to study communication gap that found in community relations and government officials activities in consensus building.

Australian political scientist, Emy (1976) suggests that the implication of consensus is that there is general agreement that has been negotiated by the individuals involved. Listening, trust, sharing, and respect are values inherent in the process. This research was designed to investigate the suitable communication strategy and assess the practice of Government Relations meant to manage serious problems like; hatred, ethnic discrimination, as well as dissemination of hostility among the societies of the city and the study could indicate that how well-designed strategic communication that practiced in the daily life of community solve these conflicts and foster mutual relationship or Consensus. Therefore, this study explored appropriate strategic communications and assessed the practices and roles of government relations towards consensus building in Oromia Regional state Burayu City.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general Objective of this research is to analyze the practices of Government Relations and operative Strategic Communication used for consensus building among the diversified peoples of Regional State of Oromia Burayu city.

1.3.2. Specific Objective

The specific Objectives of the study would be given as follows:

- To study the activities that Government officials are performing through their strategic Communications for the purpose of consensus building
- Exploring strategic Communication intended to strength harmony and build consensus among the societies of ethnic difference.
- Analyzing the trusts of Government officials and their communication worthiness to the targeted stakeholders of the City.

- To identify the major problems in building consensus among the local communities of the area under the study.

1.4. Research Questions

The researcher derived some research questions following the specific objective of this study and these questions would be expected to be answered at the end of the inquiry.

1. What are the activities carried out by Government officials for the purpose of consensus building?
2. How Strategic Communications is helpful to build consensus in heterogeneous peoples?
3. How much the Communications that used by Government officials are trustworthy to the communities of the environment?
4. What are the challenges that the Government encounters in practicing and using strategic communication to bring harmony among the peoples?

1.5. Scope of the Study

Since the issue being studied should be clearly and briefly described in the scope of the study, the geographical area of the study and subject to be studied was obviously limited based on the capability of the researcher. This study was conducted in national Regional Government of Oromia State, Burayu city administration. The researcher tried to undertake the study on specific subject so as to manage the credibility of the research and he focused on the societies like; local Officials, religious and traditional leaders, as well youth of the city. Consequently, in this research the government Relations activities and the communication strategy that used in consensus building were considered and studied properly. This study is his highly limited the practice of Government officials Communication to create relationship among heterogeneous peoples.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study gives prime attention to the strategic communication and Government Relations that used to promote consensus in Regional Government of Oromia, Burayu city administration. The primary beneficiary of this study is the peoples or heterogeneous communities of Oromia, particularly Burayu Town. This can be accomplished by providing presentation of the final result

of this study on the meeting where the local mayors, elders and youths of the environment are available, and one copy of this paper should be submitted to the office of municipality in order to refer it and improve more. So that, it strengthens communities' mutual understanding to avoid the hostilities and destroy the psychological suspicion they have on each other. As soon as the researcher finds out the strategy of communication and the practice of Government Relations in consensus building, the recommendation can contribute a lot in creating the social awareness at nation level to maintain the concept of nation building in our country or Regions. Accordingly, this research is also helpful as the best reference for students those who want to develop further theory on building consensus and it directs the Local leaders and communication experts to use well strategic way of communication to develop togetherness among the community.

1.7. Limitation of the study

In doing this research, there are some obstacles and challenges which supposed to disable the researcher's activities through different ups and downs. Among these, getting the consent of some respondents to be interviewed and voice recorded to provide necessary data was big a problem during interview. The political instability in the part of the country specifically in the study area caused a pressure to this study. Accordingly, the subject in the study is also new concept in the country and no related research has been done in this region as long as the researcher reads and find out related materials to this study (which of Consensus Building). Thus, the researcher also encountered challenges in developing most appropriate literature review for this inquiry. Even though challenges are inevitable in accomplishing any tasks, the researcher prepared and used systematic strategy to survive from the challenges. For instance, to handle the problems of political instability, the researcher took supporting letter from Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communications to the city under study and built good rapport and normal relationship with concerned body like local Leaders to facilitate for favorable atmosphere and develop mutual understanding. And while the respondents had no interest to be interviewed or discussants in FGD, the inquirer had used other key informants those who can equally be replaced with the intended one. Accordingly, the researcher used other materials which are published on other nations abroad since the most relevant materials couldn't be available in the area. These are the solutions that had been taken into an account as an option for the success of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

2. Concept of Nation Building

The related Literature review of this study would deductively provide the general concept of nation building before discussing about consensus building. Because, building consensus and good relationship aims at developing the nation building throughout the country. In this world, to bring the relationship of the citizens at the national, regional level, and at district level is mainly concentrate on building consensus among a certain community through communication as a selected tools. Hence, it is much necessary to discuss about the nation building, Communication and organizations or government roles in the practice of consensus building.

2.1. Nation-Building

The concept of nation building starts from consensus building. If there is no consensus among the community at village or city level, it is so difficult to think about nation building at national level. The term nation-building is often used simultaneously with state-building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflict reconstruction, and peace-building. But each concept is different, though their evolution is intertwined. The concept of nation-building came to be used especially among American political scientists a decade or so after World War II, to describe the greater integration of state and society, as citizenship brought loyalty to the modern nation-state with it. Reinhard Bendix (1977) focused on the expansion of citizenship and of rights to political participation. Karl Deutsch (1963. 7-8.) focused on the role of social communication and national integration in nation-building in Western societies. Others began to apply it to non-Western societies as well.

Nation-building is constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. It is thus narrower than what Paul James (2006) calls "nation formation", the broad process through which nations come into being. Nation-building aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. According to Harris Mylonas (2017) stated that the legitimate authority in modern national states is connected to popular rule, to majorities and the nation-building is the process through which these majorities are constructed. In the politics of nation building, Mylonas (2012) again explored the conditions

under which the states decide to target “non-core groups” (as opposed to ‘minorities’) and defined non-core group as “any aggregation of individuals that perceived as an unassimilated ethnic group on linguistics, religious, physical, or ideological basis (p. 210).

Nation builders are those members of a state who take the initiative to develop the national community through government programs, including military conscription and national content mass schooling. According to Columbia University political scientist; Andreas Wimmer (2018) explained, three factors tend to determine the success of nation-building over the long-run: the early development of civil-society organizations, the rise of a state capable of providing public goods evenly across a territory, and the emergence of a shared medium of communication.

In the modern era, nation-building refers to the efforts of newly independent nations, notably the nations of Africa but also in the Balkans, to redefine the populace of territories that had been carved out by colonial powers or empires without regard to ethnic, religious, or other boundaries. These reformed states would then become viable and coherent national entities.

Nation-building includes the creation of national paraphernalia such as flags, anthems, national days, national stadiums, national airlines, national languages, and national myths. At a deeper level, national identity needed to be deliberately constructed by molding different ethnic groups into a nation, especially since in many newly established states colonial practices of divide and rule had resulted in ethnically heterogeneous populations.

According to Ray Salvatore Jennings (2004) failed nation-states pose serious problems for regional and international order if the task of consensus building isn’t implemented well. They often destabilize bordering countries and frequently displace large numbers of refugees into neighboring states. Violations of basic human rights are common in failed and failing nation-states, and they often harbor transnational criminal activity, such as money laundering, terrorist operations, and trafficking in narcotics, weapons, and humans. Moreover, such situations seldom simply fade away on-their-own or are able to repair them-selves without outside assistance.

2.2. Community Building through Deliberate Relationship

Multination building through deliberately relationship of diverse ethnic groups is a system advocated, among others by Marxists, for states comprising of peoples possessing different national characteristics. The advocates of this system maintain that a state that comprises of different 'nations' or "nationalities' may act as an integrating agent in building a nation not through forcible assimilation and /or national oppression which invariably breed mistrust and a antagonism among peoples, but through the formation of a multinational state based on the principles of social justice, absolute equality, genuine fraternity and respect among the various nationalities Baro Tumsa (1973). The system intended to foster trust and fraternity among the distinct groups thereby doing away with national dissension. This would to bring about the desirable solidarity which is pre-requisites for national development (p.19).

Baro Tumsa (1973) in his study titled "Decentralization and Nation Building in Ethiopia" stated and concluded his research just by saying: 'If Ethiopia is to build a nation that Politically stable and economically viable, it must, first of all, establish a democratic Society that will afford all the interest groups within its territory the opportunities to play decisive roles in the affairs of their respective local affairs and due participation in the central government' (p. 128).

2.3. Communication in Nation Building

Taylor and Kent (2006) emphasize the importance of public relations to the successful implementation of the nation-building objectives and state: "communication as a tool for nation building must be understood as that which creates and maintains relationships" (p. 357). Taylor and Kent (2006) stress the importance of development communication and give three theoretical approaches that provide a framework for nation building; co-orientation, dialogic and civil society approaches. All three approaches concentrate on forming and maintaining long-lasting relationships and facilitating constructive dialogues with key publics. Co-orientation theory advocates achieving inter subjectivity through tolerance and acceptance of dissenting opinions. Dialogic theory is similar to co-orientation theory, but is primarily focused on individual, as opposed to group relations. The civil society approach concentrates on establishing a dialogue between civil society groups and the government. Most consensus-building studies promote open

communication between the government and the people and address the need for a democracy to have free media function without restriction (Somit & Peterson, 2005).

2.4. Strategic Communications as relationship management

As many communication scholars explained, Strategic communication essential building and managing relationship between both the government and peoples as well as among the large communities. According to Hallahan (2006), Strategic communication differs from integrated communication because its focus is how an organization communicates across organizational endeavors. The emphasis is on the strategic application of communication and how an organization functions as a social actor to advance its mission. The purposeful nature of strategic communication is critical. Whereas academic research on organizational communications broadly examines the various processes involved in how people interact in complex organizations (including interpersonal, group, and network communications), strategic communication focuses on how the organization itself presents and promotes itself through the intentional activities of its leaders, employees, and communication practitioners. Of course, this does not exclude their use of relationship building or networks in the strategic process.

According to Grunig's stated in his study; Public Relations contribute to organizational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organization's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies. This contribution has monetary value to the organization. Public Relations contribute to effectiveness by building quality, long-term relations with strategic constituencies. (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2006: p. 34)

An important emerging perspective in the systems family of approaches puts the actual relationship of an organization with its publics at the center of PR activity. Maintaining and improving that relationship is the objective of PR. This means that strategies and tactics should always be assessed in terms of their effect on the relationship between an organization and its publics, rather than, for example, the benefits they provide for the organization. The focus on relationships broadens the perspectives used to formulate PR strategies and tactics, but also by definition requires greater involvement from organizations. This is not as simple as it sounds – involvement means genuine dialogue, which in itself can be challenging. For example, Kent and Taylor (2002) point out that dialogue in practice frequently fails to meet the expectations of

those taking part. The outcomes of dialogue may not be what were desired, and dialogue itself requires disclosure of information that may make the owner of that information vulnerable. Practitioners pressing for greater interaction with publics must recognize, explain and manage these potential risks for organizations as well as for the publics they interact with.

Dialogue as an orientation includes five features: mutuality, or the recognition of organization-public relationships; propinquity, or the temporality and spontaneity of interactions with publics; empathy, or the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests; risk, or the willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and finally, commitment, or the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in its interactions with publics. (Kent & Taylor, 2002, pp. 24-25) authors' emphasis

The previous sections have shown that there are a variety of ways to look at the relationship between communication and nation building. The practice of nation building includes efforts by developing national governments to promote a national identity and unity. Many developing nations are still recovering from the vestiges of colonialism and communism. These countries create national communication campaigns to assist in their political, social, and economic development. Because many developing nations encompass various ethnic and religious groups, governments often sense a need for unifying national ideologies to maintain popular support (or the status quo). Developed nations Such as those from the former Eastern Bloc have similar nation-building needs~ for identity building. Communication campaigns can help people during difficulties of social, economic, and identity transformation. Although the importance of a unifying national vision is obvious--,-it leads to collective action on the part of citizens, it allows a government to conserve resources and focus national energies-a stable nation cannot be built at the expense of segments of its citizenry. Top-down public relations efforts· by officials, whether elected or appointed, that attempt to create national identities superseding local and ethnic loyalties to solidify support for a non-democratic government are self-serving. These one-way campaigns are doomed to fail to achieve their goals because they fail to address the real needs of a transitional nation-strong interpersonal and inter-organizational relationship that will strengthen the nation state. The co-orientation, dialogue, and civil society theories of nation building, however, offer better models because of their ability to create solidarity, tolerance, and

mutual understanding among citizens, governments, groups, organizations, and international publics.

Ferguson (1984) was the first to put forward the notion of relationship as a central focus for PR. During the 1990s, the concept of relationships was investigated more fully and the first comprehensive book discussing the area was published in 2000, by Ledingham and Bruning. Broom et al. (2000) draw on a range of relationship theories, including interpersonal communication, psychotherapy, interpersonal relationships and systems theory. Drawing together the most useful findings, they put forward a tentative framework for defining organizational–public relationships based on the following principles:

- Relationships are characterized by interdependence: parties to the relationship adapt in order to pursue a particular function in the relationship.
- Relationships represent exchanges or transfers of information, energy or resources; the attributes of these exchanges represent and define the relationship.
- Relationships have antecedents and consequences that must be taken into account when analyzing them; organization–public relationships therefore have specific antecedents (histories) and consequences (effects or results).

The centrality of communication to the conduct of relationships is unequivocal. Communication is the means by which adaptation is communicated and occurs and movement of resources is operationalized. The communication process should therefore be the starting point for an analysis of organization–public relationships. More recently, Ledingham stated and proposed the following theory of relationship management for PR (communications): “Effectively managing organizations public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and the publics or communities as well” (Ledingham (2003: 190).

Because relationships are so complex, a relationship view of PR offers many different perspectives from which to examine the discipline. Factors that affect all relationships, such as their history, the background of the people or organizations involved and the social context of the relationship, to name just three, can be analyzed in a PR context. For example, Ledingham et al.

(1999) investigated the effect of time on organization–public relationships using a survey of 404 residential telephone customers. They found that it was a significant factor in respondents’ perceptions of trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment to the relationship on the part of the organization and also influenced the propensity of the customer to stay in or leave the relationship. One problem with early formulations of the relationship perspective is that no single tool existed to measure the health of relationships with specific community (Huang, 2001).

2.5. Building consensus

It is also pertinent to observe that in any matter concerning consensus, the state in Africa is ever present and very critical. In one way or another, consensus takes place within state boundaries. Thus the consensus, to a larger or smaller extent, will require the democratic nature of the state to be fully actualised and sustained, even at the lowest levels of the society, whether community, traditional, ethnic or religious. According to some researchers, Lemarchand, et al (2008), stated that in present-day democracies in Africa, unlike in the days of military dictatorship, governments are run by political parties successful at the polls. Where this is the situation, it will be correct to argue that there is no consensus negotiated anywhere within the state which will not meet political parties as the foremost ‘stakeholders’, even when the issues in demand may appear manifestly non-political. In most of African countries like Somalia, the DRC, Uganda, Chad, Niger, Southern Sahara, Ethiopia, Kenya and Zimbabwe political parties or identified groups with political agendas are those involved in negotiations for consensus. “Even when the issues are ethnic, religious, or socio-cultural, those sent to represent constituencies in negotiations for consensus are manifestly or latently political actors” (Mamdani 2002; Lemarchand 2008).

