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School of Graduate Studies**

**Women's Status in FM Radio
Stations in Addis Ababa**

Rahel Zewdu



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Rahel Zewdu**

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Women's status in FM radio stations in Addis Ababa

By

Rahael Zewdu Kebede

Approved by the Examining Board

Chairman, Department Graduate Committee

Signature

Advisor

Signature

for Muhammed Hassen

Examiner

Muhammed Hassen

Signature

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Abstract

This study aims at examining representation, experience, practice, role and challenges of women journalists who work in FM radio stations in Addis Ababa using Feminist Communication Theories; Critical Mass, Glass Ceiling and Standpoint theory. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods are used in order to achieve the objective of this study. Questionnaires were distributed to 31 women journalists working in the six FM radio stations and in-depth interviews are conducted with four media managers. Analysis of data showed that there are smaller numbers of women journalists than men journalists in the six stations. Additionally, private stations have better representation of women journalists than government stations. The research also finds out that fewer women reached senior management positions. The findings also suggest that young and well-educated women dominated the stations and also majority of women journalists have less than five years of professional experience. Women journalists widely assumed that they have a different perspective than men journalists in terms of selecting newsworthy items and story sources, reporting styles and changing the negative portrayal of women in the media. Women journalists claim that they faced difficulties in relation to their gender, as many accepted them first as women then as professionals. It was also find out that balancing work and home responsibilities is a burden for women journalists, especially for married women. A tendency of relegating women to certain news beats is also reported as a challenge for women journalists. However, almost all editors, interviewed for this research confirmed story assignment is based upon skill and capacity rather than gender. Sexual harassment should not be overlooked since cases are reported by women journalists. Findings of this study showed that women journalists tend to solve their problems by challenging the existing newsrooms culture and working on "hard" issues. Some opt to struggle in bringing women's and children's issues as newsworthy items.

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter introduces the subject under study and describes the background of the problem. It also presents study's scope, rationale and significance.

1.1 Background of the study

Women's inroads into journalism were widely associated with historical events like the women's movement and both World Wars (Greenwald, 2003). The wars provided opportunities for women not only to practice journalism in large numbers but also to cover "hard" news, including the war itself (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). During the wars, women moved into newsrooms to replace those men who went to the battlefield. Although women could not report from the warfront because the military refused to give information to women, they contributed such stories as reporting the suffering of civilians. However, when men returned from fighting, many women lost their jobs in newsrooms.

The feminist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s was another historical landmark for women journalists. This social movement affected the role of women journalists as it affected the lives of other women (Greenwald, 2003). It forced women to think about their principles and their careers whether they accepted the core values of the movement or not. Greenwald (2003: 645) noted the impact in the United States:

For women journalists, however, the effect of the feminist movement was more dramatic; it made them think about media content and the portrayal of women in the media and how that, in turn, shaped the views of Americans.

The feminist movement also triggered the entry of large numbers of women into media worldwide. According to Joseph (2004), a large number of women started to enter journalism in India during the mid-1970s. She suggested that:

A number of factors may have contributed to creating this sizable wave. The ripple effects of the growing international women's movement were stirring the waters in India, too, during this period (2004:164).

As Robinson (2004) observed, women's entry into Canadian media was limited until the early 1970s. Then a sizable number started media work. Although the impact of the feminist movement in Africa has not been studied, women's participation in every sector was encouraged. In Ethiopia, during the early 1970s, women's equality and participation was praised (Yetenayet, 1997). According to Teshome (1997), after the change of government in 1974, many women were attracted to the media and their numbers increased dramatically. Though their numbers increased in media, women faced discrimination and prejudice (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). Women journalists encountered sexism in newsrooms, being evaluated on gender rather than on professional competence.

Gill (2007) explained that, despite numerical increases, women faced discrimination and marginalization in the media and difficulties balancing journalism careers and personal lives. Elaborating this point, she noted:

A simple numerical increase in the numbers of women producers or directors or journalists, then, cannot be taken as straightforward evidence of greater equality. Since for women, but not men, achieving this seems to involve major sacrifices in other parts of their lives (2007:212).

She suggested that women sacrificed getting married or having children in order to secure careers. Yet those careers were hampered through such discrimination as different salary scales for men and women journalists doing the same work. According to Gill, attitudes of decision-makers within the media blocked women's entering the profession or advancing to top managerial positions.

Greenwald (2003:641) also indicated that "women were seen as the 'weaker' sex when it came to reporting, and many editors still thought that they had neither the physical nor the mental stamina to cover breaking news events." She added, however, that women succeeded in journalism because they helped

each other. Eventually, the presence of women in the media added a new perspective about professional values. As Gill (2007:124) explained:

It is often asserted that women tell stories that would otherwise be ignored, that they have different ethical values from men that are evident in their reporting, and that they are particularly concerned to look at the human effects of the stories they are covering.

As Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004) suggested, women influenced the news agenda by including subjects like childcare, rape, sexual abuse and other women-related issues that were often not considered newsworthy.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The role of women and media in Ethiopia is seldom researched, with only few small-scale explorations of the lives of women journalists. However, even this limited number of studies revealed that the road to journalism practice was not smooth for women. In particular, women faced prejudice and discrimination in newsrooms (Yetenayet, 1997; Teshome, 1997; Agaredach, 2002; Haymanot, 2003).

According to Yetenayet, women populated only the lower ranks of media hierarchies and were not accepted as professionals by male counterparts. And she found that they have not achieved equal treatment in such hard news reporting as politics and business.

Teshome (1997) explained that women journalists struggled with managing family responsibilities and working nights and sometimes they left the media due to such pressures. A majority of participants in Yetenayet's (1997) study noted how working long hours and at night affected their social as well as family lives.

A recent study by Mengistu (2007) confirmed low participation of women in the media. He attributed the low number of women journalists to women's lack of access to education and media organizations' reluctance to hire women. In his research, editors cited women's inability to work up to journalism standards.

His study also disclosed that women were blocked from higher decision-making position.

Apart from demonstrating challenges for women journalists, these research papers overlooked women's contribution to media. Yet it is crucial to research their practical contributions to journalism practice. This paper aims to fill this gap, outlining not only their challenges in the media but also their achievements in the profession.

The study analyzes women's representation in and practical challenges from media. Moreover, it examines how women journalists perceive their role in and contributions to journalism, focusing on FM stations in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

- How are women journalists represented in FM radio stations?
- Do women journalists bring different perspectives to their work?
- What do women working as journalists think about their work and their working environment?
- Do women journalists face discrimination in their newsroom because of gender?
- What do media managers think of women journalists' ability to perform professionally?
- What kind of mechanisms do women journalists use to tackle challenges?

1.4. Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to analyze the representation, practice, role and challenges of women journalists working at FM radio stations in Addis

Ababa. It investigates the position and challenges of women in the profession and how they perceive their careers and contributions.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To assess the current status and representation of women journalists in FM radio stations.
- To investigate challenges of women journalists in the media.
- To examine perceptions of women journalists about their contribution to journalism.
- To analyze the attitudes of women journalists towards their profession.
- To examine the attitudes of media managers towards women journalists' capabilities and performance.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Cited in Mengistu (2007), Haregewoin and Embet (2002) noted the status of women shows the position where they are placed in a society. They described the relationship between status and privilege over certain power and rights. Greenwald (2003) indicated how studying the status of women in media is vital in identifying how the visibility of women affects audiences.

According to Alem Desta (2007), Ethiopia is characterized as a patriarchal society where women's work is mostly confined to home related tasks and not recognized as contributions to the labor market. As she explained, girls and women face gender discrimination in every aspect of life – this societal perception also affects women in journalism.

Therefore, it is important to research the status of women journalists in the media and see whether women journalists are denied rights and privileges. Analyzing their contributions to broadcast media in particular and in Ethiopian media in general will bolster the amount of information available regarding women and journalism in Ethiopia. In six years as a practicing journalism and

as a member of the Ethiopian Media Women Association, I witnessed the shortage of such resource materials. This study, I believe, will fill the gap.

The findings of this study will also benefit academicians who want to conduct further study on women and journalism in Ethiopia. All journalism students and practitioners, male and female, will benefit along with their media houses and journalistic associations. By documenting women's participation, contributions and challenges, this research will further enhance their analysis of gender equity and equality.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research focuses on FM radio stations in Addis Ababa and examines the status, role and challenges of their women journalists. It also investigates what women journalists think about their careers and their working environments. The study does not look at broadcast media beyond FM radio stations and it excludes regional, community and educational FM radio stations. The research could project the broader national picture, including female journalists working in the regions for example, had more time and money been available. However, this study was dramatically limited by such constraints.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter assesses research on women and media, focusing mainly on the status, practice and experience of women journalists. The first section deals with feminist theoretical frameworks applicable to the field of journalism. Women's representation and their role in the media are discussed in the second section, noting the practical challenges that women journalists face in newsrooms. The last section highlights historical aspects of radio in Ethiopia and women's participation.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The early and mid-1980s witnessed a large increase in worldwide research about female journalists. Most research revealed similar findings. The dominant discussion involved women's subordinate position in the media, challenges of combining work and motherhood, negative portrayal of women in the media, gender discrimination and gender-based labor division in the newsroom (Van Zoonen, 1998). In addition, Critical Mass, Glass Ceiling and Feminist Stand Point theories became central to feminist media discourse.

2.1.1 Critical Mass theory

Historically, women faced restrictions in participating in professions dominated by men. Prior to the 1860s in America, for example, women journalists rarely produced media stories using their real names (Fraser, Green and Johnston, 2003). Societal attitudes in the United States and Britain discouraged women from entering in journalism that was thought as a "rough and tough" craft for

women (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). In short, women were considered consumers rather than producers of news.

Feminist scholars considered journalism as male dominated and hierarchical. Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:16) described U.S. journalism in the late 19th and early 20th century as “characterized by a sharp gender division of labor in newsrooms, structured by male dominance in terms of numbers, status and managerial control.” Such scholars suggested that increasing the number of female journalists in the media might transform journalism from a male preserve that denied women access to the profession. They discussed this in terms of a Critical Mass theory, derived from atomic physics.

Critical Mass theory suggests that the presence of large number of women journalists in the media affect the quality of news products and alter the male-dominated newsrooms culture (Van Zoonen, 1998). This suggests that news reported by male journalists reflects the interest and attitudes of men and excludes the interests and views of women. As Van Zoonen (1998: 34) pointed out, many female journalists and feminist scholars assumed that “the news would change in to new directions, more relevant to women if only there are more female journalists.”

Cited in Robinson (2004:191), Ross (2000) observed that “increasing the numbers of women has had an impact on the process and structure of the profession, and that their presence can widen the scope of what issues, events and stories are now regarded as newsworthy.”

Nonetheless, gender researchers in North America and Europe disagreed with the notion that increased numbers of women in journalism will automatically alter newsroom practices. Research conducted on Canadian women journalists demonstrated that, though large numbers of women entered media, workplace expectations continue to be unequal and gender based (Robinson, 2004). More recent studies also confirmed that the gender of journalists is relatively unimportant for the way news looks (Van Zoonen, 1998:35). And in some

countries such as India, the impact of increasing the presence of women on the media content is even controversial (Joseph, 2004). As she explained, women in her study disagreed over whether increasing numbers of women affect decisions of newsworthiness.

2.1.2 Glass Ceiling Theory

The term “Glass Ceiling” refers to invisible barriers that prevent women from reaching senior management positions. Cited in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:83), the U.S. Department of Labor defined this phenomenon as:

Artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational biases preventing qualified women or ethnic minorities from advancing in to upper management positions and obstructing them from getting assignments that can lead to developing expertise and credibility and, in turn, to promotion.

According to Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:83), *The Wall Street Journal* introduced the term in 1986 to indicate the “invisible but seemingly unbreakable barrier preventing women from breaking through to the top echelons of industry and business.” Chambers, Steiner and Fleming noted that the “Glass Ceiling” had not yet been shattered. As Carr-Ruffino (1993) noted, glass ceiling is one of the factor that block women from top jobs.

In journalism, the concept of glass ceiling also dominated discussions on women and media. A number of studies in the 1990s revealed that women experience the glass ceiling effect in media organizations and identified journalism’s glass ceiling as a global phenomenon (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). According to Joseph (2004:170), though some female journalists showed limited progress to the top positions, “elsewhere in the press, the ceiling-glass or otherwise, is so far above them that it is not within most women’s sights.”

Tuyizere (2007:71) noted how, in Africa, even if few women hold decision-making positions, they do not exercise real power, noting how “men also hold more positions of responsibility than women and tend to set standards

regarding what is expected from a manager.' Opoku-Mensah (2004:113) reinforced Tuyizere's idea. In her study on *Women, Gender and Newsroom Cultures in Africa*, women complained that "even when they do hold senior positions in the newsroom, they have a hard time getting men to take instruction from them."

Glass Ceiling theory suggested that the presence of more women in decision-making position would have a positive impact in the media. According to Glass Ceiling theorists, changes in media output are inevitable when an adequate number of women reach the highest ranks. Many scholars also agreed that, though women started to enter in journalism in great numbers, they do not play a significant role in changing news products in Western contexts (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004; Ross, 2004). They said changes in media output could be obtained only if sufficient numbers of women hold senior positions.

In her study Ross (2004:148) indicated that most women journalists believe that "having more women in senior positions will provide a positive impact on the career prospects for other women." Tuyizere (2007) also believes the negative portrayal of women in the media would be altered if more women reached senior positions. Research from Europe also confirmed similar findings. Spanish researchers mentioned gender as one, but not the only, factor in selecting media content. As Gallego and others (2004:45) explained:

The gender of those who make decisions on media contents is a factor in final selection but not the sole nor the most important one. It is also based on the assumption that men dominated the news production process in Spain's print media.

They said women's present in sufficient numbers or holding positions of enough authority in newsrooms still would not be enough to change news products completely. In their research, they also found that women do not seek positions of power as frequently as male colleagues do.

2.1.3 Standpoint Theory

Standpoint theory describes an outlook or attitude that shapes perceptions of the world (Griffin, 2006). Standpoint theorists Sandra Harding and Julia Wood, cited in Griffin (2006:482), claimed that:

The social groups within which we are located powerfully shape what we experience and know as well as how we understand and communicate with others, the world, and ourselves.

Harding used a stick in a pond to demonstrate the standpoint effect, noting how the stick looks bent from one angle of perception (when, in reality, it is not) and how it looks straight from another angle of perception (when, in reality, it is). Similarly, standpoint theorists suggested that “we can use the inequalities of gender, race, class and sexual orientation to observe how different locations within the social hierarchy tend to generate distinctive accounts of nature and social relationships.” As Harding noted:

When people speak from the opposite sides of power relations, the perspective from the lives of less powerful can provide a more objective view than the perspective from the lives of the more powerful (Griffin, 2006:483).

On the other hand, Wood regarded all perspectives as partial, with some standpoints are “more partial than others since different locations within social hierarchies affect what is likely to be seen.” For her, a woman’s standpoint is less partial and addresses women’s needs and concerns. She offered two explanations:

First, people with subordinate status have greater motivation to understand the perspective of more powerful groups than vice versa. Secondly, groups that are advantaged by the prevailing system have a vested interest in not perceiving social inequalities that benefit them at the expense of others (Griffin, 2006:483).

Standpoint theorists confirmed that knowledge emanating from marginalized groups is complete and better than the society’s dominant group. Van Zoonen (1998:35) explained that various surveys and interviews conducted in Western

countries reveal that “it is the definition of newsworthiness, particular angles and styles, professional norms and values that the masculine nature of journalism expresses itself.” She added that:

Female journalists often criticize the selection of newsworthy topics, claiming that topics that are relevant to women are often neglected in the press or relegated to marginal sections. The masculine character of the news is also recognized in the choice of sources and spokespersons who are overwhelmingly male, despite the growing numbers of female politicians, public officials and other professionals. Another element of masculinity in the news lies in male worldviews, which underlie the actual reporting. Finally, many female journalists claim that they hold a set of ethical values different to that of their male colleagues. Female journalists feel they show more respect to their readers and their readers’ needs than do their male colleagues.

On the contrary, Ross (2004) cites researchers like Weaver (1997) who suggest that women’s and men’s perception of professional values and ethos shows insignificant differences. For her, the variation is more associated with culture than gender. In a study noted in Joseph (2004:174), many women journalists agreed that “differences in perspective depended less on gender than on an individual’s background, interests and convictions.”

2.2 Women’s Representation, Role and Challenges in the Media

2.2.1 Women’s Representation

Though the number of women in newsrooms has increased over time, research shows that women are still underrepresented in media (Opoku-Mensah, 2004; Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004; Ross, 2004; Van Zoonen, 1998). Greenwald (2003:651) suggested that media still have few women as writers, news sources and top managers. She said that, though research showed an increasing presence of women in media, women still needed to go “a long way to catch up with their male peers.” She mentioned a 1999 study published in the *American Journalism Review* that indicated women constitute 29% of the

U.S media workforce. The International Women's Media Foundation report (2001) also shows that women constitute 41% of working journalists.

A study by the World Association for Christian Communication cited in International Women's Media Foundation (2001) indicated number of women journalists all over the world decreased from 43% in 1995 to 41% in 2000.

Research about Ethiopian media indicates a serious difference in the number of female and male journalists. Agaredech's research (2002) showed that women constitute only 12.5% of journalists at the Ethiopian News Agency. A study of nine newspapers (Haymanot, 2003) found that women, though better represented in private media (18.7%) than in government press (15.4%), accounted for only 15.7% of total media workforce. A recent study (Mengistu Dargie, 2007) indicated women represented 13.5% of Ethiopia's total media taskforce – a decline in the number of Ethiopian women journalists over five years.

The number of women journalists dramatically decreases in top managerial positions. As Greenwald (2003) suggested, although the number of women holding decision-making positions is rising, it is still low compared to their overall numbers in newsrooms. When she compared *American Society of Newspaper Editors* research in 1979, 1992 and 2000, she found fewer than 4% of women held editorial position in 1979, 10% in 1992, and 19% in 2000. Her research also cited International Federation of Journalists' finding that women, constituting 38% of journalism's global workforce, held only 1% of executive positions worldwide. That prompted IFJ to launch an awareness campaign in 2001.

A study conducted by the International Women's Media Foundation (2001) also showed that women in Africa comprised 8% and 14% of broadcast and print media managers, respectively. A majority of researchers noted that female journalists hold only lower positions in Ethiopian media hierarchies. In their studies, Agaredech (2002) and Haymanot (2003) encountered no women in

editor-in-chief positions and a few as deputy editors in some media. Mengistu's research (2007) indicated 16% of women journalists reached decision-making positions as editors. The others remained reporters.

The same under-representation exists for women as news sources. According to Global Media Monitoring Project (2000), men outnumbered women as newsmakers in every major news topic. In 1996, the African Women's Media Center shows that women represented 19% of all news sources (Opoku-Mensah, 2004).

Greenwald (2003) said this under representation is also apparent among news sources. Studies conducted in 1998 and 1999 by MeidaWatch, a Toronto-based media monitoring organization, showed women appeared as sources in major metropolitan newspapers only 20% of the time. As recently as 2001, Greenwald indicated, an analysis of five British newspapers showed that men dominated news sources in coverage in the wake of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

2.2.2 The Role of Women Journalists

The assumption that the presence of women in journalism broadens the scope of news coverage, the definition of news worthiness and other aspects of news values has been controversial. Some researchers strongly argued that the existence of women in the newsroom alters the culture by introducing new topics, different angles, news sources and presentation styles Van Zoonen (1998:35). Others disagreed (Weaver (1997) cited in Ross (2004)).

American historian Cathy Covert was among the first scholars to say women journalists bring different approaches to news writing. Cited in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, (2004:107), Covert (1981) discussed how men's reporting style reflected "conflict, controversy and winning or losing," whereas women's style elaborated "concord, harmony, affiliation and community."

In her study, Ross (2004) found 50% of respondents convinced that women and men bring different perspectives. Nevertheless, 75% believed that gender alone would not make a difference in changing the culture of newsroom and the type of news produced. In her study of Canadian journalists, Robinson (2004) confirmed that both men and women believe that women bring different perspectives to their work.

Joseph's (2004) survey of Indian journalists acknowledges that women made a significant difference in covering social issues. Some professionals however charged that women do not bring change in the "hard news," especially in political reporting and analysis. After analyzing data regarding women's contributions to journalism, Joseph (2004:170) observed:

Women brought more sensitivity, passion and depth to media coverage of news and issues. According to them, women were more likely to put faces to events and numbers and to focus media attention on social trends. Several interviews were of the opinion that women usually have a more comprehensive perspective than men.

According to Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004), content analysis on U.S. and British studies confirmed that women helped to widen the scope of topics by including subjects like child care, women's health education, family, sexual harassment and discrimination, rape and battery, homeless mothers, quality of life and other social issues. They listed journalism awards as evidence, beginning with women winning prestigious Pulitzer Prizes for "soft" stories.

Cited in Joseph (2004), Linda Christmas (1997) explained that women have a style of story presentation different from men. Women "personalize or humanize" reports so that audiences identify with their stories. Her research on British women journalists identifies four major angles of women's reporting:

1. Women journalists tend to put readers' needs above those of policy-makers.
2. Women are inclined to be more people-oriented rather than issue-oriented.

3. Women emphasize news in context rather than in isolation.
4. Women prefer to clarify the consequences of events.

Feminist scholars are also convinced that women journalists use women professionals as a news source much frequently than male counterparts do. Preliminary results of the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project show that more female news subjects appear in stories reported by women journalists (26%) than in stories reported by men journalists (19%). Cited in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004), Mills (1997) said women journalists tend use women as news sources and thus helped women politicians to become visible. Yet some women journalists and researchers oppose changes that women may bring to journalism, saying that news is not defined by gender and news values apply equally to all journalists.

2.2.3 Challenges of Women Journalists

Many feminist scholars suggested that under representation of women in media results from gender discrimination in hiring, salary structure and promotion in male-dominated newsroom cultures. Additionally, they cited sexual harassment, gender-based labor division, and family-work place conflicts contribute to women leaving the profession in their early 30s (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004; Ross, 2004).

2.2.3.1 Gender Discrimination: Professional vs. Womanhood

When women began entering journalism, strong opposition came from male editors and reporting colleagues. Most male editors had stereotypical attitudes towards women, saying “women lack reporting skills and could never acquire them” (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004: 24).

Many scholars say marginalization of women in newsrooms still exists (Robinson, 2004; Opoku-Mensah, 2004; Joseph, 2004; Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004; Lavie, 2004). According to these researchers, female journalists

remain subordinate in a variety of ways: recruitment patterns, salary and promotions, and stereotypical attitudes.

As Lavie (2004) indicated, various researchers said occupational subordination exists whenever the ratio of men and women departs from their respective ratios in the labor market. This has a direct relation with structure of employment. Many media organizations in Africa are reluctant to hire women journalists perceived as “the weaker sex, are poor performers and lack depth” (Opoku-Mensah, 2004:112). In India, resistance to employing women in the press continues because women are perceived as incapable of dealing with the daily hardship of journalism (Joseph, 2004).

On the contrary, Van Zoonen (1998) said the new, market-driven face of journalism, makes women more valuable in media. She grounds her observation in basic characteristics of market driven journalism: human interest, audience needs and desires, emotional investment and sensationalism. Except for sensationalism, Van Zoonen (1998:45) noted how the other three reflect norms and values of female journalists. She concluded:

As we can see in present day journalism: the news genre is changing and therefore more women can enter journalism as a profession. These changes in journalism as a whole may transform the field from the male-dominated domain in to an area that has potential of becoming dominated by women, just as public relations or government communications have become.

Another face of media gender discrimination is salary. Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004: 83) indicated that in Britain and the United States, women journalists earn less than their male colleagues do. British data from the 1990s confirmed that discrepancy, with women earning on average 83% of men's salary. They explained gender-based payment discrepancy as:

Many female journalists find they have been employed on lower pay scales than men with equivalent qualifications and experience. As well as being blocked from promotions, women are often given different job titles to justify lower pay than men earn for identical tasks.

Ross (2004) found that increasing number of women in media reduced the gross salary of the mainstream journalists as a whole. Cited in Ross (2004:144), Creedon (1993) observed that “increasing the number of women in the media occupations diminishes the status of the profession.”

Several researchers showed how women face discrimination and prejudice from male co-workers. Cited in Melin-Higgins (2004), a study by Henningham and Delano (1998) found that 60% of female respondents experienced newsroom discrimination compared to 31% of male respondents. Carter, Branston & Allan (1998) cited a study by Anne Sebba, noting that British women journalists encountered different types of discrimination than male colleagues.

A 2003 study by Mesay Mitiku about the Ethiopian Press Agency indicated that 21.4% of all journalists interviewed, male and female, confirmed that discrimination against women is a problem in the Ethiopian Press Agency newsroom. In Haymanot’s research (2003), an equal number (28.6%) of journalists confirmed and denied gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Both studies described evidence of discrimination as male promotions, male assignments to cover politics, and male stereotyped attitudes towards women journalists as weak and incapable.

Robinson (2004:183) described “newsroom climate as sexist in both tone and practice,” with male journalists trying to show their power and superiority. Many practices appear as “communicative styles” between colleagues. Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:100) described an example:

A major problem is male innuendo, or worse, explicit sexual objectification used to undermine women’s confidence and discredit their professionalism. Even women who have reached senior positions and achieved high levels of career success have been subjected to misogynistic comments and implications that they offered sex, flirted or flaunted themselves in order to obtain a story to compromise their expertise.

They noted how women witnessed the strongest hostility in political and sports journalism, long considered male dominated spheres. In her study in Africa,

Opoku-Mensah (2004:108) found that “women often work in hostile working environment.”

Women journalists also face a dilemma reconciling professionalism and womanhood. According to Steiner (1998:155), female journalists “wanted to be recognized, respected and rewarded as journalists, but their sense of membership in a female sorority was perceived to undermine professionalism.” Joseph (2004) observed the conflict between professional identities and sensibilities as women among female journalists. Their hope to be accepted as “professional, like anyone else” it is not always possible “because they are perceived first as women by many of those they have to deal with on a daily basis” Joseph (2004:175).

2.2.3.2 Gender Based Labor Division: Hard vs. Soft News

Researchers suggested that newsrooms reflect sex role stereotypes. Cited in Tuyizere (2007:106), Shakeshaft (1987) noted that male tasks are valued more than female ones. This division of labor, she said, emanated from male cultural domination which holds that “a male-centered culture invests worth in male values and regards female values and experience as less significant.”

In the 19th and 20th centuries, newsrooms in the United States and Britain had a sharp gender division of labor (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004) with women occupying subordinate and confined positions. In addition, relegating women to soft news areas were also common. According to Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) preliminary results, women still more likely report soft news categories. Women reported 32% of political/government stories and 43% of economic stories.

Joseph (2004) also indicated that in Indian print media relegating women to a particular beats within the press continues. In her study, many women complained that they are prevented from demonstrating their skills in covering hard news. In Africa, women are seen as capable of certain topics only and

some female journalists acknowledge these notions as journalistic norms (Opoku-Mensah, 2004).

In Ethiopia, the findings of Haymanot (2003) study confirmed that women journalists mostly cover 'soft' news areas like entertainment, women and family, and social issues. According to her study, 33.3% of women reported social, 19.1% of women reported economic and 4.7% of women reported entertainment issues. No women covered politics.

Covering "hard" rather than "soft" news may have professional consequences because it is assumed that hard news is important and those who cover that are good professionals while soft news is not important and those who cover are not professionals (Melin-Higgins, 2004). As she explains, hard news that hits the front page has the highest status among journalists. Robinson (2004:186) noted that "not only story areas (beats), but also interview assignments are gender stereotypical," noting male assignments to interview high-profile personalities.

Using Raymond William's work on culture, Melin-Higgins (2004:196) examined the root cause of stereotypical roles in journalism. Taking journalism as a culture, she defined journalist culture as:

What a particular body of journalists, at a point in history, feels, thinks, acts, and is. It is creation and recreation of meaning and reality, constantly negotiated and determined by power. Journalist culture is thus, a shared world view-reality for a group of journalists that, of course, comprises a set of ideals, values, and rules of how to handle things (like news) and how to enact that perspective.

As with any culture, Melin-Higgins described how journalist culture is not homogenous. The dominant culture is seen as "normal," and that with opposing attitudes is considered "deviant." Inevitably, she noted, the dominant culture and different oppositional cultures always fight for symbolic power, with the outcome determining who has the legacy to define what journalism is. Thus, "the definitions of the dominant group are seen as the objective truth by

the dominator and dominated alike” and other definitions are repressed or excluded. (2004:197).