As presently applied in Africa, consensus building seems to be a product of knowledge arising from researches carried out in conflict areas in Africa with the help of some United Nations agencies. Often international professional negotiators and mediators are recruited by governments or international agencies to be involved in the processes, including negotiations expected to lead to consensus. The mechanism was encouraged during the negotiations for peace at the end of some of the long civil wars in parts of Africa as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Southern Sudan. Also, consensus is envisaged in the resolution of the on-going racial, ethnic, tribal or religious wars and conflicts in

Sudan/Darfur, Somalia and Côte d'Ivoire. It is assumed that consensus building will provide the key to peace in these conflict areas, or at least provide the environment which will enable peace to be built.

In addition to its theoretical roots in conflict, consensus building is said to adequately fit into several of the elements of the democratisation process evolving in Africa at the same time that these conflicts are escalating. Indeed, the number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) devoted to consensus advocacy in Africa has grown as a result of the prospect of evolving peace through the mechanism of consensus. Many of the organisations have attracted generous funding from international agencies to organise conferences, seminars and workshops, and carry out research into dialogue and consensus building programmes focusing on the conflict areas in Africa. In a place like Rwanda, aspects of the educational curriculum are said to have been re-designed with the aim of re-socialising the children and the youth so that they may begin to cultivate attitudes that may, at least in future, create the environment for consensus building in their society (Mwambari and Schaeffer 2008).

2.5.1. Conflict, consensus and power

Conflict may be viewed as a form of tension arising from mutually exclusive or opposing actions, thoughts, opinions, or feelings. It is evident when individuals or groups evaluate situations or pass judgments from different perspectives that stem from incompatible differences in their education, social background or socialisation, or knowledge of the issues in contest. Conflict often occurs when people or groups perceive that as a result of a disagreement there may be a threat to their interests. Conflicts may also arise from misinformation, stereotypes, prejudices, contradictory perceptions of justice, differing socio-cultural traditions, personal beliefs or ideologies; and they are of many dimensions: racial, sectarian, ethnic, religious, ideological, cultural, economic, political, social, and others (Kriesberg 1973:1–57; Kriesberg 2006).

2.5.2. Promises and Constraints of Dialogues as Consensus Building

In the field of conflict resolution, negotiated rule making, and collaborative problem solving, stakeholder dialogues are viewed as processes of consensus building (Susskind and Field, 1996; Susskind et al., 2003). Lawrence Susskind (2003) defines it as: “a process of seeking unanimous

agreement. It involves a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. Consensus has been reached when everyone agrees they can live with whatever is proposed after every effort has been made to meet the interests of all stakeholder parties” (p. 6).

Environmental policy makers often tend to build consensus before making decisions. This is a common approach in the United States where the desire for consensus was institutionalized in the Negotiated Rulemaking Act of 1990, in which agencies are authorized to establish formal negotiation processes over the terms of proposed regulations (Coglianese, 2001). But also in other countries a consensus approach is often considered most favourable. In the Netherlands, for instance, environmental policy is characterized by the ‘green polder model’ approach (Glasbergen, 2002), in which multi-stakeholder processes have become institutionalized in an early stage of environmental policy making. Although these are good principles on which to ground constructive dialogue, not every negotiations is entirely interest based-eventually a pie can’t be made any larger and parties are faced with deciding who will get what. A certain amount of completion is inevitable in dividing up a finite resource (or fixed pie). Nor can the effect that political power plays in negotiations dynamics be ignored. But these principles do allow participants in consensus building effort to maximize the creativities needed to create more joint gains an essential ingredient in sound resource management decisions. Several contributors to current negotiation theory Raiffa Lax, and Lewicki focus on the tension between cooperation and competition distinguishing between creating value and claiming values while urging parties to seek ways to expands the pie (i.e., to invent solutions that achieve joint gains, they also caution parties that if one side cooperates - for example by sharing information - and others compete, the more competitive often win. Convening consensus building process will not make these challenges go away magically; rather, for a consensus process to be successful, it must be designed with these challenges in mind:

- ✚ Controversial natural resources issues often are made more difficult to resolve by intraorganizational and institutional complexities.
- ✚ Parties’ incentives to address one another’s needs may be unclear.
- ✚ Forests, wetlands, wildlife populations are finite, increasing the potential for competition among users.
- ✚ Technical and scientific uncertainties can complicate negotiations.

- ✚ Disputes over natural resources generally involve public issues, not private matters alone; laws press, and governmental institutions all play a significant role.

2.6. Consensus Building process

Building a Consensus among any of the community is the backbone for living in peace and stability. As well as it is the activities of behavioral change that develops Unity (Oneness), good perceptions and attitudes for neighbors and others in the mind of the heterogeneous peoples and enable them to feel freedom in their lives. As it was explained in the Consensus Handbook that illustrated by Carrie MacKinnon (2013, p. 17), consensus can be accomplished through some process and activities among the communities of different ideologies. Thus, the five process of consensus building is discussed in the following.

a. Introduce and clarify the issue

This first stage is crucial to get you off to a good start. A good introduction will focus the meeting, ensure that everyone is talking about the same issue and provide everyone with all relevant information needed to make a decision. This could be done by explaining the issue, and why it needs to be discussed, sharing all relevant information, Agreeing the aims of the discussion

b. Explore the issue and look for ideas

Now it's time for everyone to really try to understand the issue, to express what they want or need to happen and to come up with lots of ideas for solving the problems.

- **Gather initial thoughts and reactions**

Start by giving people space to think about the issue and to express any wishes and concerns that it brings up. Make a note of these as they will need to be addressed for a solution to be found. Resist the temptation to jump straight in with a proposal – to achieve consensus we first of all need to have a good understanding of everyone's concerns and limitations. Be honest about your own feelings and listen carefully to what everyone else is saying. At times it can be difficult to say what it is you want and don't want – if you're struggling to express things say so rather than staying quiet. Equally, if you don't quite understand someone else's position, ask for clarification.

- **Collect ideas for solving the problem**

Use techniques such as go rounds, idea storms or breaking into small groups to generate lots of ideas for solving the problem. Be clear that at this stage they are only ideas, not proposals. In consensus the word ‘proposal’ implies that you have thought carefully and are suggesting a way forward you think would be acceptable to everybody. It is too early to use this word before you know what people’s thoughts and feelings are. When bringing up ideas take into account the concerns you’ve heard, and any objectives you’ve agreed.

- **Have a broad ranging discussion about the ideas**

Consensus is a creative thinking process that thrives on mixing up lots of different ideas. Make time for a broad ranging discussion, where you can explore ideas and look at the pros and cons and any concerns they bring up. This will often spark new and surprising ideas. Express any reservations about ideas early on so that they can be dealt with. Draw on all the experience, knowledge and wisdom in your group. Make sure everyone is heard.

- c. Look for an emerging issues**

After discussing the issues freely move on to finding agreement on what needs to be done. This stage is also called *synthesis*, which means coming up with a proposal by combining elements from several different ideas. Start with a summary of where you think the group is at. Outline the emerging common ground as well as the unresolved differences: It’s important to not only pick up on clear differences, but also on more subtle agreement or disagreement. Look for ideas on how the differences can be resolved and focus on solutions that address the fundamental needs and key concerns that people within the group have. Often people are willing to give way on some things but not on others which affect them more closely. The solution will often be found by combining elements from different ideas. This might also mean digging a little deeper to find out why people want the things that they do.

- d. Discuss, clarify and amend the agenda**

Check whether people have concerns about the agenda and look for amendments that make the issues more acceptable to everyone. Do things like go rounds and straw polls to gauge support for the agenda and to elicit amendments. If it becomes obvious at this stage that some people have strong reservations, see whether you can come up with a different, better option. Remember, consensus is about finding solutions that work for everyone. Be careful not to get carried away because most people like the issue. Watch out for people who are quiet or looking

unhappy and check with them. Give people time to get their head around the agenda and what it means for them.

e. Test for agreement

This can be done by asking whether anyone has objections or reservations. Ideally the consensus decision making process should identify and address concerns and reservations at an early stage. However, the issue does not always get whole hearted support from everyone, and less confident group members may find it hard to express their disagreement. It is important therefore to explicitly check if anyone is unhappy with a proposal at this stage.

2.7. Consensus-Oriented Public Relations

The overriding aim of consensus-oriented public relations is to facilitate what one hopes will be a smooth communication process between the public relations client and the relevant members of the public. This is the case if the three different levels of communication between the communicating parties are in agreement. It should be pointed out that in the present context there could be a misunderstanding of the definitions taken from Habermas's theory, namely agreement and consensus. A usual misunderstanding is to equate agreement with approval or consent of something in dispute. Concerning the issue of creating understanding, Ronald Burkart believed that communication is needed not only during conflict or to solve the conflict occurred. (Ronald Burkart 2002. P.146.) stated in his paper that "Communication must not be seen as a general means for conflict solution. It would be erroneous to believe that perfectly planned communications are able to eliminate conflicts." In this statement communication is emphasized as a weapon to eliminate conflict, if conflict is eliminated and avoided there is no other reason that makes the peoples isolated from each other so that the general consensus would be improved. In doing so, the communication we use and the techniques of sharing ideas, feeling, truth and justification and all validity claims need be in consideration. Accordingly, as it is cited in the book of public relations and social theory, most scholars agreed on the importance of validity claims in every activity of the government and communities to build consensus and good relationship among any society. Understanding is not only an end in itself of communication, but also, in the rule, a means of realization of interests (Burkart, 2002 p.148) 'Verbal communication is only the mechanism that merges the action plans and the action purposes of those involved' Here we also can understand that we can't build good relationship and understanding among the

societies without realizing the interest the community through communication, especially, verbal communication is the best mechanism and methods to enhance the relationship and mutual understanding in the heterogeneous communities.

Agreement about validity claims means that:

1. the subject of the issue matter must be clearly understood, that is, what can be represented under the subject, and it should be a consensus about the truth of the propositions and explanations provided by the client;
2. the communicators have to be clear about who is responsible for the plans and aims of the enterprise and the truthfulness of the organization and its spokesperson must be indisputable;
3. The positions held or represented must be comprehensible why the (client's) interests should be pursued and it should be a consensus about the legitimacy of the interest.

A breakdown in the communication process can happen when the relevant members of the public doubt one or more of the claims of validity (made by the public relations client). This necessitates discourse, according to the theory of communicative action. Consensus-oriented public relations then have to take the need for discourse seriously and make attempts to facilitate this discourse. From this point of view, discourse and dialogue are very important to create consensus among the community.

2.8. Government relations and communication in Consensus Building

As it is obviously known, an independent organization must help the local community to bring them together and develop their relationship. Government organizations are more powerful and influential towards consensus building and they need to correlate their power and personal trust. From scholarly point of view, Bachmann (1999) further argued that power and trust are alternative mechanisms to co-ordinate social interactions efficiently and to allow for relatively stable relationships between co-operating social actors, such as decision making groups. He stated that trust works on the basis of positive assumptions whereas power is based on negative hypothetical possibilities, which is presented by the powerful actor and believed by the subordinate actor to not be in the interest of either side. Even though Bachmann classified power and trust as alternative mechanisms, he did not exclude them from occurring in combination. In fact he said that power often appears as a precondition rather than as an alternative to trust.

Accordingly, Farrell (2002) also agreed and stating that power and trust are not mutually exclusive; he described that disparities in power affects the way in which the proceeds of trust-based cooperation are distributed, but do not prevent trust from occurring. As stated and we can understand from the above paragraph, the scholars agreed the power and trusts are the influential mechanisms in building consensus among the societies. Hence the government leaders should follow and attempt communicative rationality and legitimacy in their daily activities for consensus building.

❖ **Communicative Rationality**

The assumption that negotiations are more valid and effective to the degree that they achieve a politically neutral space has roots in the work of Jurgen Habermas on communicative rationality (Habermas, 1987, 1995). Habermas sought to create a public sphere in which 'critical, reflexive, activist modes of thought' promote social justice. To do so, he developed an 'inter-subjective' theory of communicative rationality (Habermas, 1984: 12-5). Communicative rationality would restore to the life-world of shared understandings and unquestioned presuppositions (which serve as the basis for common definitions of the situations people confront) its rightful role in cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization, rather than leaving these tasks to the reified and pathological 'system imperatives' of a 'monetary-bureaucratic complex' (Habermas, 1987 p. 374). According to Habermas (1987) communicative rationality is achieved when:

Under the pragmatic presuppositions of an inclusive and non-coercive rational discourse among free and equal participants, everyone is required to take the perspective of everyone else, and thus project herself into the understandings of self and world of all others; (p. 375).

From the above reflection Habermas believed at providing equal opportunity to everyone in the group to reflect their ideas and feeling during the discourse; so that all members can understand themselves and the feeling of others too. This is so much important in the process of consensus building via strategic communication.

❖ **Legitimacy in consensus Building**

According to Luhmann (2003), analyses of the differences between a functionally differentiated society and a stratified society, decisive differences of organizational legitimacy and legitimizing practice can be identified.

First, a functionally differentiated society values individual performances and expressions of personal diversity, whereas in a stratified society individual identity and social identity overlap, and consequently dissolve the boundary between a private and a public sphere. Second, in functional differentiation, modernist ideas prevail of a public sphere with equal access for a diversity of individual expressions. In stratification, the public sphere is regulated from above (or from a center) with the function of maintaining a common collectivist identity. Third, the coordination of a functionally differentiated society takes place in continuous legitimating and legitimizing processes in poly-contextual, pluralist interplays without any center or top. In a stratified society, societal coordination is hierarchical, most often with religion as the fundamentally legitimating reference of society. Notions of legitimacy are dictated rather than debated. Fourth, in functional differentiation, intermixture of functional rationales is illegitimate, such as, for instance (pp.35–61):

- Of politics and mass media: it is illegitimate if the political system dictates the boundaries of expression to mass media;
- Of religion and politics: it is illegitimate if any religion dictates to the government and law of a nation; and
- Of economy and politics or law: bribery of politicians or public servants is illegitimate.

In contrast, the stratified society implies no distinct boundaries between the social systems of religion, politics, economy, mass media, and family. Even economics, politics, law and market mechanisms are subject to religion and stratified group affiliation. Fifth, the modernist values of functional differentiation breed a culture of contingency as opposed to necessity, inevitability. Social norms and institutions tend to be acknowledged as contingent; that is, as choices which could have been taken differently and consequently as potential subjects to intentional change through reflection and discussion. In contrast, in a primarily stratified society social relations are based on perceptions of necessity, orthodoxy, and belief in authorities; norms assumed as inevitable and necessary to maintain society, as unquestionably accepted self-evidences (Ibid).

2.9. The impact of Media in consensus Building

Media can negatively or positively contribute towards consensus building in every community. Be it the social media or broadcast and print media, if it cautiously handled by the professional

community relations can be highly achieved through different media and also if it not handled properly the relationship can be easily damaged. Some scholars wrote about the social media impacts on community building.