Melin-Higgins observed how in journalism the dominant male culture, which is not objective, defines such stereotypical divisions of labor as hard vs. soft news. When oppositional groups (such as women) learn that these definitions are not absolute truth, they fight the divisions. So dominant groups inevitably see oppositional groups as threats and design ways to undermine them, including by saying their work has no value.

Melin-Higgins identified three types of coping mechanisms that women journalists practice. The first -- being “one of the boys” -- involves women journalists accepting the importance of hard news and breaking into that arena without violating the definitions of the dominant group. The second one -- being “one of the girls” -- attempts to raise feminine agendas as news subjects. Perceived a threat, the dominant culture tries to suppress opposition with repressive words that belittle women’s work. The last tactic -- taking the role of “women journalists” -- is to accept definitions of the dominant group and work on soft news, women’s pages and so on.

She concluded her argument as: “British journalists’ culture and its definition are masculine and sexist, which is not particularly surprising given that most feminist journalist scholars came to the same conclusion, albeit in various countries” (2004:215). Cited in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:100), Ross (2000) also found that the majority of women journalists faced workplace discrimination and considered it “the price one has to pay for working in a male ordered context.”

2.2.3.3 Work-Home Balance

In many parts of the world, where women handle domestic activities, working parents especially mothers carry a heavy burden. The situation worsens for journalists when the work requires late, long or irregular work hours and

unpredictable work schedules. This becomes a barrier to women's integration into newsroom culture (Ross, 2004).

As Ross mentioned, a number of women journalists find it difficult to reconcile family responsibilities and work schedules due to safety concerns and social disapproval. But some women journalists also criticize female colleagues for demanding special care. Professional growth, they say, requires fulfilling all requirements of the job demands.

Robinson (2004) blamed journalism's unsuitable working conditions for the under-representation of women in journalism. From her Canadian experience, she said 42% of working mothers mentioned how child-care arrangements and family obligations periodically interfered with work schedules.

In Africa, domestic circumstances can become major obstacles for women who hope to develop careers in journalism. Opoku-Mensah (2004) explained that many women leave journalism when the burden of caring for children and handling domestic activities becomes difficult to juggle with their professional duties. Moreover, she says, cultural and social expectations that dictate women's behavior often conflict with professional growth as journalists.

Balancing work and home responsibilities has often presented serious conflicts for Ethiopian women journalists. Yetenayet Andarge's (1997) study on the life of early women journalists confirmed that long and late working hours in journalism affected women's family and social lives. Unable to withstand the pressure, some abandoned journalism. Approximately 60% of subjects in Mengistu's research (2007) are single, suggesting one indication that many women work in journalism until they marry.

In some cases, employers use maternity leave and women's reluctance to work nights as reasons not to hire or promote. Cited in Tuyizere (2007), Davison and Cooper (1992) noted that many employers resisted recruiting women due to maternity-leave interruptions.

Research also shows that an after-hours male “pub culture” is a serious barrier for career advancement for women journalists (Robinson, 2004; Melin-Higgins, 2004; Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). Melin-Higgins (2004:209) described that male culture:

The sexism goes on after hours in the pub, which is really a continuation of the newsroom. In the pub, there is not only football talk. The pub is also where the next day’s jobs are often given out, where promotions are discussed, and where stories are made.

Such informal work groups have great power to influence newsroom decisions (Giles, 1995:21), with Giles noting how informal groups “can affect the formal operation of the newsroom in a variety of ways, both negatively and positively.” Any change in newsroom operating practices can provide obstacles.

Too often women journalists cannot be part of such groups, with their after-work hours consumed by childcare or family responsibilities. Society’s unwritten laws can also bar women from the “pub culture” and thus hinder women’s career advancement (Opoku-Mensah, 2004).

To tackle the work-home balance, some female journalists remained unmarried. Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:18) documented the story of Harriet Martineau, the first British female journalist who lived in the 1850s. The unmarried Martineau speculated that “she might not have succeeded as an author if she had experienced the confines of a typical middle-class Victorian marriage.” She exposed the disadvantages of married life by saying “I am probably the happiest single woman in the whole England.” However, she could not escape societal critics who nicknamed her “marriage breaker” and the like.

Unfortunately, many women journalists who cannot resist work-home pressures abandon journalism to work in the field of Public Relations or communications. Ross (2004:152) said, “Many excellent journalists are being lost to the profession because of this long-hours culture makes life impossible.” A survey conducted by the group Women in Journalism in 2001, the majority of senior women media professionals in Britain television, radio and

newspapers leave journalism due to inflexible working hours (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004).

In Britain and the United States, more full-time women journalists are young and single compared with male counterparts. A study conducted by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) and cited in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004) showed that 46% of men and 32% of women had 15 or more years of experience in journalism, which may supply some evidence that women generally do not remain in journalism as long as men do. Mengistu's research (2007) also showed that Ethiopian women journalists are young and relatively inexperienced: 70% between 22 and 30, and 80% with less than 10 years of journalistic experience.

2.2.3.4 Sexual Harassment

Various studies suggest that sexual harassment undermines women's confidence and sometimes becomes an obstacle to progress in a career. Weaver (1992), cited in Ross (2004), showed that between 40% and 60% of female journalists experienced harassment in U.S. newsrooms. Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004) document sexual harassment as a worldwide problem in the media.

According to Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004), in Indiana, 70% of women journalists described harassment in work places. In Washington, 80% of women journalists identified sexual harassment as a problem in newsrooms. In Britain, more than 50% of women and more than 25% of men in journalism said they experienced or witnessed discrimination against women and 17% of women said they experienced sexual harassment.

In Ethiopia, various media record cases of sexual harassment. Mesay (2003) showed that 33.3% of female journalists had seen or heard sexual harassment in media workplaces. Additionally, 19.4% of women faced sexual harassment while practicing journalism (Haymanot, 2003). In his study, Mengistu (2007) identified 23.3% of female journalists facing sexual harassment, with

respondents saying most sexual harassment came from public relations officers.

2.3 Women and Media in Ethiopian

2.3.1 Radio in Ethiopia

Radio broadcasting in Ethiopia began in 1935 when Italian forces invaded and occupied the country. Reluctant to let enemies use the transmission, Ethiopian military forces destroyed the station before Italian troops entered Addis Ababa (Ministry of Information, 1966). However, the Italians re-installed the station and used radio to disseminate propaganda.

The radio station was restored immediately after the Italian occupation ended in 1941 (Ministry of Information, 1995). After the victory, regular programs offered news, music, public notices and advertisements. Seven staff members, including technicians, produced four hours daily (Negussie, 2006). The Ministry of Pen, established under a Press and Information Department, was responsible for programs transmitted with 10 watts of power.

In 1960, radio broadcasting showed great improvement in facilities and range of transmission with international broadcasts. Languages for “Radio Addis Ababa” included French, English, Arabic and Swahili for audiences in Africa and Europe. In 1966, Addis Ababa, Harar and Asmara received high-powered transmitters to originate broadcast from provincial centers. Broadcasting 18 hours a day in nine languages, “Radio Addis Ababa” became “Radio Ethiopia.” Under the Derg (1974 -1991), Radio Ethiopia became the Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia with 166 hours of national and international weekly transmission in nine languages. The national service broadcast from Addis Ababa in five languages, but no regions broadcast programs.

In the early 1970s, broadcasts reached 20% of the country’s territory, with transmissions reaching 500,000 listeners. Currently, Radio Ethiopia covers 80% of the country, with 15.2 million listeners (Negussie, 2006). Owned from

the beginning by the government, it now transmits from eight provinces in eight local languages.

2.3.2 FM Radio Stations in Ethiopia

Only recently did the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) license three private FM stations in Addis Ababa, categorizing FM broadcasting into three services: government/public, commercial/private, community radio. So the country now has eight government, four commercial and six community FM radio stations registered and licensed, all with regional transmissions (See Table 2.1, Table 2.2 and Table 2.3).

According to the EBA's website, www.eba.gov.et, the purpose of government media operating at public expense is to inform, entertain and educate. Commercial radio broadcasting services aim to do the same as profit-making enterprises for private owners. Radio services owned by the community also serve as a forum for community discussions.

FM Addis 97.1 and FM Addis 96.3 are government stations operating in Addis Ababa. Established under Radio Ethiopia, 97.1 was the country's first FM station (Negussie, 2006). It began broadcasting in June 2000 with 18 hours of programming per day for Addis Ababa and nearby towns. The EBA website says the station registered in 2003 and is now broadcasting 24 hours a day. An outlet of the Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, FM 96.3 started in 2005 under Addis Ababa City Administration and provides 18 hours of programming daily, focusing on the city and surrounding areas.

Regional FM radio stations serve regional populations. Amhara Region Mass Media Agency launched in 2001 with Radio Amhara on medium wave. FM Bahir Dar 96.9 started in 2005. Dire Dawa FM 106.1 began in 2005 under the Dire Dawa Administration. The Voice of Revolutionary Woyan, originally an underground radio for the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front, continues transmission from Mekelle.

Table 2.1. Government/Public Radio Services registered by Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency

N o	Owner	Name of the station	Year of establis hment	Types of frequency	Area coverage	Transmission languages	Weekly transmission hours	Station base	Status
1	Ethiopia Radio and Television Agency	Radio Ethiopia	1935	MW, SW	Federal	Amharic, Tigrigna, Oromifa, English, Somalia, Afar, Arabic, French	24	Addis Ababa	In service
		FM Addis	2003	FM 97.1	Regional	Amharic	24 hours	Addis Ababa	In service
2	Amhara Mass Media Agency	Amhara Region Radio	2005	MW 801 FM 96.9	Regional	Amharic, Agew, Heweti	28	Bahir Dar	In service
3	Debub Mass Media Agency	Debub FM	2005	FM 100.9	Regional	Amharic	21	Hawassa	In service
4	Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency	FM Addis	2005	FM 96.3	Regional	Amharic	77	Addis Ababa	In service
5	Dire Dawa Mass Media Agency	FM Dire	2005	FM 106.1	Regional	Amharic, Oromifa, Somali	51	Dire Dawa	In service
6	Harari Mass Media Agency	Harar FM	2008	FM101.4	Regional	Amharic, Oromifa, Harari	42	Harar	In service
7	Oromia Mass Media Agency	Oromia Radio Station	2008	MW 837,1053, 1035 FM 93.5	Regional	Oromifa	56	Adama	In service
8	Tigray Mass Media Agency	Mekelle FM	2009	FM 104.4	Regional	Tigrigna	96	Mekelle	In service

Source: Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority website

Table 2.2. Private/Commercial Radio Services registered by Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency

N o	Owner	Name of the station	Year of establis hment	Types of frequency	Area coverage	Transmission languages	Weekly transmission hours	Station base	Status
1	Radio Fana Share Company	Radio Fana	2006	MW 1080, SW 6180,7210 FM 98.1	Federal	Amharic, Oromifa, Somali, Afar	80	Addis Ababa	In service
2	The Voice of Woyane PLC.	Voice of Woyane Tigray	2006	SW	Federal	Tigrigna, Afar, Kunami	62	Mekelle	In service
3	Zami Public Connection	Zami Radio	2006	FM 90.7	Regional	Amharic	168	Addis Ababa	In service
4	Adey Public Relation & Tinsay Fine Arts	FM Sheger	2003	FM 102.1	Regional	Amharic, English	126	Addis Ababa	In service
5	Paconet Media PLC.	Afro FM	2008	FM 105.3	Regional	English, French, Arabic	126	Addis Ababa	In service
6	Probecs PLC	-	2007	-	Federal	Foreign language		Addis Ababa	In service
7	Multi choice Ethiopia	-	2007	-	Federal	Foreign language		Addis Ababa	In service

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Source: Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority website

Table 2.3. Community Radio Services registered by Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency

N o	Owner	Name of the station	Year of establis hment	Types of frequency	Area coverage	Transmission languages	Weekly transmission hours	Station base	Status
1	Gima area Community Radio Service	Gimma Community Radio	2008	FM 102.0	Regional	Amharic, Oromifa	89	Gimma University Compund	In service
2	Kora Community Radio Service	Kora Community Radio	2005	FM 92.3	Regional	Amharic, Korete	21	Amaro Liyu Woreda	Not in service
3	Kembata Community Radio Service	Kembata Community Development Radio	2008	FM 105.8	Regional	Kembata	58	Durame	Not in service
4	Keffa Community Radio Service	Keffa Community Radio	2008	FM 102.5	Regional	Keffigna	21	South Regional Zone Keffa Woreda Bonga	Not in service
5	Kombolcha Community Radio Service	Kombolcha town and nearby towns Community Radio	2008	FM 104.8	Regional	Amharic	33	Amhara Region Southern Wollo	Not in service
6	Sude Woreda Community Radio Service	Sude Woreda Community Radio	2009	FM 103.5	Regional	Oromifa	16	Kore Kulu Kebele	Not in service

Source: Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority website

The majority of commercial/private FM radio stations broadcast in Addis Ababa. Private FM radio stations registered by the EBA are Fana FM 98.1, Sheger FM 102.1, Zami 90.7 and Afro FM 105.3. The Radio Fana website, www.radiofana.com, claims the first private broadcasts in 2007 with news, live talk shows and call-in programs.

Zami Public Connection (broadcaster of Zami FM 90.6) and Adey Public Relation & Tensay Fine Arts (broadcaster of Sheger FM 102.1) received licenses in 2006 and began transmitting in 2008.

Paconet Media PLC, a privately-held company registered in Addis Ababa, received an FM broadcasting license in 2008 for the FM frequency 105.3. Broadcasting mainly in English, it reaches the international community and the city's English-speaking population of Addis Ababa. It is the country's first English language radio station.

2.3.3 Women in Ethiopian Journalism

Before the Italian occupation, no women journalists practiced in Ethiopia. Some evidence confirms two women may have contributed articles to *Berhanena Selam* newspaper in 1923 (Rahel, 1991). But the first female journalist, Romanwork Kassahun, seems to be the first fulltime practitioner. The Ministry of Information hired her as a radio newscaster in January 28, 1947 (Yetenayet, 1997). She also produced the country's first bi-weekly radio program for women and co-edited a women's magazine, *Menen*. The second women journalist, Elleni Feten joined radio in 1957.

According to Yetenayet, radio broadcasting paved the way for women to enter journalism. Many early women journalists joined Radio Ethiopia as newscasters for their first jobs.