Social media tools provide a newly emerging mechanism for engaging a large and diverse group of participants, including individuals or groups that might otherwise be hard to reach or to bring together, such as individuals with a rare disease (Bacon, 2009; Fine, 2006) Social media also provide a forum for discussion that has important differences from face-to-face interactions with social media, all participants have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, responses need not be immediate, and time can be taken to review the thread of a discussion Social media also provide opportunities to reframe questions as the discussion evolves (Connor, 2009).

In addition, social media can generate a discussion archive that is useful for revisiting opinions, information, and collective history Furthermore, the manner in which social media are used by the community in the initial stages of engagement might be a barometer of the capacity to engage that community and success in doing so, facilitating evaluation of community engagement.

Generally, depending on how groups communicate, a broader group of participants can be engaged using social media than through traditional means, facilitating the process of establishing collective positions and strategies. Specifically, social media can provide a forum for interaction and discussion about both draft and final position statements if used properly. Clearly, social media also play an important role in building and sustaining networks by facilitating ongoing communication, social exchange, and coordination of activities Moreover, these media can help build trust by providing venues in which partners can demonstrate transparency and openness Meeting agendas, minutes, handouts, and questions (and responses) can all be posted and viewed.

Finally, social media can be a tool for mobilizing organizations and community members and, even more important, social media can help sustain engagement and commitment Social media can also offer accessible sites to provide information about a developing engagement, such as its purpose and goals and who is involved (Bacon, 2009; Connor, 2009)

2.10. Theoretical frame work of the research

This research was designed to study and analyze the case on the perspectives of the two relevant theories for consensus building techniques. These are the theory of 'Communicative action and *Public Sphere*' which was developed by Jourgen Habarmas and theories of 'Community and Social capital' discussed by Putnam. These two theories are selected because of their suitability and importance of their arguments in the process of consensus building among the different parts of communities those who have different ideology, culture, norms, identity and languages and etc. As a result of this, the researcher gave emphasis to the theories whether or not applied properly in the area under study for normal relationship of the community in the environment.

2.10.1.Community and social Capital theory

According to World Bank (2000) defined, social capital of a society includes "The institutions, relationships, and the attitudes, norms, and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development (p.4). Similarly, the theory of community and Social capital is important in public relations (Communication) functions; such as maintaining harmony and creating a sense of community are achieved through communication, by building relationships among the stakeholders (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000).

In Putnam's view, whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals; social capital refers to connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (Putnams, 2003). Starting from the coming of social capital as theory different scholars defined it and added some different views on their own and studied it in different perspectives. The thinking of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam are different aspects in their studies. The theory of social capital which has been summarized in-terms of definition; purposes and analysis are shortly described as follows:

Table: 1. Social Capital concepts based on its Definitions, Purposes, and Analysis

| Scholars | Definitions | Purposes | Analysis |
|----------|--|---|---|
| Bourdieu | Resources that provide access to group goods | To secure economic capital | Individuals in class competition |
| Coleman | Aspects of social structure that actors can use as resources to achieve their interests. | To secure human capital. | Individuals in family and community setting |
| Putnam | Trust, norms and networks that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit. | To secure effective democracy and economy | Regions in national settings. |

Source: Ian Winter. Towards a Theorized Understanding of Family Life and Social Capital: Working Paper, 21, 2000. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

As it is described in the above table the scholars used the theory differently to link it into their aim and accomplish the needed goals. Bourdieu and Coleman were suggested Social Capital differently from Putnam’s view and they used the theory in aspects of their own study. In this research also, the researcher particularly used and focused on the Putnam’s view of definitions and the purpose of the theory. Because in other scholars’ view it is also explained that, the mutual relations, interactions, and networks that emerge among human groups, as well as the level of trust (seen as the outcome of obligations and norms which adhere to the social structure) found within a particular group or community. As it was mentioned in the article of “Fundamentals of social Capital, 2000”, there is an implicit understanding that social capital will be useful for enhancing some other feature such as learning, social mobility, economic growth, political prominence, or community vitality as well as social capital enables people to collaborate, socialize, establish communities, and live together’ (Wall, E., et al. 1998 p. 300-322).

Creating Social Capital

Public relations scholars and practitioners need to understand the processes of creating social capital. Putnam emphasizes the importance of past experiences for the creation and maintenance of social capital. In fact, networks of civil engagement work by fostering reciprocity, facilitating

coordination, and amplifying information about the trustworthiness of other individuals; social networks embody past success at collaboration (Rothstein & Stolle, 2002). “Successful collaboration in one endeavor builds connections and trust as well as social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other unrelated tasks” (Putnam, 1993, p. 3). In short, social capital builds and maintains a thriving community, and when there is a decrease in social capital, a sense of society is lost.

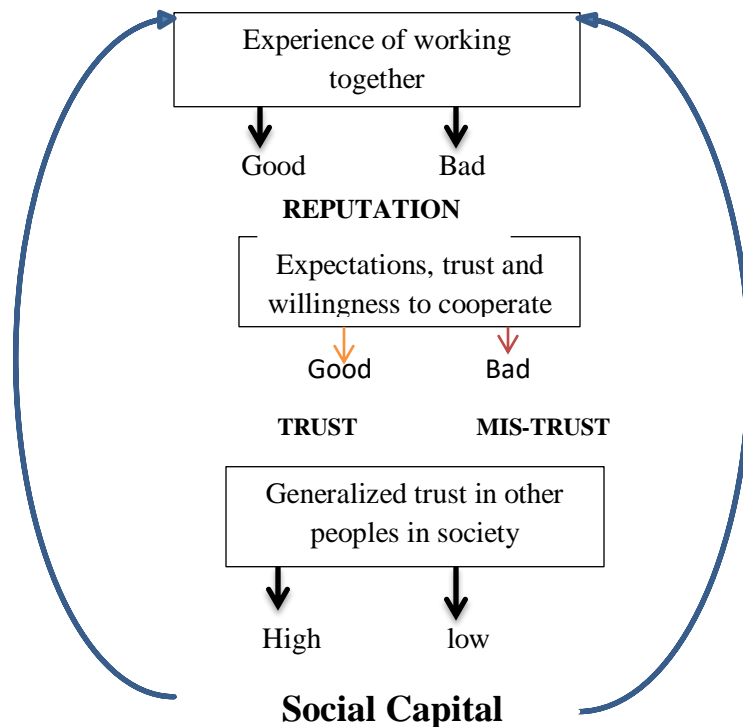


Fig: 2. Model of extremes of level of social capital creation designed by: (Luoma-aho, 2006; Misztal, 1996; Putnam et al.; Sztompka, 2000). Taken from the book of Public Relations and Social theory, 2002 p.243

The above figure describes the process of how social capital is created. The model has both instrumental and theoretical value, which demonstrates how experiences become expectations, which contribute to reality. Putnam et al. (1993) note: “Citizens in civic communities expect better government and (in part through their own efforts) they get it” (p. 182). However, for this prophecy to be fulfilled, it needs a society (e.g., a democratic societal system), in which various voices are enabled and allowed to be heard. Fostering such a society is one of the core responsibilities of public

relations or communication. However, one of the criticisms toward this theory (Putnam's Social Capital) is that Putnam has also been accused of bringing a forlorn message: in areas with a low sense of community and little social capital, the process of reestablishing either a sense of community or social capital is almost impossible.

Thus, social capital theory is also criticized that as it is more of an umbrella concept than a functioning theory and other scholars also widely accepted that social capital can have positive and negative consequences. Hence, Economists can object to the inclusion of social with capital, and sociologists can take issue with the inclusion of capital with social (<https://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/criticisms-social-capital-theory-lessons/>)

2.10.2. Communicative actions and Public Sphere

Habermas's theory of Communicative actions and Public Sphere is the second theory that strength and reveals the communication relevance to consensus building in this study and it has good approach to the theory of Social Capital. Because of it integrated the legitimacy, truth, intelligibility and truthfulness and also social capital was compiled of trust, reputation and experience of working together. So that the researcher combined both Public Sphere and Social Capital theory together in this study for the process of consensus building among different nations and peoples of the environment. According to the Theory of '*Communicative Action and Public Sphere*' (Habermas, 1984, 1987), communication always happens as a multidimensional process and each participant in this process needs to accept the validity of certain quasi-universal demands or claims in order to achieve understanding. According to Habermas point of view, "Communicative actions and Public sphere comes into existence when citizens communicate, either face to face or through letters, journals, and newspapers and other mass media in order to express their opinions about matters of general interest, and to subject these opinions to rational discussion" (Edgar, 2005, p. 31). This implies that the partners in the communication process must mutually trust that they fulfill the following validity claims:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Intelligibility | (being able to use the proper grammatical rules) |
| Truth | (talk about something which the partner also accepts exists) |
| Truthfulness | (being honest and not misleading the partner) |
| Legitimacy | (acting in accordance with mutually accepted values and norms) |

The above four validity claims are mapped by Habermas perspectives of understanding for theory of Communicative actions based on three domains of reality the three “worlds”: The “objective world” of external nature (about which true statements can be made); the “subjective world of internal nature (which consists of individual experiences and is only accessible to the respective speaker); and the “social world” of society (i.e., the world of social relations controlled by values and norms).

As long as neither of the partners has doubts about the fulfillment of these claims, the communication process will function without interruption. However, these ideal circumstances are an ideal type of imagination; they hardly ever occur in reality, Habermas argues that often, basic rules of communication are violated and therefore discourse is needed as a “repair-mechanism.” The term discourse, as used by Habermas, implies that all persons involved must have the opportunity to doubt the truth of assertions, the truthfulness of expressions, and the legitimacy of interests. Only when plausible answers are given, the flow of communication will continue (Roland Burkart 2009, p. 146).

The theory of public sphere was also criticized for it is no less permeated by power relations than society as a whole. The hegemonic discourses generated within the public sphere express the particular interests of the most powerful social groups. The discourses of educated, wealthy, mostly white, and predominantly male elites reflect the specific interests of the privileged sectors of society (see Thompson 1995: 72). And Habermas’s account of the public sphere is largely gender-blind. The marginalization of women within the modern public sphere as well as based on overly rationalistic assumptions.

Therefore, among other social theories, the researcher preferred and decided to see his study through the theory of the Habermas and Putnam’s theory: the theory of Public Sphere and communicative Action and Theory of community and Social capital respectively. In general, the activities that carried out in this study would be examined in both aspects to give the peoples space for free discourse to initiate them to feel a sense community and build Consensus by well strategic communication and encouraging the relationship through building a form of social capital.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study was designed to analyze the government Relations and Communication Strategies for consensus building in the Burayu city. The philosophy of Constructivism is appropriate research strategy for social sciences studies like this. In fact, this inquiry furthermore followed an Evaluative research type to analyze and asses deeply the roles of Government Relations (GR) and applications of Strategic communication specifically for the purpose of consensus building. Through the approaches of Assessment practices which is the subtopic of Evaluative research design, the researcher was enabled to evaluate special form of situations (cultural, social, economic) that practiced in the community and prevailed in a particular setting. Accordingly, some scholars stated that, “The policy, strategies, guidelines, rules and regulations and governing the operations of an institutions or organization and community can also be studied through evaluative type of research design” (Belay and Abdinasir, 2015 p.78). Likewise, the study also processed in-light of Social and Capital and Communicative actions and Public Sphere theory approach which discussed in detail in chapter two as a theoretical framework of the research.

3.2. Research Methods

Broadly, there are two types of research methods: i.e. Qualitative and Quantitative research approaches. Only Qualitative research approach was employed in this inquiry. As mentioned by scholar, ‘The qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings as peoples bring to them’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, the participants, and the readers of a study (Cress well, 2017).

In addition to that, Qualitative research is all about exploring issues, understanding phenomena and gaining insight into peoples’ attitudes, behaviors, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or life styles. Qualitative research aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reason that govern such behavior as well as it investigates the Why and How of decision making, not just what, where, and when (Belay and Abdinasir, 2015, p. 94).

As an academic and social behaviors research the researcher follows the Critical Social Research approach which is one among various forms of Qualitative research follows. Critical Social Research deals with examining how peoples communicate and develop symbolic understanding, expressions, and meanings of life, love, friendship, marriage, child bearing, parenting, aging, death, mourning, and grieve, sex and gender, motherhood and fatherhood (Belay and Abdinasir, 2015, p.100). Due to the nature of this study allows collecting data qualitatively through Interview and Focus Group Discussion, and it could be descriptively analyzed and provided formal interpretations at the end of data collection.

3.3. Sampling techniques

Since this study employed qualitative research approach, sampling techniques should also be designed as it goes with qualitative research methods. So that, this research used Purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.

3.3.1. Purposive Sampling

According to Cress well (2017), Purposive Sampling Techniques can be used to select appropriate and valuable respondents and collecting the fact and first-hand information. The researcher also focused on the above techniques to employ and process the data collection in this study. There are some reasons that why the researcher decided to use non-probability sampling which is Purposive sampling. These are:

- ❖ Since this study employ qualitative method approach, the researcher needs to conduct an interview with matured respondents those who can provide factual and valuable response for this research and to keep the validity.
- ❖ It is impossible to conduct an Interview and FGD with such large residents of the town at a time and it is must to focus only on the very important person or key informants of the area those who represent the large communities.
- ❖ Due to the nature of this research, the researcher needs to make the opportunity of gender balance and to treat ethnic difference in the social status of the environment to avoid personal bias as soon as possible.

3.3.2. Snowball Sampling

In addition to Purposive sampling techniques, the researcher used Snowball Sampling techniques for further study and analysis of reliable data. Snowball sampling techniques would also be used to get more relevant data which strength the study. Snowball sampling is a method of gathering information to access specific groups of people and it is a design process of selection data usually done by using networks. It is useful when the researcher know little about a group or organization to study; contact with few individuals will direct him/her to other group. The selection of the study sample is useful especially for communication aspect, in making decision or in diffusion of knowledge to peoples. The disadvantage is that the choice of the whole sample balances on the choice of individuals from the beginning of the stage, belonging to a particular clique or have ample biases. Since It is difficult to use when the sample becomes larger and larger (Etikan et al. 2016). However, the advantages and limitations of this research method was concentrated and evaluated carefully and consciously by the researcher.

3.4. Sampling size

Deciding research methodology includes specifying the data sources or respondents. Because of large numbers of residents in the environment, obviously we couldn't involve all the peoples of the land (residents) as key informants for this research. So that, putting the qualitative research form in consideration, only few key informants those who are more relevant to this study had been selected from the city residents. The numbers of respondents needed for this research was decided according to their highly importance for this inquiry; and sample size was determined depend upon the background knowledge and experiences of the residents/respondents to justify issues under study and as well as to get quality information to answer the objectives of this research.

For general sample size for this research was thirty seven (37) peoples. These peoples were purposively selected from the entire town besides contents analysis of organization's plan. Those respondents were from Local Government Officials (LGO), Communication head office and experts, religious leaders, and traditional elders of the environment/city had been conducted an Interview purposively and by using Snowball techniques, as well as the FGD which included 8-

10 individuals from each groups was take place with *Qeerroo (youths)* as a part of the community and conducted FGD for detail discussions.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

I am just as rational as human being; I always try to think positive for others and want to understand everyone with integrity as much as I can. Saying this, based on my personal disciplines and fundamental ethics of scientific research, I have been doing the necessary efforts to keep the personal privacy of every respondent of mine; even for those who have least contribution in this study. The researcher collected data from the most appropriate peoples to the issues by asking their consent and willingness to participate in the study. Then the consent form or paper of agreement was prepared for the informants of interview and FGD and distributed to them. And more than half of respondents were willingly filled and signed the form that prepared to assure the validity of this study. Accordingly, the researcher also agreed with them to keep privacy and use the appropriate information. Furthermore, the researcher invited language professionals to check language usage and grammar rules while translating the data from original source to English and also research assistants were mainly took place in assisting the researcher during data collection through interview and FGD.

3.6. Data collections tools

In this research the tools of data collection are Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Documents Analysis.

3.6.1. Interview

Interview is a technique of generating primary data in which the interviewee gives the necessary information verbally. As Belay and Abdinasir (2015) explained in their book, the purpose of interview is to explore a certain behavioral phenomena in depth and breadth using those few but focal persons who are closely related to the research agenda. Therefore, in this study the data was collected by conducting an interview with three (3) Religious leaders, three (3) popular and traditional local Elders, four (4) from local government officials. In general sixteen (10) peoples were conducted an interview. Semi-structural type of interviewing technique had been used to get and gather data.

3.6.2. Focus Group Discussion

The second tool of data collection is Focus Group Discussion. Focus group interviewing is a research strategy for understanding audience attitudes and behavior. Since the FGD responses are often more complete and less inhibited than that of those from individual interviews, it will also be used as a tool to collect preliminary data.

To conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD), there are some procedures and criteria are needed to be fulfilled and considered. By putting this in concentration, firstly the researcher visited the environment to facilitate the condition for the study and adapt the area to gather the necessary information on how contact the youth members. And then after a few days, the researcher contacted some of the youth coordinators of the city and gave highlights about the study, as well as the necessary relationship was normally built with the youth of the environment and selection of more talented youth members among the others based on their motivations and skills had started technically to access the quality data.

These skills can be by studying their communication skills (communication efficiency); the personal background of the youth in the city was properly studied and identified with oral evidences from the coordinators. And then the researcher had been able to easily organize a group of peoples and key informants those who were needed for this study. Favorable area was selected and prepared for discussions and also the researcher and the moderator welcomed the participants and gave them short explanations (the highlights of the study) as well as clarification of the introduction of the issue under study was provided to the organized group.

This Focus Group Discussion was separately took place in three different groups which consists of 8-10 individuals from each groups. Those individuals were gathered together according to their societal similarity and their own interest and creativity and motivation as well.

And also the researcher and his assistants played moderator roles so as to coordinate every activity that take place in the discussions. The researcher and assistants were also facilitating and motivating each individual's role within the groups and encouraging them to equally participate and freely giving their opinion.

3.6.3. Document analysis

Lastly, the researcher analyzed the written strategic Plan of the city administrations (Municipality office) and Government Communication affairs Office of Burayu city administration. In this document analysis, the issue of Consensus Building and applications Communication strategy had been focused in depth. Whether the local government includes in their plan about initiating the community to strength their unity and relationships, or they simply and inactively handle the issue which occurred in the society. What kind of activities that strategic communication played in the community relations and creating consensus among societies was carefully analyzed.

3.7. Data Analysis and Interpretation methods

This research follows qualitative data analysis techniques. The data were collected through different tools as it is mentioned in the data collection methods and the analyzing was also being processed according to similar idea gained from the participants. The data collected through Interview and FGD were analyzed and interpreted according to the similarities of the response given from the respondents. The data was collected by the two languages (Afaan Oromoo and Amharic) which are largely spoken by the local peoples of the city and later translated into English through verbatim transcription and explicitly interpreted by the researcher without any distortion of the idea. Since the researcher has to care about his respondents and keep the anonymity, the ‘code’ has been given to the name for the informants.

These codes could virtually represent the actual key informants; without distorting the accurate information. In this transcription style the researcher used coding instead of using the actual name of the respondents. After the data transcribed properly, analyzing techniques had done by the researcher by arranging the similar ideas together cautiously from all respondents of the interview and FGD. The collected data was descriptively and narratively analyzed and lastly, the data which gained from the Document analysis was also interpreted by focusing on the application of the plan and the study has drawn the conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The data was collected through different tools in this study. Interview was conducted with the key informants of government officials and traditional leaders or elders, spiritual leaders, and FGD was also conducted with local youth groups of the city. All respondents in this study are the most influential informants those who contribute for the success of the study. The key and important point need to be studied in this research was categorized into thematic topic. The data collected from the interview and FGD are similarly transcribed, analyzed and interpreted properly.

In the process analyzing the data, the researcher used a code which can represent the actual name of the respondents. The code decided for the representation of the respondents and the researcher used I 1, I 2, I 3, and etc. for the peoples those who conducted interview. In this case the letter ‘I’ represents the word “Interviewee”. In the same way, Focus Group Discussion was conducted at three places separately; the code was given to the first, second and third FGD naming it by saying FGD.A, FGD.B, and FGD.C respectively. Each FGD is composed of 8-10 but not less than 8 individual for the three FGD. Accordingly the participants from all FGD were given a code according to their arrival at meeting area and according to their registration, which was FGD.A1, A2 A3 A4 A5...A9. etc., and the same is true for FGD.B and C for each individuals.

Table: 2. Respondents’ Profiles

| S.N | Participants | Male | Female | Total |
|---------------------|---|------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Interview with Local Government Officials | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 2 | Interview with Traditional elders | 3 | - | 3 |
| 3 | Interview with Spiritual leaders | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 4 | Focus Group Discussions | 19 | 8 | 27 |
| Ground Total | | | 37 | |

4.2. Data analyzed from Interview and Focus Group Discussion

The data collected from Interview and Focus Group Discussion is analyzed and interpreted according to their similarity response from the participants. The contradictory arguments of the respondents from FGD are respected and triangulated together with interview responses.

4.2.1. The social relationship in Burayu City

Burayu City Administration has so many different nations, nationality and peoples those who are living together. As the population data gained from City Administration (CA) reflects, it was estimated that more than twelve (12) different ethnic groups of peoples are living in the city. As any communities have good or bad relationship with each other's, it is obviously known that the societies of Burayu city administration are living together whether they are in good or bad status of relations as data explains. By putting this in mind, the researcher conducted FGD and Interview with some selected stakeholder/ residents of the city, and almost all respondents from FGD and Interview believed that living together is better than walking alone. Among the participants, the FGD.A 2 explained about the community relationship of Burayu city from his own point of view, saying that:

If I start from social consensus of this city as a general, the communities of this city are living together by creating relationship on behalf of social, economic, and in a form of social association. Here we can say there is some amount of consensus among the peoples but the social consensus of the city or town is not as good as the relationship of in rural community. Because the relationship in the city is just follow the modernization style and everybody wants to live his/her own life lonely. So that, I'm afraid to say there is best relationship and mutual understanding among the urban peoples everywhere including the city of Burayu (From FGD (A2) conducted on April 20, 2019).

This idea is explaining that the relationship between the urban and rural society is not the same, the rural community relationship is more attractive than the urban one. Societies are feeling a sense of community at rural area even if they are sparsely living in the environment. In addition to this, the whole members of FGD.A agreed saying that 'We can't totally say that there is no understanding or consensus between the heterogeneous peoples of Burayu city, some relations is reflected from the community; however sometimes it is distorted due to religion, politics, and

ethnic difference.’ Correspondingly, FGD.B almost all participants also extend their opinion that the relationship of Burayu peoples are categorized according to the level of community and it is available between certain peoples of the similar status and rank of life.

For us it is so difficult to say there is consensus among the community of the environment and it is the same to speak and underline for totally absence of the consensus also. Because if I boldly underline the absence of community relations in Burayu city, people can meet each other at religious institutions, worshipping together, working place, ethnic similarity, language matters, and according to their norms and culture, and also having certain political view differently and they meet at different stations with their intimate members (FGD.B Conducted on April 21, 2019).

This statement suggested that the community’s relations were depending on their political ideologies, religious perceptions, and geographical appropriateness, personal friendships, language and ethnic similarities and common culture and norms that link the societies in the city together. ‘Never the less, an individual from FGD.C4 enlightened his estimation and said that;

I can’t generalize and I am dump to say that there is an umbrella which joins these people’s altogether. Because these peoples have no contact each other and know each other very well, even at wedding ceremonies, and funeral ceremony they have no issue with you unless you are the member of ‘Iddir’ in a local association, the way how they approach together is very weak during mourning with the people of different ethnicity, language, culture; and even there is a time when some family prepare funeral parlour without any support from the neighbor (One of the members of FGD, C4 April 20, 2019).

As elaborated by some individual from the FGD.C, the sense of community is eliminating and diminishing by the community participation in civil association even at neighbor level, this reflects that no one understand if his/her neighbor is in bad or good condition and whether unhappy or in a best mood, no one knows whose son is died or alive from his environment. It’s difficult to conclude that the resident of the city have strong rapport and social linkages in this kind of situations. In supporting this idea the interviewees those who conducted from the religious and traditional elders similarly answered for the related questions that the local

communities are combined together during special incidents when a problem happens in their environment. Accordingly, they meet each other according to their societal similarity and intimacy during several holiday ceremonies. Additionally, their interaction is mostly relating to similarity religion and political ideology. Otherwise, they have no follow up and continuous relationship. This can also causes to develop prejudices and contradictory perceptions among the communities.

As some scholars explained in their previous studies, this kind of situations can lead heterogeneous peoples to conflict. ‘Conflicts may also arise from misinformation, stereotypes, prejudices, contradictory perceptions of justice, differing sociocultural traditions, personal beliefs or ideologies; and they are of many dimensions: racial, sectarian, ethnic, religious, ideological, cultural, economic, political, social, and others’ (Kriesberg 2006, p..57).

Generally, understanding the view of the respondents, the researcher recognized that there should be determinant factors to create relationship and develop consensus among the heterogeneous community. These factors can be religion, culture, norm, language, ethnicity, geographic area and various phenomenons like wedding, funerals, and holidays.

4.2.2. Relationship between society and government

Naturally it is good if there is worthy relationship between the governing and governed body in any nation whether it has dense population or even at family level. Putting this in mind, the researcher analyzed the real relationship between the governments and the peoples of Burayu city. Regarding this, the respondents from the interview and FGD.A, FGD B, FGD C had been conducted and asked whether their rapport is good or weak in a sense. Firstly the whole respondents agreed on the relationship between the government and society is more useful and essential for all things. In this city the communication between local government officials and the residents is recently going well. However when the respondents said this, it was not to emphasize that the government is just fulfilling what is expected for this community in all aspects. Also for other informants, there are some reasons which linked and collated the government and the community together; the one thing that the government ought to know proper serving of the communities in the habitations and giving them important needs that the society supposed to get said and emphasized one of the respondents.

However, some respondents couldn't measure the relationship of the peoples and local government officials (LGO). They said it is not tangible and concrete to determine that there are harmonious relations between our leaders and the community. In another way, one of the interviewee (I6) believed that,

The relationship between the government (LGO) and the societies is not good and attractive. I myself sometimes ask my mind whether the local leaders know the real number of the residents and households that are living in the city or some are just living as an ordinary new comer. In my own view, the local government officials couldn't smoothly identify who is living where, and what is the level of relationship between the peoples and their communication is almost vertical (Personal Interview, April 25, 2019)

The above mentioned view is trying to demonstrate that the rapport between the LGO and society is not sufficient and fine. When the individual used the words in the earlier statement to address his feeling by saying 'knowing each other'; that means there is weak rapport between the governors and governed (peoples), not only this but also it shows that there is low communication practice vertically between them as well. Scholarly, definition the vertical communication or two way asymmetric way of communication is not as useful as two way communication model and it is also cited in the J. Fombrun and Van Reil's book of "Essentials of Corporate communication" (2007 p.34), the model of two-way-asymmetric communication is imperfect because, although the organization is revealing accurate information, the organization does not invite much dialogue. This occurs, for instance, when companies use scientific evidence to convey information to audiences (ibid). Relating to this issue the participants of all FGD also discussed on it and they justified and summarized saying;

The relationship between the government and community is dismantling. Because of the mayors of the city is immediately changed within short time of his appointment and without doing and performing his promise for the community. We just hear the word he came and he went at the same time. As if the system is changed with changing the mayors, the next mayor also doesn't want to accomplish what the former mayor planned and proposed to do for the community. So, this issue counts long years and the peoples

always contact new face of the city mayor and boring to communicate freely (From FGD conducted 2019).

Even though the relationship is not measured numerically the feeling of social interaction and socialized way of the government is not normal conditions in the environment as the data expressed. As the relation is so important for the merchants meet their costumers, employers with their staff members, students with the teachers, as religious followers connected with their priests, as well as the government and the community also need to be tied together. However, to the opposite of this the connection between the leaders and peoples is just come to an end from time to time because of seasonally changing of the mayors and officials without serving the publics. Thus, the relations can be built through time, as soon as the government is working to solve social problems and providing social facilities. The managers changed from the area within a time of appointed or before serving their peoples long time. The newly appointed one is also challenged to adapt the environment to become familiar with society so that their rapport would become dismantled due to this. In other words, half respondents of FGD and interview responded that, the government's officials sometimes create misunderstanding in relationship.

For instance, when some problems occurred in this environment, the government officials invite the residents of all villages according to their similarity in social and economic status to discuss with them. Even though they communicate with the communities in all levels, their communication is so different because they try to manipulate their speech to convince the audience rather they put their intention to build well rapport in the community. The respondents illustrated this in best example saying: when the peoples of the area complain about high price increment on specific Goods, the officials (city administrator) also complain against the merchants that it was wrong and need to be corrected very soon when they are only on the stage. But if they have a meeting with merchants also, they do the same and talk at back of the community forgetting the mistakes wanted to be verified. As this imply, the governors are working to comfort with every people they meet in their discussions. From this we can understand that there is failure of using appropriate communication and low achievement of Public Relations duties as well. From scholarly view, some researchers also inter-linked the profession of public relations or communication with the dynamic needs of the society even if it is not much successful in the context of our country. To Kruckeberg (2006) public relations can

be understood as having the responsibility for creating, restoring and maintaining the societal linkages between governments, civil society organizations and corporations.

4.2.3. Strategic Communication for consensus Building

It is inevitable to think about the communication when we talk about consensus and agreement. Consensus can be improved and built through war and conflict. Anyhow, as scholars emphasized that 'societies and social organizations are held together not by consensus but by constraint, not by universal agreement but by the coercion of some by others' (Onuoha, 2010, P.11). Even if consensus is built by constraint and coercion its end may not be successful forever. Therefore strategic communication is the best techniques that help to build consensus for long-lasting time. As it was previously described in the literature review, strategic communication just focuses on how organization communicates across organizational endeavor.

While the researcher asked the participants whether the city practicing well strategic communication to organize the community of the residence, more than half respondents those who conducted interview from different sectors were responded that the organization is practicing and applying very important tasks especially in unifying the societies the city. According the response given by 'I3' during interview, the main objective of this office is to create National consensus among the peoples of the city. When we say the peoples of the city it is not only about specific community those who are identical in language and identity or cultures. It is about concerning all residents to understand the government plan and as well as the community in his/her environment by having consensus of the nationwide (Personal Interview, 2019).