In 1950s and 1960s, female journalists were highly educated from well-to-do families encouraged and supported by families. Yetenayet's research identified all as high school graduates and half as university graduates, with on-the-job

training. Unlike Westerners, Ethiopian women journalists started in radio, then joined television as newsreaders and program hosts in the 1960s and migrated to newspapers around 1964 (Yetenayet, 1997).

The majority of women journalists covered women's issues. Teshome Birhanu (1997) said Romanwork's name was inextricably linked to women's radio program, detailing women's role in opposing the Italian invaders and addressing problems from cultural and societal attitudes. Her programs also emphasized special government attention for women.

The first women's page in English – "Dear Women this Page Gives You Voice, Speak Out Loud" -- appeared in *The Ethiopian Herald* under the editorship of Sophia Yilma. The first women's page in Amharic -- *Ye Ethiopia Demtse* (Voice of Ethiopia) under the title *Yesetoch Hiwot* (Life of Women) was edited by a man, Merseahazen Abebe. As Teshome (1997) noted, it covered women issues from a male perspective and failed to raise critical issues affecting women's lives. Within a year, Elleni Feten took over as editor, renamed it *Yesetoch Getse* (Women's Page) and encouraged women to be visible.

Three months after Ethiopian Television began, in January, 1964, the first women's television program emerged as *Setochina Muyachew* (Women and their Profession) airing a half hour every Thursday night. Abaynesh Birru (1996) cited in Yetenayet (1997) mentioned that women's programming became effective and well known after 1974 when *Kemaget eske Adebabaye* (From Domestic to Public) produced by Bizu Wondimagegne showed the lives of rural and urban women. Bizu's program was unique in that she disclosed how cultural practices discriminate against women.

According to Yetenayet, early women journalists experienced gender discrimination as prejudice and opposition in male-dominated newsrooms. Yetenayet documented that managers used budget cuts as a pretext for firing Romanwork because she could not gather news like male journalists. However,

when she took her case to Emperor Haileselassie, he returned her job and she continued her career for 25 years.

Another veteran journalist, Tabotu Woldemicheal, also experienced discrimination as a newcomer in Radio Ethiopia who asked to read news in English. Her request was originally denied in the belief that a woman's voice would undermine news value. Asegedech Yiberta described salary discrepancies. In 1967, the Minister of Information, Dejazemach Girmachew Tekelehawriat, reportedly replied to women journalists request for a salary increase with: "You women, what can you do with the money? Do you want it to buy fancy car?" (Yetenayet, 1997)

The emergence of women in journalism encouraged girls to follow. Teshome (1997) described how the change in government in 1974 attracted women to media. Program producers like Genet Berhe, Mulugethaye Bogale and Sahelemariam Beyene and newscasters and hosts like Helina Tefera and Mimi Sebhatu joined media houses.

One interviewee in Yetenayet's (1997) study reported better treatment for women journalists after 1974. "Both Emperor Haileselassie and Derg used media for strengthening their power. During the time of Derg, it was possible to bring women in decision-making positions," she noted. She added that the regime's socialist ideology also encouraged women's participation in society in general and in media in particular.

Another change of government, in 1991, also meant huge another change in Ethiopian journalism (Neguisse, 2006). Private media ownership increased opportunities for women (Yetenayet, 1997; Teshome, 1997), including opportunities to run their own media. Emebet Zewde (Ethio Post), Tigist Yilma (Capital), Tsion Girma (Embilta) are among the first female newspaper owners, and Meaza Birru and Mimi Sebhatu are the first female journalists to own and run FM radio stations.

Women journalists founded the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA) in 1997 (EMWA magazine, 2007) to promote women's rights in and through media. It aims to reverse little participation, rare access to information, and little role in decision-making through media. It helps to train journalists and media practitioners, conducting surveys and developing guidelines on gender and media issues. According to the EMWA quarterly magazine, the association has nearly 200 members as of 2008, from all fields of media and communication.

Chapter Three

Research Method

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains research methods used in the study. The first section describes sampling techniques. The next section deals with data collection methods and the rationale behind selected techniques.

3.1 Sampling Technique

3.1.1 Purposive Sampling

As stated in Chapter One, this study aims to analyze the status, role and challenges of women journalists working at FM radio stations in Addis Ababa. In order to attain the objective of this research, purposive sampling method is used. As Wimmer and Dominick (2006) mention, a purposive sample includes specific subjects that fulfill a certain criteria and excludes those who fail to meet criteria. The subjects are identified based on the purpose of the research. Purposive sampling is important when a researcher wants to get information from a group that meets the purpose of his/her study.

FM radios are purposively selected as recent phenomenon in the country's history of broadcasting. This helps to examine how women are represented and treated in these media and it is important to look at whether women FM radio journalists experience similar or different challenges from women in the print media. This selection is also made on the assumption that women are sought more for radios than for newspapers, and the research will examine this idea.

The research would have been complete with access to all women journalists working at FM radios operating throughout the country. However, due to time and other constraints, it excludes regional FM radios and does not examine community and educational FM radios that serve specific target group

audiences with special purposes. The study only includes FM radio stations categorized as public and commercial by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) (see table 2.1 in previous chapter), namely FM Addis 97.1, FM Addis 96.3, Fana FM 98.1, Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7 and Afro FM 105.3.

The study hoped to include all women journalists working in six FM stations. Various definitions of journalists in radio or television obliged the researcher to define the term before selecting the study's informants. The majority of literature defines journalists as those who produce news stories for newspapers or for broadcast on radio or television. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989:609) defined a journalist as "one who earns his living by editing or writing for a public journal or journals." Some definitions of journalists incorporate newscasters and program hosts as journalists.

In order to achieve the purpose of this research, news announcers and program hosts are excluded from the definition of journalist because they do not report news or produce stories, according to the information gathered from administrative staffs of FM radio stations. Instead, only women journalists who are employed fulltime to collect news and produce radio programs are purposively selected.

3.2 Research Tools

3.2.1 Mixed Methods Research

This research employs qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. Since this study's primary objective is to reveal the status, experience, practice and challenges of women journalists, mixed methods research is the most suitable approach. Creswell and Planoclark (2007) emphasized the importance of using qualitative and quantitative method. They defined this mixed methods research:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of

qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (2007:5)

Understanding women journalists' status, role and challenges demands both qualitative and quantitative methods as Creswell and Planoclark noted. Qualitative data produced detailed information about respondents' behavior, view, attitudes and opinions. Qualitative data cannot explain the status of women in terms of numbers, positions, age composition, work experience and educational level. So generalizing finding solely on qualitative data is difficult but quantitative data fill this gap.

Quantitative data are best way to gather information about the number of women journalists in the media, their position in their respective media and their challenges without inspecting the reason behind the findings. Nevertheless, only expressing women journalists' representation in terms of numbers will not answer all research questions. Detailed data regarding women journalists' attitude towards their career, experiences, practices and challenges in the media can be gathered by using qualitative methods. Therefore, the outcome of the quantitative data would be enriched by the qualitative data.

As Creswell (2009) explained, mixing of data is not simply collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. Rather it involves using both kinds of data at the same time so that the overall strength of the study is more than either qualitative or quantitative research alone. This research also combines and mixes the findings of both qualitative and quantitative methods during analyzing and presentation.

In order to meet the research objective and answer the research questions, this researcher opted to collect data through a self-completion questionnaire, focus

group discussion and individual interviews. The advantages of each method are discussed below.

3.2.1.1 Self-Completion Questionnaire

Questionnaires, as one data collection tool in survey study, are used to determine what people think, plan to do and do by measuring their attitudes, tastes, prejudices, beliefs and values (Berger, 2000). They are important in gathering large quantitative data from a large number of people (Miller and Brewer, 2003). Questionnaires are important in this study to collect information about women journalists' educational background, journalistic work experience, age, marital status and positions in their respective media. Women journalists' perceptions about their newsroom and their understanding of their role in the media will be measured quantitatively. Questionnaires will also be used to reveal how many women journalists there are and what kind of challenges they face.

A questionnaire was developed and distributed to all women journalists at the six FM radio stations. As Gray (2004:205) explained, "Questionnaires are a one-shot attempt at data gathering; it is therefore they are accurate, unambiguous and simple to complete." As Berger (2000) and Gray (2004) recommended, all questions should be clear, short and unambiguous; none should be leading or loaded. The questionnaire includes open-ended and close-ended questions. The former should capture views, perceptions, opinion and attitudes of women journalists towards newsrooms and jobs. The latter are vital to compare views, attitudes and opinions of one group with other group of women journalists.

To minimize misunderstanding, questions are short so respondents can answer easily. Another method to avoid misunderstanding is pre-testing. Berger (2000:199) described the advantage of pre-testing:

The advantage of doing a pilot study is that it frequently helps you discover problems in your questionnaire that you couldn't

have anticipated, which you then can solve before you undertake a large study.

In this study, pre-testing was conducted with sample respondents, with a list of initial questions tested with three Radio Ethiopia women journalists not part of the final research. Their feedback led to some adjustment of questions.

The pre-tested questionnaires were then distributed to women journalists in media setting where they were asked to fill and return the questionnaire within two days. In some cases, it took up to two weeks. Though the questionnaire was prepared in English, respondents could answer in Amharic to explain themselves better. All Amharic replies were translated during data analysis. The response rate was 83.87%, with 26 of 31 questionnaires filled and returned.

3.2.1.2 Focus Group Discussion

As Morgan (1997) cited in Wimmer and Dominick (2006) explains, this study used focus group discussion (FGD) as a multi-method – one of qualitative techniques to collect data. According to Wimmer and Dominick, FGD is a research instrument that helps to understand peoples' attitudes and behavior. Miller and Brewer (2003) suggested that FGD is advantageous in sharing views, experiences and stories among participants. It provides "insightful and rich" data that is "more intense and valuable than if all the participants were interviewed separately." (2003:120-121)

This research uses FGD to gather qualitative data about women journalists' perception of their working environment, their role in bringing new perspectives, the challenges they faced and their coping mechanism in their respective media. FGD is preferred over individual interview because it stimulates interaction among participants. As Gaskell (2000) explains, participants in FGDs talk and respond, compare experiences and impressions and react to what others say in the group. Moreover, a group discussion helps

respondents remember some issues from other participants' remarks that would be unlikely in individual interviews.

No clear guidelines dictate the number of FGD or number of participants. Wimmer and Dominick (2006) suggested that between two and four FGDs could be enough for a small research project. Regarding the number of FGD participants, they recommend from six to 12. Miller and Brewer (2003) recommend six to 10 people per group although a greater or fewer numbers could work.

Since the sample participants in this study are few in numbers, two focus group discussions seemed enough to gather rich qualitative data. Miller and Brewer indicated that categorizing participants is important; in this study FGD participants are grouped according to journalistic experience and position in their media. The first discussion group included editors and reporters with more than five years of journalistic experience. The second group included reporters with have less than five years journalistic experience.

Before conducting the FGD, guide questions for each interview were developed based on data gathered from questionnaires. This shaped discussion about comprehensive explanation of perceptions, views and attitudes of women journalists. Questions emerged based on research objectives.

Focus group discussants were reached through media administrative offices. The first FGD was held June 18, 2010, in Kumnagar Media and Entertainment office (my work place) from 2:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. The second FGD took place on June 21, 2010, from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the same place. The researcher, who facilitated for FGD, believes that conducting the discussion outside of participants' media would encourage them to speak freely. The discussion was conducted in Amharic, with data later translated into English.

In the first FGD, five women editor and reporters with more than five years of experience participated. Six reporters with less than five years of experiences attended the second FGD. Comparing the two clearly shows how experience

matters. The first FGD was full of interaction, emotional involvement, arguments and digestion of ideas, with participants conscious about gender differences and its impact on their professional lives. The majority of participants in the second FGD, with limited journalistic experience, did not engage in active conversation. Some discussants refrained from commenting on some issues of discussion. This allowed the researcher to examine the research problem via different participants with different experiences.

3.2.1.3 Individual Interviews

In some cases, researchers prefer individual interviews over focus group discussions. According to Gray (2004), interviews are important when people prefer to talk rather than to write. Company managers, government officials and higher-ranking individuals often do not have time to reply to questionnaires or discuss their work in a group. In such cases, interviews are powerful research instruments to gather information.

In this study, individual interviews were used to gather information about the views, perception and experiences of media managers regarding women journalists in their media. The intention -- to interview all six media managers -- did not materialize. Meaza Birru, manager of Sheger FM 102.1, refused and Shimeles Meresa, director of Afro FM 105.3, was out of the country during the data collection period. Therefore, Samuel Endale, Director of Fana FM 98.1, Tsehaye Chane, Director of FM Addis 97.1, Mimi Sebhatu, Director of Zami FM 90.7 and Ermiyas Getahun, Radio editor of FM Addis 96.3 included in this interview.

Their absence, I believe, did not greatly affect research findings because the views of women managers as well as government and private media managers are included. Researchers suggested that media ownership affects journalistic content and practices (Carter, Branston and Allan, 1998), making it necessary to include outlook and attitudes of managers from government and private media. Interviews of male and female managers from government media (FM

Addis 97.1, FM Addis 96.3) and private media (Zami FM 90.7, Fana FM 98.1) are included.

Among four categories of interviews that Berger (2004) described, semi-structured interviews were best suited for this study. Interview questions were designed to reveal media managers' attitudes towards female journalists' capacity and performance and managers' criteria in job assignments and issues such as hiring, promoting and firing. All interviews took place in media managers' offices.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents, discusses and analyzes data gathered from a combination of questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews. It also attempts to relate the experiences of women journalists to media operations and production in its four sections. The first section deals with the status of women journalists in the six FM radio stations noting male-female composition, comparing government and private owned radio stations, their position in the media, age, journalistic experience, educational level and qualifications.

The second section, which presents the role of women journalists, discusses the new perspectives that women brought to journalism focusing on their contribution in terms of broadening news scope, selecting sources and changing the negative portrayal of women in the media. The third section examines types of challenges that women journalists faced in the media and its consequences on their career progress. The last section addresses the possible solutions to tackle challenges of women journalists.

4.1 Status of Women at FM Radio Stations

4.1.1 Women-Men Composition

In order to understand the presence and impact of women journalists on the media, it is important to examine the ratio of men to women. While distributing questionnaires to women journalists, I collected information about the number of men journalists from the Human Resource and Administration Departments of the six FM radio stations. Table 4.1 indicates there are 31 women and 69 men journalists. In other words, women constitute 31% of the total workforce

in the media, which is compared with 69% that of men. This implies women are under represented in FM radio stations.