This emphasizes that the organization is actively working to create united society in their daily activities, as well developing good rapport between the government and among the peoples themselves regardless of the their language, ethnic and different ideologies. As the statement explained, the main goal of the organization is to bring the national consensus at nationwide, this implies that they are on the way to build nation which is one of the big responsibility of the government. In contrast, other respondent from the community (I5) replied, the Government (LGO) did contribute nothing for the relationship of the community; many times they focus on their political advantages. Their concentration mainly about the economic development,

supporting political ideology of the ruling party but they have no space for the communication which strength national consensus. This contradicted idea with the first one; when the first idea gave emphasis to building social connection, the second one stressed that there is a communication gap on behalf of the government to realize the vision of strategic communication in consensus building process.

Additionally, according to other respondents reacted in their discussion during FGD, the work Communication was not done before an incident happened last time in the city, if there was strong communication culture in the people that problems/ conflict between the peoples would have not happened. This was the weakness of the government to predict for social cooperation at that time, they added. In the same way, all interviewees from the part community likewise agreed upon that the government only prepare the stages to discuss with local peoples during crisis happened. It is also intended to solve the problem but not to foster the future relationship of the community, they have only an option to use politician words to persuade at that time, to change the heartbeat of the audience and anyhow this is not helpful for long term solutions. The peoples' wishes are the sustainable relations with each other by developing the Consensus among each individual and understanding the culture, identity, values and every societal principle. As it is cited in Rhee, Y. (2004) case study of a government organization, the Public Relations scholar J. Grunig (2002) was renamed the maintenance strategies as cultivation strategies and he demarcated cultivation strategies as communication methods that public relations people use to develop new relationships with publics and to deal with the stresses and conflicts that occur in all relationships. From this point of view, the researcher understands and cognize that relationship cultivation strategies are just important for the communicators and LGO's to sustain general consensus.

The government officials were asked in interview about their strategic communication activities, they replied that the office has top down structure, and relationship with the stakeholders and households; this means they highlighted that the organization have a chain members from the top management to village level as an agents, those agents can deliver us the new idea, information or message if any problem happen in the community and this system enables the communication to smoothly disseminated.

Conversely, many respondents in their responses couldn't agree with this and believe that the communication strategy is functioned well between the community and as well as the government also. They told the researcher that, there are some lack with the LGO in working on the relationship of the peoples and satisfying them by fulfilling some necessary criteria which join the peoples together. The society gets the stage after the conflict happened between Oromo and Dorze peoples. Therefore, the intention of the meeting was to manage the seriously conflict otherwise the strategic communication was not intended to create consensus between the two bodies. Relating to this, scholars also argued that communication is important to build relations than to use it only as conflict management. It was cited and paraphrased by Emma Wood (2001, p. 83), emphasizing Van Riel's corporate communication that, it is founded upon the notions of strategic management and relationship building; "corporate communication is an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent" (Van Riel 1995, p. 26).

4.2.4. Roles of government Relations and society in consensus Building

Consensus is not something which can run by a single individual, but the individual can be an energetic and powerful stimulant to maintain a consensus among large numbers of societies.

4.2.4.1. Government Relations in consensus Building (CB)

All respondents believed that the government must construct the sense of community by facilitating the atmosphere and creating the decision making process in the form of the conference. Frankly speaking said one of the FGD members (FGD.B5) that are the local leaders (government officials) who are highly accountable for the community to attract and make them aware of the diversity and tell them how to tolerate each other. They have to facilitate the condition for the peoples and treat them equally, and then the community can easily learn to love each other. The officials in this area are always passive in integrating the peoples because of they are much busy for the tasks politics. Adding to this, one the interviewee (I8) stated that and said;

The local governments officials don't care for the local community, but the society are taking care of their government in this local area. Even I can say the peoples are carrying

the cargo of the leaders and the leaders are applying to use their authority rather than understanding the community's interest (I8 personal interview, April 15, 2019).

Almost all participants agreed that there are many important topics which can open the opportunity for communication to close the gap between the societies and government, that is the issue of the basic social need that the community deserve to acquire from the ruling party like electricity power, water service, health center, schools and road and etc., these all things require effective communication, if these issues are communicated well and public interests are satisfied or their questions are answered at the right time, no need of blaming towards the government officials of the city. Adding to they indicated that, 'be it the problem of budget, or lack of government interest, we don't know the reason behind why the government always unable to enhance the community service and fulfill their needs' said and the group emphasized (FGD.C conducted on April 21, 2019).

In other way, as the data gained from the interview that conducted with the government officials reflects, currently many tasks are started to work on the relationship of the community on behalf of the government. The interviewees were trying to support with evidence saying that, 'on the last Easter celebration, the Oromo and Gamo peoples had celebrated the holiday together and sharing opinion with each other on April 27, 2019 in Burayu City. Both communities had also exchanged their experiences and love as well as hospitality on that day. Accordingly, this event or celebration was done intentionally to strength the relationship of both peoples, since the previous conflict was specifically happened between these two groups of the peoples. The issue concerning about fulfilling social necessities is also on the way to be answered with short time, definitely, the government is working to satisfy the public interest' (Personal interview I8, April 16, 2019).

Realizing from the ideas that indicated in the above paragraph, we can understand that there are objectionable opinions between the leaders and society. The community were grumbled to the governors due to their low activities in serving the society, the effort to organize and unifying the communities was took place mostly in case of social grievances. And also this data also told that, the government relations is active in assembling the community for social interactions at a time when crisis happened and propagating to seek only their political advantages. But the officials

also expressed their intentions that they initiated the Oromoo and Dorze peoples to come together and celebrate the holidays in organized way. This is surely and intentionally planned for the purpose of calming down the conflict that happened between both peoples. Celebrating holiday festivity with diverse ethnic class is much important for the development of the city relationship. Nonetheless, the holiday would have included the whole community of the city otherwise; it may have an implication or negative impact on other ethnic groups in their social relationship. Because, as it was mentioned earlier; the city has different nation and nationalities, and different ethnic families those who are dwelling in the environment. Even though, the data shows that the local government's role in communication is limited to the special case that it was only taken place when social quarrel happened; accordingly, and less activities are carrying out to build consensus in normal situations even the best option for leaders should be to solve the problem/crisis before it exploited and expanded. Moreover, it needs first hand service to achieve consensus, according to the intentions of the respondents. Anyhow scholars confirmed and agreed that, 'indeed, decision making is a communication process in which meanings are constructed and reconstructed, and in which power is enacted and all kinds of communication roles are played. This varies from information and persuasion to dialogue and negotiation' (Ruler, 2004, p.123-143).

In similar way, the FGD.A of all members underlined and agreed upon what need to be done by the government after they reacted in details for long minutes, they summarized that,

In the Burayu city administration the community relationship is not built by the activity of local government, since we started to live in this city, we haven't seen any event prepared by LGO for the purpose the strengthening the relation of nations and nationality. Any communication in the area is just organizational purposed but it doesn't much focus society and not community centered. Therefore to create the consensus and arrive on general agreement with all peoples, the local leaders including the mayor of the city should do on awareness creation, prepare a stage and communication space among the community and organizing the peoples together and discuss with each individuals. And also enables to mobilize a civil association which includes all peoples of diversity. For instance, it is more important if the government organize the local peoples, youth group, elders associations, according to their ethnic diversity by giving good recognition to for

all nations nationalities equally. Then peoples can understand difference and diversity and respect everyone (The members of FGD, April 21, 2019).

This statement implies that the role of government was not functional and their communication is paralyzed to maintain the relationship of the local community. They practiced organizational communication which mainly focus on the organizations duties, rather than consider about social alliance of the city residence. No space is left for the community to discuss together and the leaders also didn't initiate them to fill communication gap.

4.2.4.2. Roles of Society in Consensus Building

Any societies may have an experience of playing an upper role in building consensus and creating common association traditionally. Various nations and nationalities and peoples of this world are living together harmoniously with others and discordantly with one else. As conflict is natural, the source of this conflict is disagreement based on interest or misperceptions on some idea. Otherwise, any peoples by themselves as an individual or a group have no case and problems to fight and make conflict without any reason.

According to the respondents illustrated, irrespective of the gender, age, status and identity all the peoples or communities of the city are responsible for creating relationship and consensus among the community. In a sense, society, government, youth, religious leaders, traditional elders and political parties are responsible for this issue. Thus, every person has his /her own vision, responsibility for himself and others as well as for his country. Therefore it would be interesting if all person focuses on strengthening the relationship and develop the general consensus of the community. Without saying, it is the responsibility of young or youngster, elders or leaders, we have to take this as an individual assignment to work on building the consensus among the different peoples of the country. The response of Interview that conducted with traditional leaders showed that, in the process of creating the consensus the new generations are on the right track to develop sentiment and love among the community. Since the history was not good for our relationship, the residents were discerning and discriminating each other by the identity based conflict, but these should be stopped at this point by new and visionary generation. As well as this is a time when we have to construct the demolished rapport between the nations

through building the consensus, said the traditional elders. Similar to this, the youth group that conducted an FGD was also explaining,

To build a consensus every nation, nationalities and peoples of all level have their own different roles, but before starting to build the consensus, we should identify where the truth is and know how truth can sound within all of the society. We need to get united on truth and impartiality; if truth of these communities theft once, the whole community became voiceless, and their rights is being disrespected as well, to come on agreement with all peoples, these all things should be put in consideration by the ruling party and the door should be opened for all peoples for discussion on what they have in common like values, culture, language and life itself. Then no one ignore others norm rather to respect and understand each other. Consequently, the youth of the city decided to struggle for the distorted truth and to correct the wrong done by the government. This is not about hating other peoples and it is regardless of the ethnicity, identity, and language difference as well and the only issue these youth group want to improve is the equal service for all nations of the city without any discrimination (Conducted FGD April 20, 2019).

When we scrutinize the above argument, just from both interview and FGD response we precisely understand that their great ambition and interest in the community to build consensus. Specially, the traditional elders were acting as arbitrations while a crisis and the youth were also struggling for the unity in the city. Accordingly the elders responded by saying that though this country was in different ideological complications from the history, the new generation will be accountable for the future of this country and they need accept full responsibility for building nations even beyond territory. The youth had also assured to take the responsibility if and only if the truth is respected widely as a nation. They explained that they want to treat all peoples equally to foster the consensus among all ethnic diversity. That means if one ethnic group is discriminated and the other is favored, consensus can be built in no way by doing so. Here, the researcher analyzed that there is a big wills in the mind of the community, the youth and society as general are playing appreciable roles in connecting and creating social liaisons.

4.2.5. Government trust and transparency in communication

Trust and transparency are the most important spice in building consensus. Whatever issue that you want to communicate with your friends is evaluated by the trust that you have for the message or information. If we lose the trust and transparency we can also lose our individual respects or organization reputations as well. Hence, this study analyzed the trust and transparency that the government shows in their daily communications.

Scholars also suggested that ‘...as many professions fight issues of public trust in the wake of recent scandals, there is an increased emphasis on ethics’ (Sama and Shoaf, 2008, <https://books.google.com.et/books?isbn=3834986755>), so that the respondents also discussed and responded to the researcher’s question openly. Relating to this matter, one of the interviewee from the government official was asked the question and responded that, ‘in the previous time the local peoples or residents of this city have no trust from the government and LGO also. However, recently after the reformation done at all level by restructuring the government’s strategy, the government start to listen to the peoples and the peoples are starting to put their trust on him, he said. As we all know, in the former government system (means before deep reform applied) the communication style was not smoothly symmetrical system’ he added (Personal communication I5. May 5, 2019). Contrasting this argument, another interviewee (I9) gave details on this response as follows:

Normally I cannot say that, the communication of LGO is smooth and clear, because no one is guarantee for what is spoken and communicated for the public. It is preferable for the government to tell the peoples the truth on the ground which can build hospitality between the heterogeneity rather than propagating only their political view and try to persuade the peoples and divert their opinion for political agenda. I hope if the government apply and create stage for free discussion with the community of the environment all things would be expected to be improved very soon, and I wish the government officials to make deep reform from top to down at Woreda and village level, as it was started at higher governmental offices. Then the issue of the mobilizing the community to foster mutual understanding and harmony will be undeniably developed. To do this, just the government is still on the starting point and there is a frame work but

practically it has not been implemented well. Therefore, our expectation is beyond this (Interviewee I9; May 6, 2019).

Understanding the above contradictory arguments, the intention of first respondent was that there is a change between the former and the recent government practices in the city. It may be due to the current reformation from the government; so that the peoples started to believe them and put their trust on the government's accomplishments. In view of that, the respondent tried to give his own view in the statement that the government officials are also starting to pay their attention to the society after they engaged themselves in deep reformations of the regional government. Dissimilarly, the second respondent was arguing against the first one saying that; the government is left with long way to improve the behavior of telling the truth and showing the trust as well as to communicate with the community honestly to develop hospitality between the peoples rather than focusing on the single agenda of the political propaganda. According to this informant the government reform didn't reach in the community and bring change, so it is up-to the government to utilize this change and reform in the wide range of the community especially in middle and lower government officials. Doing this the government can achieve his role in building the consensus and bringing the peoples together by truthfully and transparently.

Above and beyond this, other informant (I3) certainly exposed his idea and told the researcher, that in the city administration of Burayu, the communication between the local government officials and the community was not depends on truth. When the ordinary peoples want to communicate the local leader of the city or their staff members for some issue, it is impossible to get what they need from them through communicating; they need some money to solve their problem or to answer your question. So, that it based on relatives (kinsfolks) and money can do so many things in this city more than smooth communication (Personal Interview I3 may 8, 2019). Adding to this, the participants of FGD said; we don't believe that there is trust in the communication of the officials; the society itself is tiresome with communication of the government officials (LGO). That is because of their communication and their action/ practice are not relevant. Nowadays there are many cornerstones in our environment that put by the mayor of the city for the purpose of city development; but it is just only oral manipulation than implementation of what they promise to the peoples. As a result of this the peoples don't want to

listen to the LGO, somehow, recently the government is trying to persuade them and peoples are somehow starting to pay their attention to the leaders (FGD.B April 27, 2019).

Even though the FGD participants and interview respondents are complaining the government officials for their mistrust, the some interviewees from the sectors replied that the issue not about denying the peoples questions to answer but the problem is delaying to answer and fulfill their interest, the government is working hard to response and accomplish their ambition they said. To the contrary of their opinions, officials also replied that; we always make survey getting the feeling of the community. The problem is while we collect an opinion from the society to report to the government or concerned body; sometimes the answer may be little bit delay to return back to the targeted society. Then if the previous question is not answered immediately the people would haven't interest to contribute their opinion. They need immediate response but the government needs to act according to his strategic plan. We encountered the challenges of peoples' misunderstanding for the reason of failure to responsiveness (Interview from the officials, April 12, 2019).

The exceeding statements of respondent I3 indicate that the officials were not serving the public fairly, and more of the services delivered based on the relationship between the customers and a form of reciprocal service practicing the local officials. The second (from FGD) also support this argument, and in addition to that, the FGD informants justified that the government is not as smart as his speech to applying what swore to his peoples and their communication has not been supported by action. Therefore, it causes despair to the community and fails to accomplish what make promises and again leads the community to become less interested in their participation. Scholarly view also supported this opinion and they claimed that professions also resist government regulation, in general, so demonstrating professional ethics is an important aspect of independence. Johanna Fawkes (2016) also emphasized that 'your work has value to society, generally. The social value of public relations is often presented as enhancing democratic processes through skilled communication. However, there are many critics who see only propaganda and distortion in our work, particularly in the political fields' (p. 73).

4.2.6. Challenges in consensus building

The major challenges of community relation and obstacles to build consensus among the community was discussed with key informants and respondents. The respondents shared idea on the factors that affects consensus starting from their personal experiences. As well as they itemized the main challenges and obstacles one by one and argued on the issues seriously. According to the respondents there are many problems and obstacles to the consensus in the area under study as discussed deeply with the key informants. As respondents stated in in the interview and at discussion time the first challenge in consensus building is the difference between the natures of human being. Relating community relations in Burayu city administration, one of the group participants told that,

The first reason for diversity is caused by demographic or geographical setting. This means the difference can found at least between the peoples of the same culture, identity, religion, language and ethnicity as a result of the geographical scene. In this city also since these all peoples come from different are areas, their political ideology is also quite different and it leads them to suspect each other due to the political system of this country has not been stabilized yet. The peoples always say to each other he is from this party, she is from there and that, he is the supporter or oppose to this or that party. This ideology creates confusion on the societal relationship for many years and still in process. Unfortunately, peoples those who came from the similar environment can isolate them-selves based on behavior and attitude even irrespective of their genetically or naturally the same human being. Saying this everybody is playing the political gambling rather than building relationship and consensus within the individuals (FGDA April 20, 2019).

All the all participants or respondents had agreed up on the above argument during discussions and interviewing. The idea meant to state about the main challenges of peoples in building consensus; that is due to some factors listed in the above. Among them geographical difference, political ideology (instability of political system of the country), cultural values and religions, are the stressed matters for the city residents. And these factors pledged the peoples to fell apart by their ideological difference and fill themselves in suspicions of each other. Additionally, one interviewee (I1) also supporting the idea and clarified that, ‘Since this country has the complexity of different nations and nationalities, there is a time when an individual simply

suspects his intimate friends due to his Identity and discriminate each other for the reason of, religion, language and culture and etc.’ (Interviewee I1 April 16, 2019).

Similarly, some informants exchanged and idea during of FGD and come on agreement according to the following

The past history has also an impact on certain society to harm the current relationship as well as multiple party system can divert the mindset of the peoples in the area that affects their relationship even at national level; and they couldn’t decide which party they have to support and which party they have to ignore, that is because all the party are organized by the name of the same peoples to struggle for freedom and community became confused with which party will be the winner and stands for truth successfully. And therefore, it creates a huge debate among the community so that social relations are getting decreases. And the other challenge also an appropriate use of communication and lack free discourse with community and negative perceptions toward others and undermining ones identity is the major problems. (FGD.C; April 21, 2019).

According to the respondents mentioned in the paragraph, the FGD agreed that the other problems of building consensus in the city are Past-history societal experience, multiple party system of the country, undermining other’s culture and values, and lack of plan communication (absence of deliberate dialogue with diversity). As it intended to explain by the respondents, the past history can harm the present and future relationship of community. This means that if certain community had recorded bad practices of some other peoples from history in the past it can develop negative attitude on their current relationship. It was also mentioned in the literature review from Putnam’s (2000) point of view that social capital depends upon the past experience whether it is good or bad history. The multi-party systems have also disabled the peoples to decide who they to follow and many are confused of politician ideology to support and ignore each other. Accordingly, consensus cannot be built while someone undermines other’s identity and values.

In opposing to the above respondents statements, the officials were similarly trying to response and argued saying that they are working for the society and also responsible to manage any conflict and make strong relations among the community in this city. As well concerning the

communication among the residents of the city also just they have a meeting when an urgent issue happened about our local village; on this meeting, different nation nationalities and peoples of the city participate on it. While doing this, there should be a communication to make discussion with the peoples; then most of the time we use Amharic language as the medium of the communication. This is intended to make the message clear for all peoples and to treat and show tolerance in our diversity. By saying this, the officials also advocated and entitled the other challenges for consensus as follows:

It is known that due to lack of the general consensus among the community, the ethnic based conflict was happened previously. There are some reasons for the occurrence of the conflict and ethnic clash in the city, one of the challenges is there unknown group of peoples that need special advantages by clashing the peoples together. It seems to get political advantage and exaggerate the conflict between the government and society, as well as among the societies by differentiating them in culture, norms, identity, and language and so on and disseminate the hostility between them. It is unknown these may be from the member the party. Besides this the other challenge of building consensus among the peoples is 'the broadcast media' but sorry to say this, because, these communities have been living together for long period of time without facing challenges concerning ethnic conflict. However, after different media started to broadcast about the community especially during crisis, they exaggerated the conflict as it was ethnic clash based on identity, said the officials (Personal interview with Officials, April 12, 2019).

By and large, the respondents from other interview and FGD described that, the political party also always prepare and agenda to create conflict among the peoples of the land. It is not peoples who have problem the communities but because of there is no good news from the leader of the political party and this creates worries even between the people of the same identity and ethnicity. And also the government needs to evaluate each of his political members locally, and nationally to identify negative ideology which leads this country to be dismantled. Peoples at any time are having an interest to live together and they have no options to make grumpy with each other, the member added.

As the respondent from both sides debated and reacted in the above section, all informants either from the part of government officials or the community tried to illustrate the challenges the

consensus throughout the country and particularly in the environment. As the idea from the official expressed there are unidentified bodies those who always reasonably create among the communities. As this statement describes those nameless peoples are suspected as being a member of the ruling party and the one those who against towards the new reform in the country. Anyhow, the identity of these peoples has not been still known and brought to the law from the city. So we can recognize that there is less concentration on behalf of the government to solve the society's problems and strengthen the relations between the peoples. The second justification also told us about media problems. This is also viewed as the media was reporting oppose to the government activities and many times intensify the personal conflict as the ethnic clashes. In the same way, the second argument from the FGD also supporting this opinion and added saying that there was a problem with the government body, that they prepared an issue which cause to controversy within the society and the peoples sometimes quarrel together due to a single mistake intentionally or unintentionally done by the government.

Generally speaking, the participants were conducting detail discussion in FGD and the interviewees were also responded their arguments and forwarded their wishes about the serious issue of consensus building particularly in the city government Burayu and generally at nationwide as well. On participants' point of view, media can play over handed roles to strength the relationship of the community and also it is influential to depart them from each other by destroying the image and reputation of the community values and culture. Consensus can be only built if the media works and keep it balances while emphasize the negative and positive activities of the peoples.

As the community they have to know that we have different culture, values, languages, norms, religions, and attitude especially ideology towards politics and everything in the life and just like that we have to also respect all diversity in the city. Lastly, the respondents explained their future demands that; if consensus is successfully built among the society, the social relationship is much important for economic and technological development, sense of social cooperation; and contributes stabilized political phenomenon.

In general, the researcher collected data from the respondents and analyzed it honestly without any bias and discrimination of others. The researcher compiled the necessary data and built the

vivid and colorful block on how to build consensus in particular area of community and nation building at the nationwide. In the process building consensus communication is the central one and Attitude is the debatable issue and thinking humanity (accepting every person that he/she is a human being) is and agreeable one to achieve consensus. The frame that shows the difficulties or opportunities in developing consensus was designed by the researcher based the data evidence here under. This frame is termed as an ‘Influential Components of Consensus Building.’ These components can successfully accomplish the consensus among the communities; if and only if the communication is effectively used and the peoples have well understood of the difference in the phenomena.

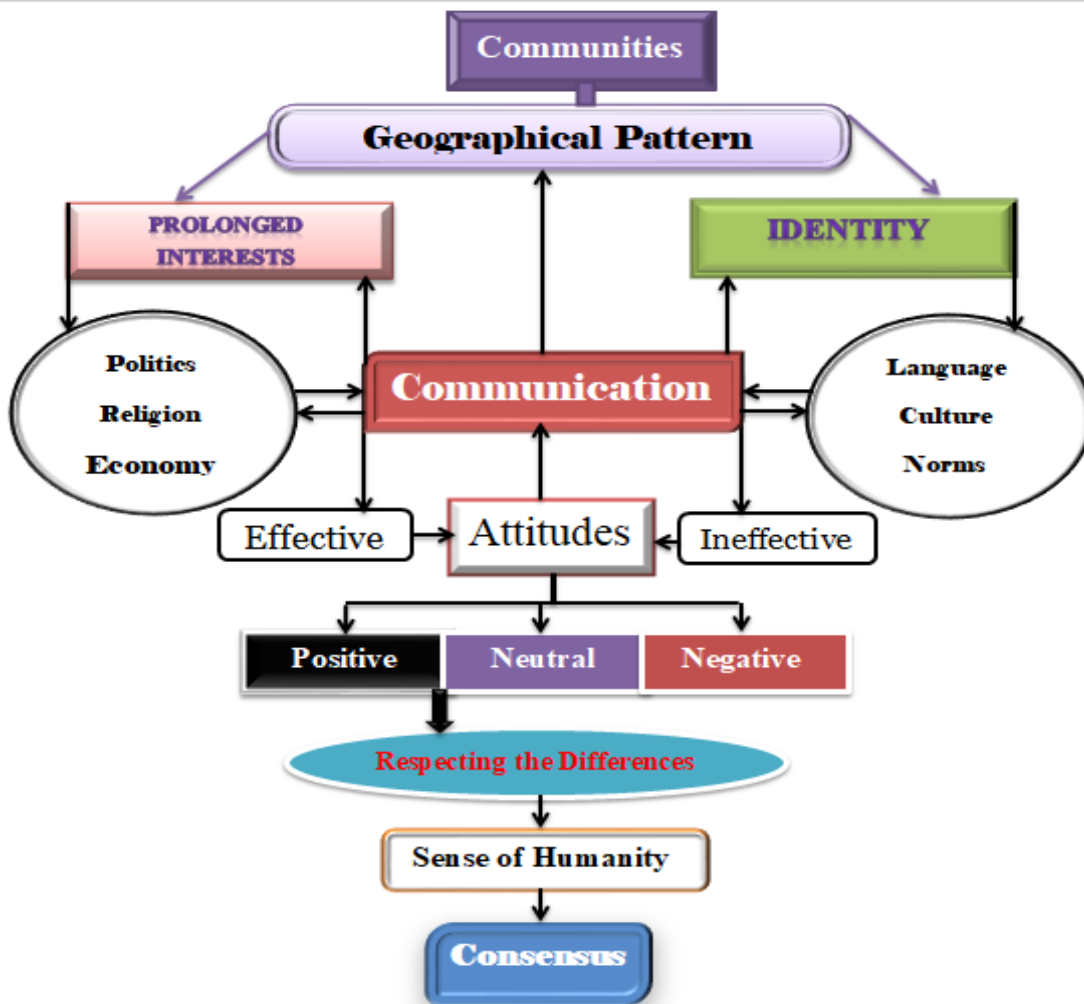


Figure 4: Influential Components of Consensus Building; framed by the researcher (2019).

The above frame shows that the initial point in the community relation is the Community themselves. This community can dwelling in the different geographical areas. Therefore, the chart indicates diversity of peoples from all environments and how communication integrates them together. The first thing that differentiates the people is geographic pattern; peoples may be from different geographical features, having their own 'prolonged interest and Identity' mainly. 'Prolonged Interest' can be a collection of politics; Religion, economic, different human needs and wants and the 'Identity' can also consist of languages, culture, norms, values and etc.

Furthermore, there should be a means of communication style for these various interests. The communication might be disseminated effectively or ineffectively; if the communication is ineffective it can develop negative attitude between the peoples and accordingly the communication might develop an attitude, this attitudes may be negative, positive or Neutral.

Then the base and fundamentals of all these complexities that need to be understood in the attitude is humanity concern. If everyone believes at a sense of humanity which is common for all, everyone can understand each other and respect the difference to promote toleration or open-mindedness towards the uniqueness in the community. If it so, consensus can be created in all aspects among societal context. Thus, the social constructivism philosophy also justified that understandings of the world's meaning can be developed in coordination with other human beings that jointly by individuals (Amineh and Davatgari 2015, P. 13). In the same way, Leeds Hurwitz (2009) also stated that the most important elements in this philosophy are the assumption that human beings rationalize their experience by creating a model of the social world and the way that it functions, as well as the belief in language as the most essential system through which humans construct reality.

4.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis is one of the tools to collect relevant data from Burayu city administration. From the very beginning the researcher read the yearly strategic plan of the office of Government Communication Affairs and Municipality office to give detail analysis and assess how communication plan is strategically implemented. Content analysis has become a widely used method of analysis in a variety of settings, including anthropology, linguistics, social

psychology, sociology of knowledge, communication, and increasingly organization studies (Dورياu et al., 2007; Krippendorff, 2013).

In the introduction part of the plan the strategic mission and vision of the organizations communication were discussed clearly in the first page of the documented plan. The plan described that the overall purpose of 2011 plan is to motivate and make the local community to be participative in accomplishing the government policy, strategy and enable the society to take part in the developmental revolution and democratic system as role players. Here as we understand from this the plan is intended to increase community participation in the country's policy and strategy as well as to sustain economic development and improve the democratic system of the country. The mission of the organization is also talking about expanding the modern, active and effective communication system to create free flow of communication between the government and communities through developing the national consensus, increasing the community participations, and as well as building the good image of the city.

There are certain values of the organization listed in their plan, these are:

- Readiness for change
- Transparency and responsibility
- Truthfulness
- Participatory
- Best Source of information
- Sense of team-work

These values are smart and ambitious in its written form, Even though, the applicability of these values is under a big question as the data from the respondents of FGD and Interview explained. The community has been mobilized and informed well at any time, but officials only need the peoples while they want to transmit political messages when serious issue happens.

4.3.1. Roles and Power of CBA Communication Department

1. Giving the training on the activities of communication, government policies, and strategies for the managers and media and communication practitioners of the city to develop their awareness.

2. Working on the issues which can build the good image of the city and create national consensus
3. Monitoring and assessing the false news that disseminated by the various media about the city and giving the feedback as soon as important.
4. Collecting the questions of the society from different direction, and analyzing it, working the communication and prepare the issue for the concerned sector to create transparency.

As we can simply recognize from the above terms communication department of the city administration of Burayyu have the roles and power that the organization can act just as its responsibilities. Thus, it is explained in four broad categories. The first number is giving short-term training for managers and communication practitioners on the policies and strategies of the government, and is meant to increase their participation. The second one is just seems more interesting and it is about building an image and national consensus. Building city image and national consensus is must be community centered approach needs their contribution. Thirdly, Monitoring and surveying the bad news about the city enables reshape the image and reputation of the city; fourthly the organization has a power and role to collect the question of the community from all directions to analyze and address the questions to targeted sectors for further answers; then if the question is answered properly there would be a transparency and responsiveness.

4.3.2. Communication inadequacy for the implementations of the plan

The office of communication by itself listed some of their weakness that makes them incompetent in their daily work.