Table 4.1. Representation of women Journalists in FM radio stations

No	Station Name	Number of Journalists			Media Owner
		Female	Male	Total	
1	FM Addis 97.1	5	30	35	Government
2	FM Addis 96.3	7	5	12	Government
3	Fana FM 98.1	6	16	22	Private
4	Sheger FM 102.1	4	12	16	Private
5	Zami FM 90.7	6	5	11	Private
6	Afro FM 105.3	3	1	4	Private
Total		31	69	100	

Although examining the status of women journalists over time is important, there are no, at least the knowledge of the researcher, studies on Ethiopian broadcast media. Previous studies focused on women journalists in newspapers and news agencies (Agareddech (2003), Haymanot (2003) and Mengistu (2007)). Their findings showed that women constitute nearly 15% of the medium’s total workforce. The most recent research (Mengistu) showed that women represented 13.5%. This research indicates that women have better representation in radio than newspapers and news agencies.

Though private media represent twice as many stations as government media, private stations employ fewer women journalists (as indicated in Table 4.2 below). At the four private stations, women represent 25.53% of the media workforce while women at the government stations comprise 35.85% of the workforce, compared with 74.47% and 64.15% of men journalists respectively. This suggests that women are better represented in government media.

Table 4.2. Representation of Women Journalists in government & private media

No	Media ownership	Number of journalists		Total	Percent	
		Female	Male		Female	Male
1	Private	12	35	47	25.53%	74.47%
2	Government	19	34	53	35.85%	64.15%
Grand Total		31	69	100		

Media managers and focus group participants cannot with certainty explain the small number of women in the media, they do make guesses based on their experience. They blame stereotyped attitudes, lack of education for women, denied opportunities, and a reflection of the country's labor force in general.

Focus groups participants said none faced discrimination due to gender during the hiring process at their respective stations. Although they said men and women received equal recruitment opportunities, participants also said they sensed a tendency of media managers to prefer to hire men. As speaker two in FGD 2 observed, media managers may consider women as inefficient, with a lower level of energy during pregnancy and a disruptive maternity as possible explanations for that preference. Speaker three in the same FGD examined the preference from the perspective of women's status in Ethiopian society. She said women have low access to education, hindering their chances to practice any profession they pursue.

The majority of media managers attributed the smaller number of women to the cultural and traditional challenges women face. According to Wz. Tsehay Chane, Director of FM Addis 97.1, fewer women in media reflect fewer women in the country's labor force. According to the 2004 African Development Bank report on country gender profile, out of the total labor force employed in the Civil Service, 40% are women. Of these, 71% are employed in lower level jobs earning less than 400 Birr per month. Women's limited participation in the country's political, social and economic sectors, she said, is restricted by their

traditional position in society. Women were not expected to work in public spheres like journalism, she said, noting that this stereotyped attitude keeps large numbers of women from advancing in journalism.

Ato Samuel Endale, Director of Fana FM 98.1, also cited the generally low participation of women in social, political and economic sectors. He noted how lack of education and low participation prohibit women from being competitive in the labor market. At his station, he said, fewer women than men apply.

Ato Ermiyas Getahun, radio program editor at Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency (broadcaster of FM Addis 96.3), said the small number of women journalists is due to the socio-cultural influences. He indicated, however, this is changing, with the number of women journalists improving over time. These days, he said, the gap between men and women journalists is narrowing with a relatively equivalent number of women and men journalists at his station. Nevertheless, in regard to higher editorial positions, he said, the gap becomes widens.

For Wz. Mimi Sebhatu, Director of Zami Multi-Media (broadcaster of Zami FM 90.7), denied opportunities (plus stereotyped attitudes) impacts under representation of women in the media. She opposes the idea there are not enough competent women journalists available, noting dozens of women applicants. She described the situation:

When we advertise to recruit journalists, more than 80% of applicants were women. Though many of the women were impressive in their interviews, we decided to balance the number of men and women since we need participation of both sexes. We often give trainings and examination before hiring journalists. All women passed the examination whereas many men failed. Even in the next round of training, similar situations occurred. This is the reality at Zami. I also observed women's courage and devotion to their work. I believe women lack the opportunity, not the capacity.

She indicated how, if women get equal opportunity in every sector, they have the ability to excel and exert extra effort to tackle society's root problems.

According to Critical Mass theorists, the presence of a large number of women in media should affect the newsrooms culture and the news itself. Many women journalists who participated in this study agreed with these scholars while some disagreed. The data gathered from the questionnaire show that more than half of respondents support the idea of increasing the number of women in the media as a way to alter the newsrooms culture. Of respondents, 23.08% strongly agree and 34.62% agree that “increasing the presence of women in the media has an impact on changing the newsroom culture.”

According to these respondents, women are well-organized, responsible, active, creative, reasonable, peaceful, sociable, look things in detail & from new directions and sources of new ideas. They believe these qualities of women influence and change the culture of a newsroom, which they describe as “male dominated.” As one respondent noted, “I believe women have a lot to contribute to a media that is dominated by men.”

On the other hand, 26.92% of women journalists disagreed profoundly with the idea that gender by itself will make a difference in changing the newsroom culture. They said gender does not play a significant enough role as to be able to change the culture of newsrooms. For them, individual talent, experience, efficiency and devotion to work have more impact in altering newsrooms’ culture. Of all respondents, 15.38% stayed neutral.

Table 4.3. Women’s presence in changing media culture

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	6	23.1%
Agree	9	34.6%
Neutral	4	15.4%
Disagree	7	26.9%
Total	26	100%

Similarly, many women in the focus group said having more women in media will influence working conditions in a positive way. They described newsrooms

as male dominated in numbers, managerial control and gender division of labor. They also described how more men than women are preferred to cover big news events (See section 4.3 for details). They also described newsroom culture as sexist because women are considered weak and incapable. Speaker four in FGD 1 spoke from her experience:

Men are taken as effective, strong and capable of dealing with any issues whether it is hard or not. However, relating womanhood with inefficient and incapable is common in many media. The period that women get pregnant and give birth are considered as career interruption. Sadly enough, this gap is taken as a factor for evaluating performance.

The participants made it clear that a male-dominated newsroom culture would be more women-friendly if more women joined the media. In addition, they said news would be more relevant to women if more women produced the news. That, they said, would provide an opportunity to reflect women's interests and outlooks, which they said are different from men's.

On the contrary, some focus group participants did not believe more women could change newsroom practices. Speaker five in FGD 1 said the biggest challenges that women face in the media is not their numbers, but rather the stereotyped attitudes of media managers and all journalists, men or women. She explained this:

Media managers do not value women's contribution and do not consider women journalists as professionals. For them, dealing with women and children issues do not make you professional journalist. Some women journalists also share this attitude. So how numbers by itself change this negative attitude unless women begin support each other and media managers stopped to think in terms of gender rather than skill?

Speaker 4 from the same focus group discussions endorsed speaker 5's idea. She said changes in the media would be inevitable if and only if women hold decision-making positions. For her, women need power not numbers.

Media managers confirm the importance of equalizing the number of women and men. Wz. Mimi said this would improve news diversity, teamwork and staff relationships. Wz. Tsehay noted how male-centered outlets reflect men's

interests forget half of the total population called women. She said that women may emphasize women's issues more and better than men do so having more women in certain media may introduce more balanced news coverage. She concluded:

Number plays a significant role in every newsroom. When you are large in number, your voice would be heard loudly. Whereas, when you are few in number, your voice would be suppressed.

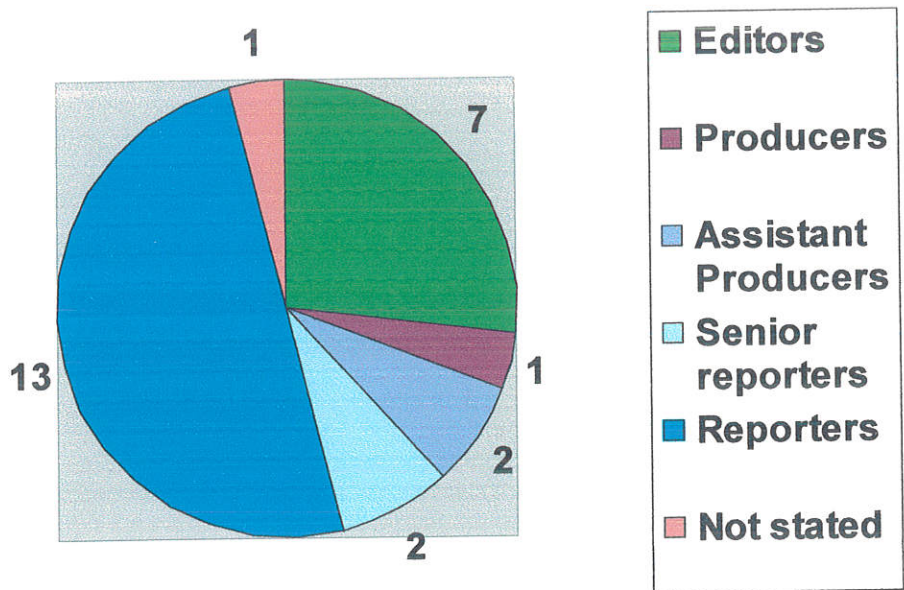
For Ato Samuel, the presence of both sexes in a newsroom would affect content and presentation. Though newsrooms are not hostile to women journalists, he said, the dominance of one sex does affect process and output. Ideally, he said, media should be representative of the society, with each sex represented in proportion to their presence in the population.

Ato Ermiyas supported the idea that the presence of both genders in a media organization ensured a variety of ideas. Attracting women to the media, he said, not only gives opportunities for women but also benefits the media organization. He said women bring talents, interests and skills different from men. Incorporating this, he said, means that media cannot be a place where only men's voices are heard.

4.1.2 Women's Position in the Media

In addition to their relatively few numbers in the media work force, even fewer women reach senior management positions. Quantitative data gathered from questionnaires show that women hold only minor decision-making positions (See Figure 4.1 below). This study reported 26.92% of women journalists are editors and 50% are reporters, dominating the media's lower ranks.

Figure 4.1. Position of women journalists



Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004) described the glass ceiling as a global phenomenon. Women journalists in the focus group discussions confirmed its reality in Ethiopia, noting their barriers in attaining senior management positions. They called stereotyped attitudes of media managers as their greatest obstacle. In their view, many media managers and editors think that women are not strong enough to shoulder responsibilities and become leaders. Speaker 3 in FGD 2 mentions that many male managers consider this a token opportunity to increase women’s participation rather than an acknowledgment of their competence. Speaker three in FGD1 drew on her own experience to explain this point:

There are many experienced and well-educated women in our media. It is a puzzle for me why they are denied promotion. I feel media managers have negative attitude about women’s efficiency. I worked for six years in the same media as a senior reporter. I was denied promotion when a male journalist who has similar educational level and efficiency with me got it. In a situation like this, I asked myself why gender is more valuable than tangible evidences? It is discouraging when you are implicitly told that you are weak and unfit just because you are a woman.

Focus group participants said women also harbored negative attitudes, reluctant to accept editorial responsibilities if they had the opportunity. Speaker five in FGD 1 described women's lack self-confidence and strength to climb the ladder because they do not set big goals and upgrade skills to meet them. Speaker two in FGD 2 also stressed how, too often, women do not stay long enough in media jobs to qualify for higher positions based on experience though they may qualify in educational background and performance (the three traditional qualifications for editorial positions).

Ato Ermiyas said that gender plays no role in promoting journalists to editors, with selection based on efficiency and performance. Ato Samuel also said that promotion is awarded for competency not for gender:

If we believe that a journalist can fit the post, regardless of his/her gender, we appointed him/her. We never give positions in order to secure women's participation. What matters is competence and productivity. However, if we have equally experienced woman and man, definitely we promote the woman.

However, they do not deny the existence of attitudes that consider women as unfit for or resistant to higher decision-making positions. Both Ato Samuel and Ato Ermiyas acknowledge the women's socialization distorted their self-image; both said this would be corrected in time. Although women editors outnumber men editors in her media house, Wz. Mimi said that women refuse to take editorial positions and acknowledged a lack of readiness to accept promotion. According to her, women devote so much time and effort to families that prevents them from achieving career goals.

Both data collected from questionnaires and focus group discussions show that breaking the glass ceiling and having more women in decision-making positions would change newsroom culture. Data gathered from questionnaires indicate that 42.26% of women journalists believe that increasing the number of women in senior management positions would create opportunities and give chances to demonstrate their proficiency. Respondents said that women

managers easily understand the problems of women journalists, fairly divide work and positions, create suitable working environments, employ and encourage women, understand that women lack chances and try to widen opportunities for them. One respondent indicated that sexual harassment would not be a problem in media led by women.

On the other hand, 23.08% of respondents disagreed that the gender of a leader does play a significant role in changing newsroom cultures and news itself. As one respondent observed:

In my media even if we have a female manager, I could not see any improvement in terms of bringing women to the decision-making positions. Rather I believe it is important to have attitudinal change by women managers themselves. Women managers who share stereotyped attitude about other women could not bring change because only they belong to the women group.

Another respondent expressed her concern that women managers themselves face challenges to exercise real power without much chance to support other women journalists.

Focus group discussions repeated similar points of view regarding contributions of women media leaders, saying different newsroom traditions would exist if women hold major decision-making positions. As speaker one in FGD 1 discussed, women managers can easily spot sexist behavior in newsrooms and strive for change. She also explained that women managers who become part of the news selection process would include issues of relevance to women and children that are not currently considered newsworthy.

Another speaker from the same focus group said women are more concerned about gender balance in the media than men are. Women managers would also play a significant role in bringing more women into the media. Speaker two in FGD 2 said increased numbers of women managers would encourage women journalists to set high goals and pursue big dreams. Women seeking to be good managers would adopt a good woman manager as a model.

As media owner and manager, Wz. Mimi identified gender balance is an important aspect in any media house. She elaborated her point:

Many people said that we have more women journalists in our media because I am a woman. This might be true. We gave equal recruitment opportunity for both men and women. Nevertheless, if by chance the number of women were less, definitely I will give chances for women. If there were one thing that I can be partial, it is women's question. Because I believe in a society like us, where negative attitude about women prevailed, this is a decisive role that any women can play.