- Incapable of using all available opportunities in creating national consensus on the most determinant and common issues and building the good image of the nationwide particularly the city.
- Lack of decision making with the targeted costumer or residents of the city.
- Absence of Scientific research and analysis of broadcasted information through media and making suffice feedback towards the opposite propaganda about the city.

Generalizing the trends that emphasized in the above bulletins, though there were some prospects to develop consensus and relationships in peoples, the organization couldn't use the opportunities supposed to build consensus properly,

Hojiilee komunikeeshinii hojjatamuuf karoorfaman keessaa hojiin dhimmoota murteessoorratti waliigaltee biyyaalessaa fi naannoo uumuu, ilaalchota gufachiisoo sirreessuufi maqaan gaarii biyyaafi naannoo akkasumaas magaalaa keenyaa roga gaariin ijaaruu hojii isa ijoo fi ol'aanaa yemmuu ta'u, ka'umsa kanaanis, rakkoo ilaalchaa raawwataa biratti mul'atu hiikuufi sirreessuuf sochiin taasifamullee, raayyaa kominikeeshinii keenya biratti miira gareen hojjachuufi tajaajiltummaa ummataa dagaagsuun sadarkaa barbaadamurra kan hin hingeenye ta'un hubatamera (WDhKBMB, 2018/19, p.18).

Translations

Among the planned activities of the communication practices, considering on the work of consensus building, correcting the negative attitudes, solving and rectifying the perceptions of the practitioners, building the good image of the city brand and the region are the highest key of our responsibility. Nevertheless, it was understood that there was a shortage of working in team-spirit with our practitioners, and also community service has not been successfully accomplished (BCA Communication Affairs Office plan, 2018/19, p.18).

We recognize from the statements that there is a problem of attitudinal change between the practitioners and managers, even if the reason is explicitly exposed; there is a conflict of interest and attitude with the communicators. Therefore if there is conflict interest it unpredictable to build the consensus between the peoples. Consequently, the organization couldn't accomplish the work assigned to them, servicing the community also jammed to be fulfilled. Additionally, according to the central part of their plan explained the planners tried to put some solutions that need to be improved. Some studies also showed that direct communication from line managers was far more effective than communication from internal media in determining favorable attitudes regarding strategic initiatives. The flow of communication between departments

influenced attitudes regarding strategic issues, but its influence proved less important than that of management communication (Josephine Dixon Banks 2007).

Hojii keenya isa biraatiinis, imaammata, tarsiimoo, karooraafi raawwii gurguddoo, akkasumas, haala yeroofi dhimmoota kkf irratti hojii mootummaa keenyaan hojjatamaa turanirratti ummanni magaalaa keenyaa odeeffannoo gahaa argatee hirmaannaafi fayyadamummaansaa akka dabaluu gochuuf oduu/sagantaawwan gaggabaaboo, barreeffammoota ibsa ejjennoo mootummaa balballoomsan, dokimantarii fiilmiifi oduu mootummaa akkasumas, maxxansaalee birooshaarii garagaraa qopheessinee raabsuun odeeffannoo mootummaa ummataaf ittiin kennaa turruus hojii hojjatameef duub-deebii fudhachaa hojicha fooyyessaa deemuun barbaachisaa ta'a (ibid).

Translations

In our other activities, we were working on government policy and strategy, disseminating information on current issues to inform the peoples, preparing newsletters, government releases, brochures, documentary films and delivering the information about the government. However, we need to collect the necessary feedback concerning the work done to improve the future social satisfaction (Ibid).

We can forward conclusion from the view of above paragraph that practitioners as well as the managers were mainly focusing on delivering the news about the government, persuading the peoples about the policies, and urgent release of the political propaganda. In other hands, there were few opportunities to take a feedback from the community. This shows that the communication was vertical system and almost two way asymmetric models. Peoples can bother if the communication focus on one way persuasive communication as well as the society also needs to react with the immediate issue they want be heard. Otherwise the communication style will become crumbled and the relations also paralyzed.

In the same way, the written plan from the Municipality office also justified that the LGO and experts have been doing good works on behalf of reporting new trends from the government and trying to create trust and transparency between government and community through various

media platforms. However, these activities are being criticized for it was not continuous and less media coverage on important issues to the community.

As uniquely the tenth part of the organizational plan is specifically considered about the core issue of that strategic plan; in this part the best slogan is used which says “The nations moved to exemplar of change from the uncertainty fragmented situations!!” (BCA communication plan P. 51) which means, this country was under a fear of disintegration in the previous time, this is also told us that there is some hope visibly and changes which shows the relations and unity of the country. Accordingly many important messages were discussed in organization’s strategic plan of under this slogan: such as Economic development, social development, building a democratic system and good governance were the most essential topics included in the plan to be accomplished. The plan is okay, but if professionally analyzed and evaluated there is no clear-cut strategies for the application the plan. Because plan needs to be SMART (specific, measureable, applicable/attainable, reliable, and time-bound) therefore there is clear idea in white and black when and how it should be take place.

The General Strategic Map of Burayu Municipality Office

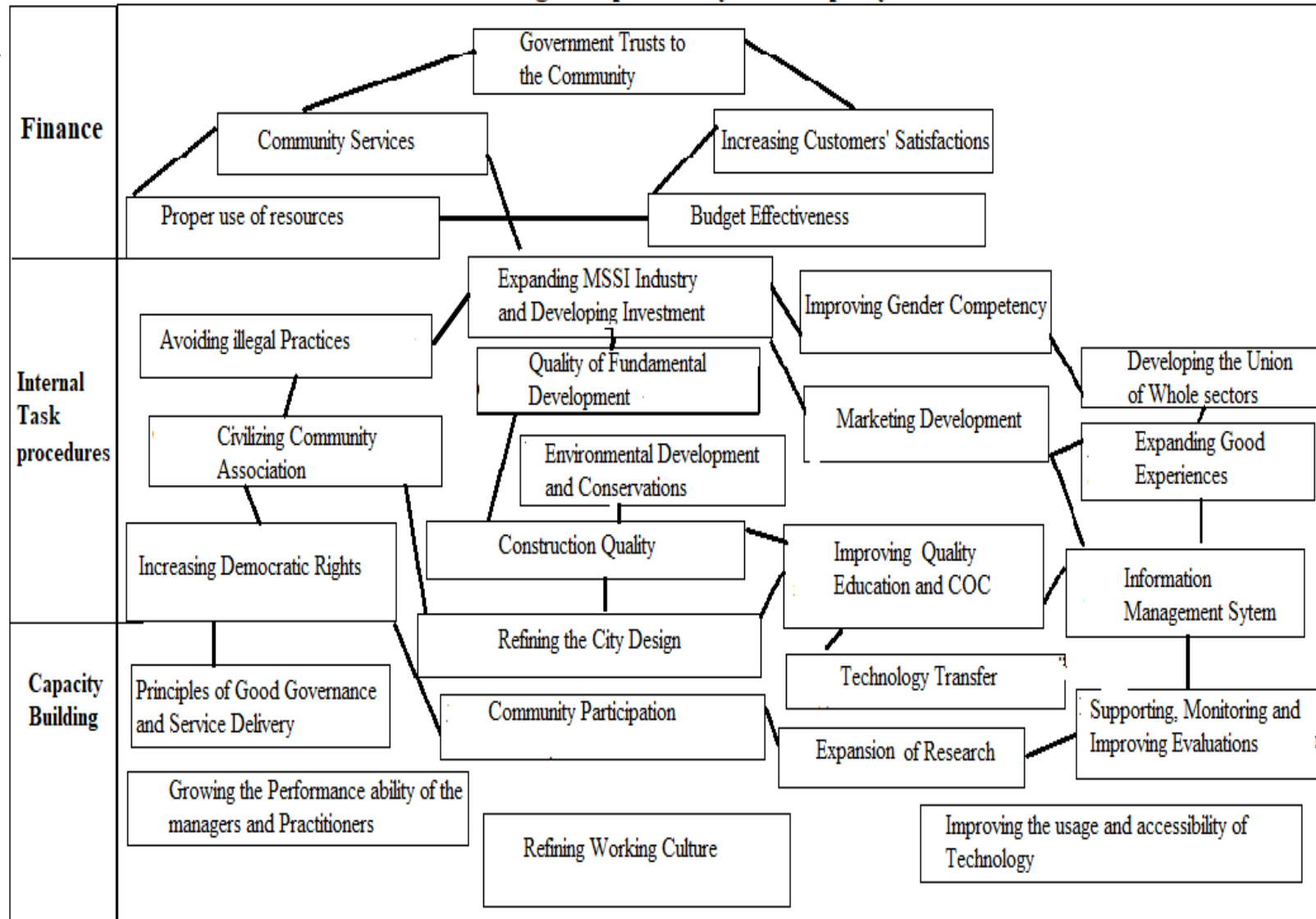


Figure: 4.1. Strategic Map of Burayu Municipality Office; the Framework was taken from the office of municipality Annual Strategic plan, on April 24, 2019.

The chart shows the frame of strategic plan of Burayu city Municipality Office. As we have seen from the above map or plan structure, every activity that needs to be implemented in the city was clearly explained. It is good strategic frame work and properly chained and the analysis is given here under.

If we try to explain activities put in the frame, the first box on the top says “Amantaa Uummatni Mootummaarratti” which means ‘trusts of the community on the government’ it meant to say to increase the trustfulness that the government have for the society. Then the other chains are derived from the root of this phrase. Though the trust is the base of others in this plan structures, all necessary points are included in the chart, but no clear measurement for its applicability is put. In addition to this, structure is good in explaining that tasks undertaken concisely. However, still there are most important points being neglected and have not been clearly and precisely put on the map. The strategic plan did say nothing about the national consensus; community relationship and also it didn’t suggest about how different nations and nationalities and peoples of the city become unified and actively participate in democratic and economic development. If the municipality office of the city planned to increase the level of trust between the government and the society, in the same way, it is must for them to think for the trust and relationship of the community that always living together. Not only this but also the frame didn’t include about the way how solve crisis and bring behavioral change so the communication need to be focused more. The plan was mainly Organizational centered, economic revolutions, increasing experiences of mangers and practitioners focused and communication was out concentration as it is seen in the above frame.

Professionally, this frame work or plan was well-designed and it is really emphasized about economic development as well. As well as it is stick to reduce joblessness in the city by mobilizing the youth and organizing the peoples in Micro Small Scale Enterprise (MSSE) to sustain the economic revolution.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

The study was focusing on analysis of the government Relations and Strategic communication practiced in the Burayu City Administration for general consensus building process. This inquiry mainly considered about the daily activities of the government relations and strategic communication usage in the consensus building activities and as well as the study identified the major challenges for consensus building and all points focused in the entire of this research is summarized as follows:

1. As the study showed that the LGO's were working with the local communities, traditional elders, youths, religious leaders and with other peoples to bring the unity and develop mutual understanding among the peoples of the city. Especially they organized an event for the peoples at holiday time to celebrate with each other and foster their relationship as well. However, it was taken place between the specific ethnic group such as Oromo and Gamo and Dorze peoples. According to the data reflects concerning the government practices, the issue of gathering those peoples is for the purpose of special agenda which meant to solve the conflict or crisis happened between the peoples. Additionally, the study indicated that; even though more of the LGO's concentration deep-rooted on their political agenda, the government is providing equal social services for all residents of the city.
2. This research ascertained that there was no clear cut and applicable strategic communication plan in the city administration office, which is intended for the purpose of consensus building and strength harmony among the diversified peoples of the city. Even though LGOs are taking an action and organizing discussions with the peoples, it was just taking place as a sudden occurrence without clearly put and explained in their plan. However, the peoples were harmoniously living together through their traditional connections without any efforts of the government for their relationship. The government was dealings with different propaganda for last many years and had no predetermined communication policy for the unity of heterogeneous peoples in the specific area. Anyhow, the government recently started to with the peoples familiarly and to organize them in team and strength their rapport by unifying them on common agenda.

3. This research also exposed that the trustworthiness of the communicator and government were not highly appreciable to the peoples/communities of the city. The official also had no space for communication and to discuss with the peoples except during some crisis happened. There is also a little chance for peoples to reflect their opinions and no public discourse taken place to close the gap and as well as the communication and action of the government was not correlated with each other. And also there was poor strategic communication performance to build unity and community relations in the city.
4. Lastly, some obstacles that encountered in consensus building were identified. The local government officials and local community are facing different challenges in building consensus. Some of these basic and main challenges identified by the study were: political ideology, identity and ethnic difference, religious, and environmental patterns of the peoples' are mentioned as the source of misunderstanding which causes to failure in building the consensus.

5.2. Conclusions

This study aimed at assessing the government relations and strategic communication towards Consensus building and it employed the qualitative approach and as well as purposive and snowball sampling techniques in data collection procedures. The data collected by interview and Focus Group Discussion were successfully organized and Document analysis of the organizational plan was reviewed and analyzed well. The current and past experience of the governments and community were studied. Accordingly, the previous practice the government practices was not recognized and acknowledged as role player in building consensus among the residents. As the study revealed, this was just due to the nature of complexity political system of the country and badly defiling and spreading the past historical experiences of certain community as if it has negative impact toward others. Definitely, the current practices of LGO are somewhat good, but less responsiveness for the public interests and demands and also no space left for communication meant to develop consensus in the city communities.

The study also pointed out some challenges for the community and government in creating relationship; these problems are improper use political propaganda and related issues by various media platforms, continuously act of unidentified body which stick to creating ethnic clash and intensifying identity based conflict among the peoples. Accordingly, multipart system and issues

related with religious and environmental differences are some problems recognized in the study. And these complications form of circumstances causing vast suspicions between diversity communities and affecting their relationships. This was developed because of the absence of well communication strategy and strong community centered liaisons through decision making process.

The study also identified that there is lack of trustworthy in the daily communication of the government officials towards society despite their orally manipulated speech many times. This also showed that the LGO are shortfall of the truth for their communication and failure to apply the strategy. As it was voiced in the study, the current generations are truth seekers generation. They believe in unity and harmony and they need someone who can understand their inner integrity for social integrations and develop cooperation by respecting their natural diversity.

The research generally approved that the activities in government relations and strategic communication was not functioned appropriately and there was a communication gap to includes all community in decision making and deciding their roles in formal associations.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the study carried out and the data reported in this research, the researcher found some problems and tried to give tactical and operational endorsements on how to close communication gaps on behalf of both the government and the communities; that it need to be recommended to substantiate well societal relationship and liaisons for future generations, therefore, the researcher forwards the following recommendations:

Strategically

- ❖ Well strategic communication which aimed at community centered approach has to be implemented in the municipality and communication office of the city. Since the communication department was devalued in building consensus and relationships at city level, it ought to be seen as a best weapon for rapport creation. The LGOs should give wider opportunities and invite them the stages for discussions and initiate the peoples to talk freely on their difference, as well as two ways symmetric communication has to be realized.
- ❖ Community's traditional associations should be encouraged by the government steadfastly and communication needs to be applied strategically. Appropriate communications styles which can be integrated with social norms and values of the society need be initiated by the government to sustain unity and long lasting relationships.
- ❖ The government has to prepare formal and participative stage of communication regularly to scrutinize the level of community relationship and rapport. That is okay to think about national consensus and nation building at national level, but nation building starts from the consensus, the consensus should be also begun from the village or family level and will be widely expanded at the country.
- ❖ The government should play pivotal roles in Community mobilizations to reestablish and regenerate the unity that makes the society feeling as oneness and togetherness with all nation nationalities and variety peoples of the country.