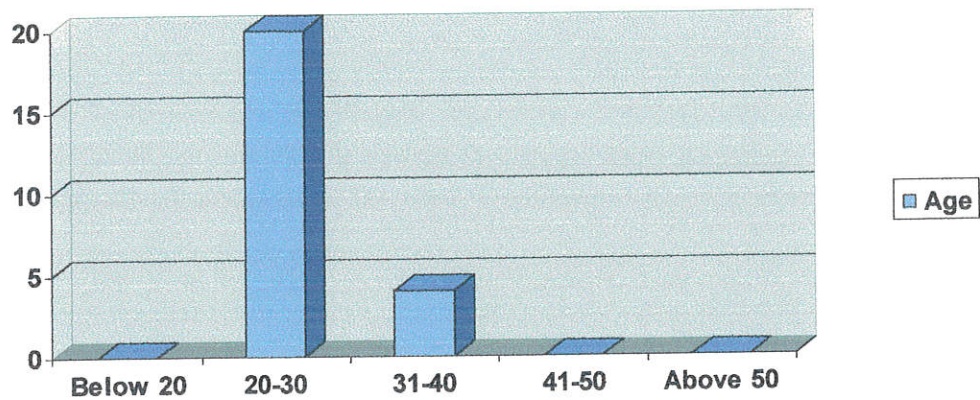
However, she said that she does not treat women journalists in any special way beyond demands of the profession, requiring women to obey media house rules and regulations and be as competent as male counterparts. Her goal, she said, "is to open doors wide for women and let them to decide by themselves once they get in." Wz. Tsehay, as a government employee, said she cannot go beyond the institutional hiring system even if she wanted to have more women in media because the system itself has to support it. However, she agreed that having women managers would create conducive environments for women and inspire them to work more.

4.1.3 Age Composition and Work Experience

Large numbers of women journalists currently working in FM radios are young. According to quantitative data, 76.93% of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 30 and 15.38% are between ages 30 and 40 (See figure 4.2). No women reported being younger than 20 or older than 40.

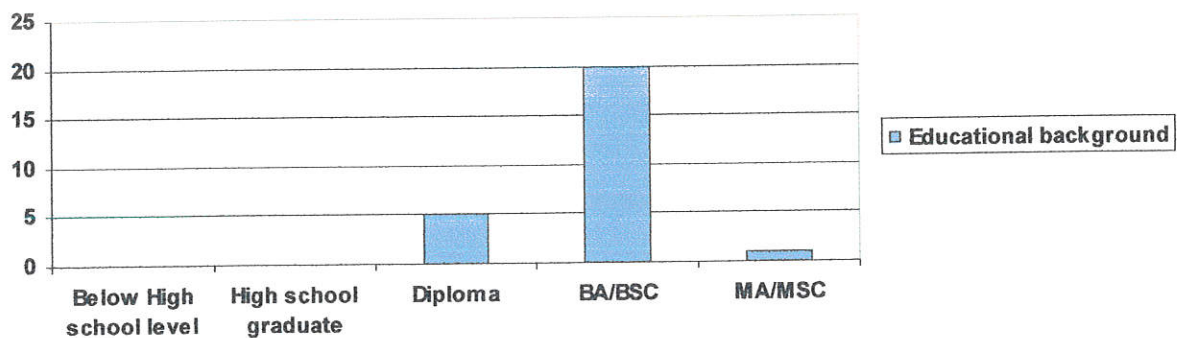
Although the study did not report the age of men journalists for comparison, the findings indicates that currently young women practice broadcast journalism.

Figure 4.2. Age composition of women journalists



Similarly, a majority of women journalists have less than five years of journalistic experience. As indicated in Figure 4.3, those with less than five years of professional experience dominate the total media taskforce. Women who stayed in the media more than five years and less than 10 years reflect 34.62% of the work force and those with more than 10 years of experience reflect 7.69%. This suggests that many women do not stay in media jobs for a long time.

Figure 4.3. Journalistic experience of women journalists



4.1.4 Education and Qualifications

The educational status of women journalists is promising, with no one below diploma level. The majority possesses BA degrees (76.92%), and one has an MA

degree (3.85%); the remainder earned diplomas (19.23%). Their fields of study include Language and Literature (50%) and Journalism and Communication (19.23%). A few are qualified in Law (7.69%), Social Sciences (7.69%), Natural Sciences (3.85%) and Theatre Arts (3.85%).

4.2 Role of Women Journalists

4.2.1 Bring Different Perspectives

According to Standpoint theorists, women developed a different outlook from men because of their status in a society. Participants in the study widely assumed that women journalists have a perspective different than men, explaining that women journalists have their own way of selecting and presenting news stories. In this study, 19.23% strongly agreed and 43.31% agreed that women bring a different perspective. But 7.69% said gender is not the only factor explaining differences in news story selection, and 30.77% stayed neutral.

Respondents attributed women's different outlook to different lived experiences and roles in society, identifying women's ability to pick serious but uncovered social problems. Regarding story presentation, respondents acknowledged women's ability to approach ideas from a fresh angle and in depth, look at the human side of the story, give sense to the story and provide descriptive writing. As one respondent noted:

Even in war stories women try to see details how the war damages children and women, how war affects people's life, the old and the young rather than putting how many soldiers took place or killed in the war.

A second respondent mentioned that:

Women involve themselves in their stories and feel it. Mostly they also want their listeners to sense the problem in the story.

And a third added:

Women try to include a sense of human in their stories. If the story is about employment, they inspect the opportunities given to men and women rather than putting ratios or numbers.

In contrast, some respondents emphasized individual differences apart from women as a group. Professional values guided all journalists selecting newsworthy items, with differences in presentation less gender-related and more skill and understanding. In both focus group discussions, the role of women in bringing a different outlook in news selection and presentation is praised. Participants said women and men ordered news items with different scales. As speaker one in FGD1 explained:

I believe women and men have a different understanding regarding newsworthiness, because they look things differently. For instance, women sense social issues than men do. The same is true in arranging news items depending on their news values. In our media women and children issues often placed at the bottom of daily news order. These issues are not considered as newsworthy. However, if there were more women editors, I am sure the arrangement would be different.

Speaker three in the same FGD supported that idea:

Women journalists are very few in number. Moreover, we are not part of the news selection process. We receive already ordered news approved by the editorial board. Since there were no or very few women editors who attended the editorial meetings, for me the news selection simply reflects the interest and insight of men. It ignores women's interest.

For speaker two in FGD 2, women are more critical observers, with women attending to details better than men and projecting differences regarding newsworthy issues. "Sometimes the disagreement led to fight," she said. Speaker two in FGD1 also noted how women's issues did not receive the same attention as other news items unless it was International Women's Day. If more women became editors, she said, they would attend women's issues as newsworthy.

All media managers agreed that women and men have different points of view. Wz. Mimi noted other differences:

Women look things calmly and from a different angle. They are also cautious and uncorrupted. No one can easily bribe them. All these positive qualities reflected in their job.

However, she did not assume women and men have different measures for newsworthiness defined by professional values. Wz. Tsehay found differences not only between women and men but also between individuals. However, she cited characteristics common to women as a group: logical thinkers, able to handle difficult conditions with patience and tolerance. She explained:

For instance, a male journalist and I would not pay equal attention towards a raped child. I attentively inspect the matter by putting my daughter and myself in that child place. A male journalist might address the matter from distance because I believe women are closer to the society than men.

For Wz. Tsehay, newsworthiness is also based on professional standards. In her media house, political issues generally took priority over social issues though occasionally social issues might lead the news.

Ato Ermiyas found women offered a different perspective and understanding not only in workplaces but also in homes and other environments. As he explained, women brought a new perspective that changed traditional working conditions at media houses. He noted one woman elected “best producer of the month” repeatedly because of her unique and attractive programs. Ato Samuel also mentioned how issues that interest women differ from those that interest men.

4.2.2 Broader News Scope

Most women participants in the study believed that women are especially interested in covering social issues in general and women’s issues in particular. They believed that women play a significant role in bringing women’s and children’s issues to their reporting, thus broadening the definition of news. They said women helped to highlight issues of rape, abduction, violence against

women, plus the rights of women and children. Some said that women had a special role and responsibility in ensuring better coverage of such issues.

Questionnaire data showed that 38.46% of respondents believed women bring additional issues to broaden the range of news coverage. And, they said, when men dominated a media house, fostered men's interests and perspectives. Including more women, they said, led to new ideas and outlooks. As one respondent noted:

Women sense some issues differently from men. Thus, women's perception of news can be different. In addition, they give attention to women's issues.

On the other hand, 34.62% of respondents disagreed that gender can be a factor in bringing issues of women and children. According to these respondents, journalism is objective. For them, women journalists should not to work more on women's issues.

In a similar manner, many focus group participants agreed with the idea of women's contributions in widening the definition of news while some disagreed. Speaker five in FGD 1 said not all women have similar interests and determination to work on women's issues. As she mentioned, some women do not think issues like rape and violence against women are newsworthy and reluctant to cover them.

On the other hand, some respondents said men journalists also show interest to cover women's issues. Though they believe including women's issues would broaden news definitions, the contribution would go to both men and women journalists.

As Wz. Mimi and Wz. Tsehay observed, women focus on women's issues in particular and social issues in general. Wz. Tsehay said women understand and know women's issue better than men. According to her, women's appearance in the media is greatly associated with bringing new issues.

4.2.3 Source Selection

In her study of 625 news stories from *Reporter* and *Addis Zemen* newspapers, Seble (2008) found that women represent 8% of news sources while men represent 69%. Women, she said, are least represented in news involving political, government, business, economics and legal issues.

As stated in the previous chapter, feminist communication scholars said women journalists tend to use women news sources more often than men do and thus increase women's visibility in the media. In this study, none of the questionnaire respondents favored male story sources where they have a choice of men and women informants. As indicated in Table 4.3, the majority (69.23%) prefer women and men as story sources, where as 26.92% favored women over men.

Table 4.3. News sources preference

Preferred news sources	Count	Percentage
Male	0	0%
Female	7	26.92%
Both	18	69.23%
Not stated	1	3.85%
Total	26	100%

Respondents preferred both as story sources to give balance to their stories and they suggested that women and men offer different outlooks and life experiences. One respondent noted that "Journalism is all about being objective. So I prefer to use both men and women as my sources." On the other hand, those who favored women as story sources said "women are a huge information bank, they describe situations more clearly, they are easier to talk to and they have more interesting and sensitive issues."

Some of respondents found news stories male dominated and wanted to include women's voices. As one respondent noted:

I observe majority of news stories overcrowded by men story sources. Implicitly this is conveying a message that women do not have the knowledge and expertise to be information sources. I would love to bring out the faces of strong and good decision-maker women in the media. In addition, from my experience, information gathered from women is reliable and trustworthy.

Unlike questionnaire respondents, a majority of focus group respondents preferred women as sources. They found stereotyped attitudes among journalists regarding women experts and their knowledge. Speaker one in FGD 1 said women's ideas are not taken serious and what they say is not important.

There is such misinterpretation among journalists that women interviewees are reluctant and shy to give information in public. Most of the times, journalists prefer to interview lower male personnel than a senior female official. Whether a woman is well educated or the exact person to give information, many journalists hesitate to interview her. If there are large number of women journalists in a media, I believe they include women as their story sources.

Speaker three in FGD 2 found it unusual to cover stories about women in professions traditionally associated with men so having women as sources would spice up her story and catch listeners' attentions. For speaker one in the same focus group discussion, as long as using women news sources did not compromise newsworthiness, she loved to air women's voices. Speaker five in FGD 1 also mentioned that women sources are more reliable and put profession ahead of personal interests. She noted:

While I used to work as a host for a live health talk show, among the guests that I invited, I found that female doctors are more professional and supportive. They were easily touched by the stories that listeners presented. Unlike male professionals, they never intend to use the media to promote themselves.

Dealing with women, she said, is free of harassment because male interviewees often manipulate women journalists in order to date them.

Other participants do not use women as story sources because they had trouble convincing women to give interviews if the would-be sources lacked

self-confidence or hesitated to decide independently. As speaker two in FGD 1 described:

I refused to use female story sources unless I do not have an alternative. In our media, because of female informants some programs are cancelled frequently. Even women from the Ministry of Women Affairs give appointments but disappear for the interview. It is also tiresome to convince them to give interview. Whether it is lack of self-confidence or other, I do not know why they behave like this. Therefore, in order to make my job easier I tend to use male story sources that I can address easily.

Speaker two in FGD 2 also said women consider themselves unfit to represent the company or the institution. Instead, sometimes women themselves assign male officers to give interviews because they do not consider the journalists' intention positive and fear journalists would pick up on their weaknesses.

4.2.4 Change Negative Portrayal of Women in the Media

As Van Zoonen (1998) and Chambers, Steiner & Fleming (2004) discussed, women are negatively portrayed as submissive, passive and victimized. To them, women journalists play a vital role in changing stereotyped representation of women in media. Similarly, other research revealed that women are misrepresented in Ethiopian media. According to studies conducted by Kenaw (2006), Seble (2006) and Nardos (2005) women are negatively portrayed as victims and weak.

This study also illustrated the correlation between the increased number of women journalists and the process of changing women's image in the media. The data gathered from questionnaires showed that more than half of respondents (19.23% strongly agree and 38.46% agree) said women journalists change misrepresentation of women in the media, with a special role and responsibility to promote positive media images of women. On the contrary, 11.54% of respondents disagree that building a positive image of women in the media is not the only responsibilities of women. Men journalists also have

social responsibilities to fight negative gender portrayal as part of social transformation.

Respondents said women journalists better understand problems of women than men journalists do. As one respondent said, "The issue of gender inequality more affects women. So they would be more than responsible to strive for change." Another respondent described portraying women as domestic heroines, a weakness commonly accepted as truth in media. To alter such distortions, women journalists should take the lead and not be part of the problem.

As far as changing how women are portrayed in the media, focus group participants shared similar points of view. They recognized how women's images are associated with the inferior, disadvantaged and victimized. Speaker one in FGD 1 explained that women get news coverage about child-bearing, domestic activities home management, plus fashion and beauty issues. On the other hand, men are portrayed as successful politicians and businesspersons, heads of family, responsible and strong. She described an interest in promote positive media images of women.

There are many educated and professional women in the country. However, the media often present needy and dependent women. Since media has power to shape audiences' attitude, it is important to reflect the reality. As a woman journalist, I am interested and also responsible to show the positive aspects which most media ignores for years.

On the other hand, speaker two in FGD 1 stated that promoting only the positive aspects of women is also partial image presentation. For her, media should present reality rather than build images.

4.3 Challenges of Women Journalists

4.3.1 Recruitment, Payment and Promotion

As feminist scholars note, discrimination against women based on gender appears during recruitment, payment and promotion because they are not

considered tough enough to deal with hardship of journalism (Lavie, 2004; Joseph, 2004).

Questionnaire data confirmed that the majority of women journalists do not face discrimination because of their sex during recruitment, payment and promotion. As indicated in Table 4.4, more than 50% of respondents reported that they witnessed no discrepancy in hiring, promotion and payment.

Table 4.4. Recruitment, payment, benefits and promotion

Face challenges	Count	Percentage
Yes	10	38.46%
No	14	53.85%
Not stated	2	7.69%
Total	26	100%

Some complained about denial of promotion and low payment, indicating that salaries do not compensate for workload. As one respondent said, “There is no benefit in journalism rather suffering. Journalists are the least paid professionals.” Another respondent confirmed denial of promotions without explanation.

Speaker four in FGD1 stated she got low performance evaluations while pregnant and on maternity leave.

I was denied promotion and when I asked the reason, my editor told me that I had low performance during my pregnancy. This is not only a single case on me. But four women also faced the same problem. One of the women told me that she was denied promotion because the time where she was on maternity leave was taken as career disruption. I believe all the policies and constitutional rights are left on paper.

In both focus groups, participants noted equal opportunities for women and men journalists depending on educational background and work experience. As speaker three in FGD 1 described, if a male and a female journalist have similar education and experience, women get the promotions. However, speaker one from the same focus group mentioned stereotyped attitudes among

media managers regarding promoting women journalists. They believe, as she said, women are poor performers. Even they appoint women to higher positions because they want to increase women's participation rather than acknowledging their competence.

All media managers indicated their media institution gave equal recruitment opportunity for male and female journalists. As Wz. Tsehay, Ato Ermiyas and Ato Samuel mentioned, women have greater opportunity among equally qualified candidates. All managers indicated that promotions are based on experience, efficiency and education – not gender. However, Ato Samuel said under no condition will media houses hire unqualified women. For Wz. Tsehay, discriminating against women based on responsibilities of childbirth is awkward. Some people, she said, consider maternity leave a rest period, which she dismissed as another stereotyped attitude about the role and contribution of women in a society.

4.3.2 Professional Vs Womanhood

Robinson (2004) and Opoku-Mensah (2004) described newsrooms as “sexist” and “hostile” to women, with communication style between male and female colleagues sending a message that men are more powerful and superior. They found that women journalists fall into daily dilemmas in male-dominated newsrooms: to be considered as professionals as well as women.

However, women journalists at FM radio stations do not feel their newsrooms are “hostile” or “sexist” even if males dominate in numbers, editorial positions and division of labor. The majority of women responding applauded male co-workers for their support, with 50% of respondents acknowledging positive attitudes. It is find out that none of respondents receive discouragement from their male co-workers.

However, they did note a tendency to diminish women's knowledge and professionalism, with women's performance and contribution overlooked in the

media organization. This attitude, they said, affected their career development. Focus group participants said gender plays a significant role in how women are perceived and treated by male colleagues as well as by editors. Even if women journalists wish to be viewed as professionals, many of discussants noted, they are first perceived as women.

Speaker three in FGD 2 cited situations proving that the gender of journalists is more important than professional performance, including story assignments. According to her, women's mistakes are attributed to gender weakness even though men are never evaluated by gender.

Wz. Tsehay agreed that categorizing women as unprofessional is widely accepted in society, more troubling when leadership is at stake. As she noted:

It is a recent phenomenon that women begun to appear in public not at all holding leadership positions. Women were reserved in the domestic sphere. I believe we are not free from the influence of this attitude. As a woman leader no one appreciate your strength. All your mistakes are taken as an out put of your gender. Like a male manager you cannot emotionally speak your mind. If you do so, it is taken as a cover for your weaknesses. It demands further struggle to break the stereotype on women leader in particular and women in general.

According to Ato Ermiyas and Ato Samuel, professionalism is not measured based on gender. They demand expertise and knowledge from journalists regardless of gender. Although they acknowledge that women may be labeled as unprofessional, measuring performances based on gender is becoming rare.

4.3.3 Hard Vs Soft News

As discussed in a previous chapter, various researchers suggested that stereotypical sex roles are reflected in newsrooms round the globe. Society determines women and men labor based on their sexes (Tuyizere, 2007). Relegating women to certain news beats is also a reality in FM radio stations in Ethiopia. Data collected from questionnaires showed that men have more chances of covering big events and issues than women. According to the

questionnaire data, this evolved from the assumption men are strong and capable while women are weak and incapable.

However, the majority of questionnaire respondents are confident that women can address hard issues with equal competence as men. The questionnaire found 57.69% agreed with the idea that women are capable of covering hard issues (See Table 4.5 below) and only 15.34% of respondents said women could not.

Table 4.5. Covering Hard vs. Soft News

Women are incapable of covering hard issues	Count	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	3.8%
Agree	3	11.54%
Neutral	4	15.38%
Disagree	3	11.54%
Strongly disagree	12	46.15%
Not stated	3	11.54%

Respondents who disagreed that “women are incapable of covering hard issues” said women proved their ability by producing quality reports on politics and current affairs. Moreover, they affirmed that choosing topics does not imply capacity rather than interest. One respondent reply as:

Politics is everyone’s life. Women as being part of the society, I don’t think politics can be hard for them to understand and to deal with. Women can attend political discussions and report on it. They can also read and discuss political issues.

Another respondent associated the assumption with traditional thinking that politics is hard for women. She also indicated that stereotyped attitudes about abilities of women among editors are not yet shattered. According to her, editors and managers do not have confidence to send women to cover big political events and/or to interview major political figures.

Focus group participants called gender-based labor divisions a problem in their respective media houses. Though the majority of participants acknowledged job assignment based on journalists' interests and skills, women covering hard issues like politics are rare. Speaker three in FGD 1 complained that editors do not assign women to cover hard issues with big responsibilities. As she said:

There is discrepancy among women and men journalists in assigning jobs. Women are pushed to entertainment and women issues, which are considered as easy and less important, where as men are recruited for national issues, which are taken as high status news. I assure that we are still under men dominance. I believe we can work in every issue. I should have to be evaluated if I couldn't be effective after I am assigned. It would be a discriminatory act to think that I am incapable because I am a woman.

Speaker one from the same focus group noted a custom accepted and implemented by editors to assign women to jobs they consider uncontroversial.

Whenever we discussed about a holiday programs, all the issues are distributed among male and female journalists. However, when it comes to including women guests, all fingers are pointing towards me or other female journalist. On the contrary, an editor does not hesitate to send a male reporter to cover Parliament and interview the Prime Minister.

Focus group participants also confirmed that male journalists assigned to women programs would consider it punishment or demotion. The same speaker described this experience:

When I begun working on women's program, there were no other women to work with me. So a male journalist was assigned. In one meeting, he told to editors that he faced a moral destruction by working on women's program.

Speaker three in FGD 2 explained that editors considered women's program as unimportant not deserving attention. If a current issue needed to be addressed urgently, the women's program would not be aired.

Some focus group participants disagreed that women are pushed to soft news, while men are preferred for hard issues. They said women themselves resist, feeling uncomfortable in dealing with hard issues even when given the opportunity. Speaker five in FGD 1 said some editors who assign women to

cover current affairs and major political issues, however reluctant and uninterested women may be.

Speaker two from the same focus group confirmed that in her media house, where women outnumbered men, all journalists have a chance to work on stories based on their interests. Yet, she noted, women are often more interested in topics that do not demand effort or energy.

Speaker two in FGD 2 questioned hard news as strength and soft news as weakness. For her, a journalist's strength is measured by the amount of information that he/she can capture, with all information valuable for society. As she described:

The society needs all issues whether they are political or social. Women's issues are issues of every individual and we cannot abandon them. Development would be inevitable if we can pick out and correct not only political but also social flaws.

All managers said their media houses do not divide labor based on gender. As Wz. Mimi explained, journalists are free to choose issues of interest unless assigning is mandatory. In her media house, major events and hard issues are assigned by editors without considering gender. She said women covered any issues because she knows women who passionately work on politics, sports and business. Yet she prefers to assign women to cover women's issues. She explained her rationale:

There are no many men who seek to understand women's issues and concerns. They don't even care about it. I want to have an in depth coverage of women's issues. I prefer an interested woman than a disinterested man to produce a well-digested program. Therefore, I consciously assign women.

According to Wz. Tsehay, the gender of a journalist is not an important factor in assignments, with all journalists given the opportunity to pursue interests. As Tsehay explained, some women cover hard issues and become successful but she also noted how many are attracted to social issues like health, women

and children matters that in general do not interest men. As a manager, Wz. Tsehay is confident sending any journalist to cover major events.

Ato Ermiyas cited interest and journalistic skill as major criteria for story assignments, not gender. His media house does not relegate women to certain beats, but rather he and women journalists follow choices on covering issues of interest to be successful, with many women bringing change in political coverage. However, he noted an assumption among all journalists that women can work on women's issues better than men.

Ato Samuel agreed, regarding story assignments with no demarcation between hard and soft news, with assignments matching interests and chance of success. For him, addressing both hard and soft issues demands skill, talent and interest. A woman who can be tough and clever in political issues might not be successful in covering social issues and vice versa, he said. He said attributing hard news as valuable and soft news as less valuable emanated from stereotyped attitudes towards women.

4.3.4 Work Vs Home

Because women and men have different social responsibilities, working mothers face a big challenge to balance work and home (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). In journalism, the majority of married women journalists have trouble reconciling professional demands and being a good wife and mother.

In this study, the majority of respondents faced difficulties in balancing work and family life. Data gathered from the questionnaire showed that 53.85% of respondents complained that working nights, weekends and holidays detached them from their families and especially from their children. Some 34.62% of respondents did not feel work interfered with family/personal life. While 11.53% do not respond.

As indicated in table 4.6, balancing work and home is more difficult for married women than single women. The majority of respondents confirming that domestic responsibilities overshadowed work are married. This indicates journalism is more challenging for married than single women.

Table 4.4. Relation between marital status and working condition

Marital status	Work affects family life			Percentage	
	Yes	No	Not stated	Yes	No
Married	8	2	1	72.73%	18.18%
Single, never married	6	7	1	42.86%	63.64%

Focus group participants expressed similar points of view. The majority of single women found no difficulties to reconcile professional and personal demands. However, married women journalists said handling childcare and domestic responsibilities created great burdens on their performance at work.

As speaker five in FGD 1 mentioned, women have different social responsibilities before and after they get married. She outlined her experience to show how family responsibilities influenced career advancement.

When I was single, working late or working on holydays and weekends was not a problem. My focus was to grow professionally. Nevertheless, when I establish a family, things began to change. I realized women are expected to shoulder all domestic responsibility. Moreover, the society evaluates women as a good wife if they come home early, giving time for their husbands and children. As the society dictates us, if we want to be a good wife, we need to forget journalism. On the other hand, if we want to be a good journalist, we need to forget our family and children. Many strong women left the media because they couldn't escape the pressure of work and family life.

The same is true with speaker two in FGD 2. She explained how the burdens of domestic responsibilities affect women's professional advancement and complicates efforts to balance home and work life.

Journalism is all about knowledge. It demands reading, digging for information, communicating and following what is happening today not yesterday. In order to accomplish all these activities, I need to have extra

time other than working hours. If I lack one of these qualities, I cannot proceed in the profession. On the contrary, as a mother I want to give an appropriate care and treatment for my child. Families and relatives also expect me to be at home with my child at least after work. If my husband did not understand me, both my profession and life would be messed up. When I was pregnant it was a big challenge for me to cope up with the situation. Though my editors told me to have some rest, I feel I was putting myself behind and there were times that I condemn myself becoming a journalist. The pressure is hard for women. But for men, we are watching that establishing family or raising children couldn't become an obstacle for their career development.

Media managers also observed how women journalists struggle in balancing their personal life with professional stability. As Wz. Mimi suggested, women journalists are expected to fulfill social responsibilities over profession duties so some women grow a family at the expense of a career. She believes in such decisive moments women should sacrifice to achieve what they really demand; family or career. As a woman manager, she does not provide special treatment or care, preferring to let women journalists decide for themselves.

For a woman to be professional, she is expected to pay extra, because there are many things that disrupt her journey. Living in a society like Ethiopia where gender equality is not granted, falling in to dilemma is not unexpected. Nevertheless, women should have to be career oriented and consciously consider how to excel professionally. My contribution would be giving the opportunity. Though I am a woman, I am also a professional. I do not want to give excuses because I share the same sex.

Ato Samuel disagreed that social and family responsibilities are only a woman's burden, and he acknowledged many strong women journalists with children. The important thing, he said, is giving equal opportunity rather than supporting women by giving lame excuses.

Ato Ermiyas reflected a point of view common to other managers, saying that women journalists receive necessary maternity and pregnancy-related leaves. For him, the problem rests with the mindset of the women themselves. As he noted, some women concluded handling both home and work is impossible and others women show ability to manage work and home. He concluded no women had to leave media work due solely to the impossible juggling act.

4.3.5 Sexual Harassment

As various researches suggest, one obstacle hindering women from achieving career goals is sexual harassment. Researchers indicate sexual harassment is a worldwide problem (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004). Quantitative data showed that 23.08% had seen or heard sexual harassment occur in their media house (See table 4.7 below), but only 7.69% of respondents faced it directly themselves. However, the findings of this study suggested that sexual harassment does not distract majority of women journalists from career progress, sexual harassment should not be overlooked as a sizable number of respondents witnessed it.

Table 4.7. Sexual Harassment

	Seen or heard	Percentage	Faced	Percentage
Yes	6	23.08%	2	7.69%
No	19	73.08%	22	84.62%
Not stated	1	7.69%	2	7.69%
Total	26	100%	26	100%

One respondent who did noted how it affected her career. As she indicated, her editor asked her for sex and her refusal repeatedly resulted in denial of promotion. She said:

Within my 8 years stay in the same media, I only promoted once to a producer position. However, others who have less experience than mine, got assistant editor positions. My editor clearly told me that if I do not commit his command, I would end up being producer. In addition, if you do not accept their requests, they started to belittle your work and tried to embarrass you in front of your co-workers.