Operationally

- ❖ It is better for the government to create and facilitate the condition for communication and initiate public participation from all dimensions as well as trying to manage the media by giving immediate response for any bad news about the city and others.
- ❖ Interethnic relationship should be established among or between each nations, nationalities and peoples of the land. The philosophy of Oromara, need to be applied or implemented among all peoples of each ethnic group. This means, the peoples have to be able to call and named by the specific name that reflects the relations of the two peoples like Oromara for instance. This is helpful for equally treating all nations and upgrading their relations as well as diminishing suspicion among them.
- ❖ Permanent Liaison Committee which consists of all diversity has to be instituted in the city and elsewhere entire the country similarly. This committee should be selected and organized from each native of the residents according their villages and mixed together in the form of civil association.
- ❖ Everyone should have respecting the difference and having a sense of humanity rather than discriminating each other based identity and cultural values. To leave peacefully, each and every societies of diversity should understand and respect one's culture, norms, languages, and other social values.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE PREPARED FOR THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

This study is titled as “*Analysis of Government Relations and Strategic Communication towards Consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City.*” to investigate the government relations and strategic communication towards consensus building in the case of Burayyu town. These questions are prepared to collect relevant and first hand data for the purpose of the research only. And in the process of data collecting the personal privacy of the respondents should be kept secret and anonymous.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| i. Name | iv. Job positions |
| ii. Age | v. Educational level |
| iii. Residence | |

Questions:

1. What is your understanding about the concept of consensus among the community? And why it is needed?
2. How can you explain the relationship of nation’s nationalities and different peoples those who are living in this environment (town) together?
3. What activities did you carried out as a government Relations to mobilize the community to stand together?
4. How strategic communications is useful in Government Relations to play the role in building relationship among the community?
5. How do you include about national consensus in your yearly plan, especially considering the local peoples?
6. Do the communities are interested to live with other different parts of society peacefully? (What about respecting and tolerating each other?)
7. What is the case and major challenges that affects their relationships?
8. How do you support them and encourage their rapport as a manager?
9. How do you equally threat the interest of these communities to avoid conflict?
10. What are the steps and criteria that you follow to unify the peoples together?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE PREPARED FOR RELIGIOUS AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS.

These are some questions prepared to collect data for the research titled, “*Analysis of Government Relations and Strategic Communication towards Consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City*” It is a as guidelines for interview and Focus Group Discussion for the selected respondents of the study. These part of interview questions are meant for the selected traditional or *local elders* from the town those who may accomplish the work of this research.

Demographic Information of the Interviewees:

- I. Name:
- II. Age:
- III. Residence:
- IV. Kebele:
- V. Occupation:
- VI. Educational level

Interview Guide:

1. How can you explain the relationship of nation’s nationalities and different peoples those who are living in this environment (town) together?
2. How can people develop consensus and relationship with each other?
3. How creating relationship and building consensus among our today’s community is important, and why it is helpful?
4. What are the sources of challenges for effective relationship of the society?
5. In what method do you bring the community together to create the opportunity of free discourse/dialogue round table (as traditional leader)?
6. What are the specific roles and activities of government relations in the Environment?
7. How do you use strategic communication to create awareness and mutually understanding of different residents?
8. How do you explain the situation that the local leaders face in creating consensus and to construct rapport and unity?
9. What are the principles need to be considered in the process of avoiding insulation and strengthening social consensus?
10. What outcomes you expect after the strong relationship is well built in your local communities? What are the roles of local managers should be on this issue?

APPENDIX III

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR LOCAL YOUTH

This study is to “*Analysis of Government Relations and Strategic Communication towards Consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City.*” These FGD questions are prepared to collect relevant and first hand data for the purpose of the research only. It is intended to conduct a focus group discussion with young group of peoples that purposively selected from Burayu communities. And in the process of data collection, the personal privacy of the respondents should be kept secret and anonymous. By any means, it never exposes the individuals to be harmed for the reason of giving this information.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think about the social relationship?
2. How can you explain about the relationship among the peoples of Burayyu
3. How do you explain your communication style to create awareness and mutually understanding about the different status the residents?
4. Have you ever personally or as group faced some kinds of inferiority or superiority feelings while living in this town?
5. How do you explain the situation that the local leaders face in creating consensus and to construct rapport and unity?
6. What is the outcome you expect after the strong relationship is well built in your local communities? What are the roles of local managers should be on this issue?
7. What are the specific roles and activities that government relations perform in the Environment?
8. How can people develop consensus and relationship with each other?

APPENDIX IV

Afaan Oromoo

Kabajamtoota keenya Qorannoon kun mata duree “*Analysis of the government relations and strategic communication towards consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City*” jedhu irratti sadarkaa barnoota Digirii 2ffaa “Public Relations and Strategic Communication(Journalism and Communication)dhaan guuttachuuf kan hojjetamaa jirudha. Odeeffannoon isin gareedhaan marii’attanii nuuf laattan qorannoo kana akka cimsuufi rakkoolee magaalaa kana keessa jiran akka furamu gochuurraan kan hafe dhimma nama dhuunfaa kamiyyuu saaxiluun miidhaa akka hin geessisne hubattanii yaada barbaachisaa ta’e akka nuuf laatta kabajaan isin gaafanna.

Qabxiilee akka ka’umsaatti dhiyaatan:

1. Hubannoo ati waa’ee walhubannaa/walii-galtee hawaasaa irratti qabdu maal fakkaata? Maaliifis barbaachisa jettee yaaddaa?
2. Jiraattootni magaalaa walshakkii tokko malee waliin jireechaa jiruu? Haalli waliin jireenya hawaasa magaalaa kanaa maal fakkaata?
3. Namoota gosa gara-garaa magaalaa kana keessa jiraatan walhubachiisuufi hariiroosaanii cimsuuf walquunnamtiin(communication) jiru akkamitti ibsita?
4. Mee akka dhuunfaatti dhimma kanarratti miira akkamiitu sitti dhaga’ama?
5. Wal-hubannaa uumuufi hariiroo sirrii ta’e ijaaruuf gama bulchitoota magaalichaatiin waan dalagame fi haala isaan quunnamee akkamitti ibsita?
6. Osoo waliigalteen cimaan uummata gidduutti uumamee maal ta’a jettee abdatta? Kana fiduuf immoo angaa’onni maal gochuu qabu jettee yaaddaa?
7. Gochaaleen dhimma kanarratti akka addatti gama mootummaatiin hojjetamaa maal fa’i?
8. Mee namootni akkamitti walitti dhufeenya gaarii fi wal hubannaa sirrii ta’e uumuu akka danda’an bal’inaan ibsi.

APPENDIX V

ውድ ተሳታፊ!

እነዚህ "ለህዝብ ግንኙነት ጉዳዮች" እና “*Analysis of the government relations and strategic communication towards consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City*” በሚል ርዕስ በተሰየመው ምርምር ዙሪያ መረጃዎችን ለመሰብሰብ የታቀዱ ጥቂት ጥያቄዎች ናቸው። ይህ የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች ለእርስዎ (ለተመረጡ ባህላዊና አካባቢያዊ ሽማግሌዎች) ብቻ ነው ይህንን ጥናት ለማከናወን ነው። ተመራማሪው ለግላዊነትዎ ኃላፊነት ይወስዳል።

- i. ስም: _____
- ii. ዕድሜ: _____
- iii. የመኖሪያ ፈቃድ: _____
- iv. ቀበሌ: _____
- v. ሥራ: _____
- የትምህርት ደረጃ: _____

የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. በማህበረሰቡ ውስጥ የመግባባት ጽንሰ ሀሳብ ግንዛቤዎ ምንድነው? ለምን እና ለምን ያስፈልጋል?
2. በአካባቢው የሚኖሩትን የሃገሮች ዜጎች እና የተለያዩ ህዝቦች ያላቸውን ግንኙነት እንዴት መግለፅ ይችላሉ?
3. ሰዎች እርስ በርስ መግባባትና ግንኙነት እንዴት ሊፈጥሩ ይችላሉ?
4. በዛሬው ጊዜ በእኛ ኅብረተሰብ ውስጥ ግንኙነቶችን እና መገንባት እንዴት ጠቃሚ ነው, እና ለምን ጠቃሚ ነው?
5. የህብረተሰቡን ጥሩ ግንኙነት ለማምጣት ምን ችግሮች አሉ?
6. የንግግር ዴሞክራሲን / የቡድን ሰንጠረዥ (እንደ ባህላዊ መሪ) እድል ለመፍጠር ማህበረሰቡን በየትኛው ዘዴ ያመጣሉ?
7. በአካባቢ ጥበቃ የመንግስት ግንኙነቶች ምን ዓይነት ሚና እና ተግባር?
8. ግንዛቤ ለመፍጠር እና የተለያዩ ነዋሪዎች ግንዛቤ ለመፍጠር ስልታዊ ስልጣንን እንዴት ይጠቀማሉ?
9. የአካባቢያዊ መሪዎች የጋራ መግባባትን በመፍጠር እና እርስ በርስ ለመደራጀት እና አንድነት ለመገንባት የሚያጋጥሟቸውን ሁኔታ እንዴት ገልፀዋል?
10. የግንዛቤ ማስጨበጥ እና ማህበራዊ መግባባትን ከማበረታታት ሂደት ውስጥ ግምት ውስጥ ማስገባት ያለባቸው መርሆዎች ምንድናቸው?
11. በአካባቢዎ ማህበረሰቦች ውስጥ ጠንካራ ግንኙነቶች ከተገነቡ በኋላ ምን ዓይነት ውጤቶችን ያገኛሉ? የአገር ውስጥ አስተዳዳሪዎች ሚና በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ምን መሆን አለበት?

APPENDIX VI

የትኩረት ቡድኖች የውይይት መመሪያ-

ይህ ጥናት “Government relations and strategic communication towards consensus building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City” የሚል ነው። ለነዚህ ዓላማ ተገቢ እና የመጀመሪያውን ውህብ ለመሰብሰብ እነዚህ የ FGD ጥያቄዎች ተዘጋጅተዋል። ዓላማው ከቡድኑ ማህበረሰቦች ውስጥ ሆነ ተብለው ከተመረጡ ወጣት ቡድኖች ጋር የቡድን ውይይት ለማካሄድ የታሰበ ነው። እንዲሁም በመረጃ አሰባሰብ ሂደት ውስጥ፣ የምላሾች ግላዊ መብት ሚስጥራዊ እና ስም-አልባ መሆን አለበት። ለማንኛውም ግለሰቦች ይህን መረጃ ስለሰጡበት ምክንያት እንዳይገዱ ፈጽሞ አያጋልጥም።

1. ስለ ማኅበራዊ ግንኙነቶች ምን ያስባሉ?
2. በቡራይ ሕዝቦች መካከል ስለሚኖረው ግንኙነት እንዴት ማስረዳት ትችላላችሁ?
3. የግንኙነት አይነት እንዴት ነዋሪዎች ነዋሪዎች የተለያዩ ደረጃዎችን ግንዛቤ ለመፍጠር እና የጋራ መግባባትን እንዴት መግለፅ ይችላሉ?
4. በዚህ ከተማ ውስጥ ሲኖሩ በግልም ሆነ በቡድኑ አንዳንድ የበታችነት ወይም የላቀ ስሜቶች አሉ?
5. በአካባቢ አስተዳዳሪዎች / መሪዎች ፈንታ ማህበረሰቡ መግባባት በሚፈጥሩበት ጊዜ ችግሩ ምንድነው? ወይም ደግሞ አንድነት እና አንድነት ለማምጣት ምን አይነት ችግሮች አጋጥመዋቸዋል?
6. ጠንካራ ግንኙነትዎ በአካባቢዎ ማህበረሰቦች ውስጥ ከተገነባ በኋላ የሚጠብቁት ውጤት ምንድን ነው? የአገር ውስጥ አስተዳዳሪዎች ሚና በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ምን መሆን አለበት?
7. የመንግስት ግንኙነቶች በአካባቢያቸው በሚከናወኑባቸው ሚናዎች እና እንቅስቃሴዎች ምን ምን ናቸው?
8. ሰዎች እርስ በርስ መግባባትና ግንኙነት እንዴት ሊፈጥሩ ይችላሉ?

APPENDIX VII

List of interviewees and FGD participants

Table: 1. Lists of interviewees

| | Interviewees | Status | Sex | | Codes given to each interviewees I= Interviewees | Total |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|---|-----------|
| | | | M | F | | |
| 1 | Local Officials | Experts Communicators Mayors | 2 | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I 1• I 2• I 3• I 4 | 4 |
| 2 | From traditional leaders | Above 50 ages | 3 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ I 5✓ I 6✓ I 7 | 3 |
| 3 | Religious Leaders | Muslim Orthodox Protestant | 2 | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ I 8❖ I 9❖ I 10 | 3 |
| Grand Total: | | | 7 | 3 | | 10 |

Table: 2. Lists of Focus Group Discussions

| | Participants | Status | Sex | | Codes given to FGD participants | Total |
|---------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|----------|---|-----------|
| | | | M | F | | |
| 1 | FDG. A | Youths | 6 | 3 | FGD.A 1 FGD.A 2 FGD.A 3 FGD.A 4 FGD.A 5 FGD.A 6 FGD.A 7 FGD.A 8 FGD.A 9 | 9 |
| 2 | FGD. B | Youths | 6 | 2 | FGD.B 1 FGD.B 2 FGD.B 3 FGD.B 4 FGD.B 5 FGD.B 6 FGD.B 7 FGD.B 8 | 8 |
| 3 | FGD. C | Youths | 7 | 3 | FGD.C 1 FGD.C 2 FGD.C 3 FGD.C 4 FGD.C 5 FGD.C 6 FGD.C7 FGD.C8 FGD.C9 FGD.C10 | 10 |
| Grand Total: | | | 19 | 8 | | 27 |

APPENDIX VIII

Participants' Consent Form

This template is designed primarily for those who participated on qualitative interviews for the research title “*Analysis of Government Relations and Strategic Communication towards Consensus Building: Oromia Regional State Burayu City.*” The participants are the workers of different offices, leaders, elders and religious leaders of the Town. A consent form is not simply about a person giving you permission to involve them in research; it is an agreement between the researcher and the research participant outlining the roles and responsibilities they are taking towards one another throughout the whole of the research process. The researcher should retain one copy of the consent form signed by both themselves and the participant. The participant should also be given a copy of the consent form as a record of what they have signed up to.

Agreements to take part in this research

1. I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
3. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
4. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
5. I understand that if I inform the researcher that my-self or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
6. I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
7. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research
8. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

Knowing all the above points, I'm one of the participants that delivered necessary information for the researcher to strength the study being carried out in Burayu Town. According the ethics of research, I (the researcher) also promised to keep the personal privacy of the respondent in order not to be exposed to any kinds of harm due to this information.

Signature of research participants

Signature of the participant: _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date _____

I believe the participant was giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of Advisor: _____ Date _____