But the majority of women in the focus group discussions said sexual harassment is not a threat for women journalists and they do not face or see sexual harassment inside or outside of their media organizations. Yet some participants said sexual harassment appeared more frequently inside the media house than outside. This, some said, prevented women from reaching

higher positions and sometimes forced them to leave their job. Speaker five in FGD 2 mentioned that media is not free from sexual harassment. She remembered the fight:

There are editors who want to kiss you when you enter their office for assignments. Night works are happy hours for editors who love flirting. However, most of the time women keep as secret to secure their job or embarrassed to disclose the shameful acts of their immediate bosses. I worked in one media for two and half years, but could not get any salary increment. This is because I always say no for such kinds of requests. When things become worse, I quit my job.

Speaker two in FGD 2 suggested that women use such requests as a shortcut to a promotion. For her, this is unprofessional and unethical for men (editors) to use their power and women (journalists) to use their femininity.

Though media managers said they had no complaints of sexual harassment in their media houses, they suspect the problem exists. Wz. Tsehay said, in general, media professionals are more aware than other members of the society. So it is hard for her to say that sexual harassment is not a reality in media houses. From her experience, she said, sexual attraction explodes among journalists mainly in field work. Ato Ermiyas also shared Wz. Tsehay's opinion, saying that journalists who struggle for the rights of other should have the courage to stand up for their rights as well.

4.4 Coping mechanisms

Melin-Higgins (2004) suggested three types of coping mechanisms that women journalists developed in order to integrate with newsrooms culture. As discussed in chapter two of this study, Melin-Higgins categorized the tactics as "one of the boys", "one of the girls" and "labeled as women journalists."

What kind of coping mechanisms women journalists used? The first tactic, one of the boys is mainly preferred by participants of this study. Majority of women journalists participated in this study demanded working on hard issues to demonstrate their craft. As one respondent replied she continuously seeks

working on hard issues and finally she attains her request. Another respondent explained how she struggled to tackle the stereotyped attitudes of editors:

I fight the negative attitude of editors by working hard like to be on time and always available at work place, working quality and up to standard reporting. However, it would not always possible to win their outlooks. Sometimes I sacrifice promotion and benefits, sometimes I confront challenges.

Focus group discussions also reflected similar points of view. Speaker five in FGD 1 noted that there is a tendency belittling women's potential and women need to show their abilities. Speaker one in the same focus group discussion said women need to push the boundary in order to be accepted as professionals. The road to journalism, as she said, might not be smooth. However, she said, continuous struggle would bring victory.

Speaker two in FGD 2 mentioned women journalists need to broaden their knowledge by reading and adopting attractive reporting styles. For her, journalism is information. If women journalists have valuable information, she said, no one cares about their gender.

On the contrary, some discussants opted for "one of the girls" tactics, noting that challenging the existing stereotyped attitude regarding newsworthy issues would be vital. They believe women's issues need to be regarded as an important news items and women journalists should pursue towards that.

What do media managers think to curb problems of women journalists? All media managers believe giving equal opportunity for women and men brings change in the media. Wz. Mimi noted that once women are given the opportunities, they should have to exploit that. She suggested that the success of women depends on their individual determinations. She explained herself:

I believe giving opportunity would open the door for women journalists. A woman should have to exploit the given opportunity. In this world to be a woman and successful at the same time, one needs consciously using these chances. Women are victims of discrimination and prejudice that makes them lose their self confidence. Sometimes this problem reflected in their work. From the beginning women should have to fight this by

themselves. Taking the society they are living in, they need to exploit the opportunity.

Ato Ermiyas stressed that not only tackling challenges of women journalists but also praising their contribution would be necessary. He confirmed that women's contribution and role are not properly utilized in media. Additionally, he suggested women journalists should be strong enough to believe in themselves that they have the potential to bring change in the media.

For Ato Samuel, education is a basic tool for women to advance in their career. Women were denied access to education for so long, he said, which shadowed in their work progress not only in journalism but also in other fields. He stressed women should seek further education that equip them with the necessary knowledge and capacity. Moreover, he said, women need to recognize their ability and capacity in order to make use of opportunities.

Chapter Five

Summary and Conclusion

The status of women in Ethiopian broadcast media is under researched. While conducting this study, I could not find any research focusing on the experience and practice of women journalists who work for radio and/or television. This research begins to fill this gap by examining the representation, practice, experience, role and challenges of women journalists in the six FM radio stations in Addis Ababa based on three Feminist Communication Theories; Critical Mass, Glass Ceiling and Standpoint.

In order to attain the purpose of the study, both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques are implemented. A questionnaire is developed and distributed to 31 women who work in the six FM radio stations and 26 are returned filled by women journalists. Two focus group discussions were also conducted to collect experience and practice of women journalists. The first focus group discussion (FGD 1) participants were editors and journalists with more than five years of experience. Reporters and those who have less than five years of journalistic experience attended the second focus group discussion (FGD 2).

Attitudes and views of media managers were collected through individual in-depth interviews. Four media managers (men and women) from government and private media were interviewed.

The findings of this research revealed women are underrepresented in FM radio stations in Addis Ababa. Women constitute 31% of the media's workforce compared with 69% of men. However, it shows women have better representation in broadcast media than in newspapers and news agencies. It is also found that private FM radio stations (25.53%) employ fewer women journalists than government FM radio stations (35.85%).

Participants of this study blame stereotyped attitudes, lack of education for women, denied opportunities, and a reflection of the country's labor force in general for smaller number of women journalists in the media. The majority of media managers attributed the smaller number of women to the cultural and traditional challenges women face. However, Wz. Mimi Sebhatu, Director of Zami Multi-Media (broadcaster of Zami FM 90.7), denied opportunities impacts under representation of women in the media. She opposes the idea there are not enough competent women journalists available, noting dozens of women applicants in her media.

More than half of women journalists (57.7%) who participated in this study believe increasing presence of women in the media would affect the newsrooms culture in a positive way. They believe the male dominated newsrooms culture would be altered if more women join the media. On the other hand, 26.92% of women journalists disagreed profoundly with the idea that gender by itself will make a difference in changing the newsroom culture. Of all respondents, 15.38% stayed neutral. Media managers confirm the importance of equalizing the number of women and men journalists in the media.

Glass ceiling is also a reality in FM radio stations. Women hold minor decision-making positions in the media. This study reported 26.92% of women journalists are editors and 50% remain reporters. Women journalists said stereotyped attitude towards women's abilities still exists, noting denial of promotion. Media managers on the other hand noted the reluctance of women to accept major responsibilities and top management positions. Nevertheless, both women journalists and media managers agreed that breaking the glass ceiling and having more women in decision-making position would have an impact on newsrooms practice and news itself.

This research also finds out that majority of women journalists are young and have less than five years of professional experience. 76.93% of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 30, with no women reported being younger than 20 or older than 40. Women journalists who have more than 10 years of

journalistic experience comprise only 7.69%. Nonetheless, their educational status is very promising with 76.92% possessing BA degrees. No one is found below diploma level.

The role of women journalists in bringing new perspectives, broadening news scope, source selection and changing the negative portrayal of women in the media is widely accepted. Respondents assumed women have a different outlook in selecting newsworthy items and presentation style. Additionally, participants of the study assumed women journalists have interest in dealing with women's and children's issues that broaden definition of news. With regard to selecting story sources, majority of respondents (69.23%) preferred both men and women informants. However, none favored male story sources.

Participants of this study suggested that they faced challenges in their media. They noted that diminishing women's work and their expertise, relegating women to certain news beats and balancing work and home responsibilities are their major challenges. 53.85% of respondents complained that working nights, weekends and holidays detached them from their families. Balancing work and family life is more difficult to married than single women.

Sexual harassment and denial of equal opportunities in hiring, promotion and benefits are also indicated as challenges. Though 53.85% of respondents reveal the existence of equal opportunity in the process of hiring, promotion and benefits, 38.46% complained about denial of promotion nothing editors' and media managers' stereotyped attitude towards women. On the other hand, media managers confirm that story assignment bases on the experience and skill of journalist regardless of their gender. They also said that they do not encountered with any complain of sexual harassment in their media.

In order to curb the problem that women journalists faced, majority of them preferred mechanisms to work on hard issues and demonstrate their abilities. Some of them opt for concentrating on women and children issues and continuing to play the role of a woman journalist.

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Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Journalism and Communications



Appendix I. Questionnaire

This questionnaire gathers information for conducting a Master Thesis on *Women's status in FM Radio Stations in Addis Ababa*. Female journalists from all FM radio stations in Addis Ababa are requested to cooperate and fill this questionnaire. For the success of this research paper, your honest and truthful replies are valuable. All the information collected from recipients is kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research paper. In addition, your responses are not presented in such a way that you will be able to be identified individually. Therefore, you are kindly requested to answer all the questions.

Note:

1. You are not expected to write your name
2. You can reply in Amharic language if you want to elaborate your points
3. I appreciate if you can return the filled questionnaire within two days
4. You can use additional paper or the back page if you find the available space is not enough

Introduction

This questionnaire is divided in to four sections. The first section holds general background information about the respondent. The second section deals with the perception of women journalists about the newsroom that they are working in. The role of women journalists and challenges in their radio stations are presented in the third and the fourth section respectively. I request you to answer all questions.

I. Background information

(Please circle one of your choices)

1. Age:

- A. Below 20 B. 20 – 30 C. 31 – 40 D. 41 – 50 E. Above 50

2. Educational background:

- A. Below high school level D. BA/BSC
B. High school graduate E. MA/MSc and above
C. Diploma

3. Field of study:

- A. Journalism & Communications D. Natural Science
B. Language & Literature E. Other, specify-----
C. Social Science

4. Journalistic work experience:

- A. Below 5 years C. 5 – 10 years
B. 11- 20 years D. Above 20 years

5. Marital Status:

- A. Single, never married D. Separated
B. Married E. Widowed
C. Divorced

6. Name of the media you work at:

- A. Fana FM 98.1 D. FM Addis 96.3
B. Sheger FM 102.1 E. Zami FM 90.7
C. FM Addis 97.1 F. Afro FM 105.3

7. Position in your media:

- A. Reporter D. Editor
B. Senior reporter E. Other, specify -----

8. Ownership of the media you work at:

B. Private

(Please circle your one of your choices and write your answers in the space provided)

2. If you DISAGREE, state your reasons.

A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

A. Yes B. No

10. If more women reach top decision-making positions, they will create a suitable working environment for female journalists.

- A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

11. If you DISAGREE, What are your reasons?

12. If you AGREE, What are your reasons?

13. Have you faced any discrimination in the newsroom because of your sex?

- A. Yes B. No

14. If you say YES, what kind of discrimination did you face?

15. If you faced any discrimination, what kind of coping mechanism you used for each type of discrimination in order to curb the problem?

III. Role of female journalists

(Please circle your one of your choices and write your answers in the space provided)

16. Women and men present the same story in different ways.

- A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

17. If you DISAGREE, What are your reasons?

18. If you AGREE, What are your reasons?

19. Women and men have different perception of professional values, like newsworthiness and objectivity.

- A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

20. If you DISAGREE, What are your reasons?

21. If you AGREE, What are your reasons?

22. Women in journalism have a special role and responsibility because of their gender, particularly in terms of ensuring more and better coverage of women's issues and changing the negative images of women.

A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

23. If you AGREE, What are your reasons?

24. If you DISAGREE, What are your reasons?

25. Women look at the human side of the story even in covering hard news.

A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

26. If you AGREE, State your reasons?

27. If you DISAGREE, What are your reasons?

28. Women and men have different leadership styles.

A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree

29. If you AGREE, State your reasons?

30. If you DISAGREE, State your reasons?

31. If you have a choice, do you prefer male or female professionals for your story source?

A. Male B. Female C. Both

32. If you say FEMALE, Why?

33. If you say MALE, Why?

34. If you say BOTH, Why?

35. I am comfortable/happy to work as a journalist.
A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree
36. If you DISAGREE, State your reasons.

37. If you DISAGREE, State your reasons.

38. Do you intend to continue working as a journalist?
A. Yes B. No
39. If you say NO, What are your reasons?

IV. Challenges in the Media

40.Do you face any challenges while working as a journalist in terms of promotion, benefits, rights, payment and privilege?
A. Yes B. No

41.If you say YES, What are the problems you faced?

42.Does your work affect your social/family life?
A. Yes B. No

43.If you say YES, How?

- -----
44. Women journalists are incapable of covering hard news like politics.
A. Strongly agree B. Agree C. Neutral D. Disagree E. Strongly disagree
45. If you DISAGREE, State your reasons.

46. If you AGREE, State your reasons.

47. How do your male co-workers perceive you as a journalist?
A. Male co-workers encourage me
B. Male co-workers discourage me
C. Male co-workers do not comment about it
48. Have you seen or heard of sexual harassment in your radio station?
A. Yes B. No
49. Have you faced sexual harassment while working as a journalist?
A. Yes B. No
50. If you say YES, from where the sexual harassment comes from?
A. Inside my radio stations B. Outside my radio stations
51. If you say from INSIDE, from whom you faced the sexual harassment?
A. Colleagues
B. Editors
C. Administrative staffs
D. Other, specify -----
52. If you say from OUTSIDE, from whom you faced the sexual harassment?
A. Public Relation Officers
B. Higher Rank Officials
C. Other, specify-----
53. If you face sexual harassment, what are the consequences of the most serious one in your career?

Appendix II. Questions for focus group discussion

1. Why do you think women are few in the media especially in top decision-making positions?
2. Do you believe increasing the number of women would change the working environment and media content?
3. Do you believe that if women hold top positions, they would bring change in the media?
4. Do you believe women have a different perspective than men?
5. Do you think the media that you are working at is male dominated?
6. Have you faced sexual harassment?
7. What kind of challenges you faced in the media?
8. How fair are the recruitment and promotion patterns in your media organization?
9. What experiences do you have to tell as female journalists?
10. Have you faced problems in assignments given from your editor?

Appendix III. Interview questions to media managers

1. How do you express women's representation in your media?
2. Why do you think there are less women than men in your media?
3. How do you assign stories to your journalists?
4. To what kind of stories do you usually assign women?
5. Who covers hard news stories most often?
6. Do you believe is there issues that women cannot deal with?
7. Do you think that women have a different perspective than men?
8. How do you give promotion in your media?
9. In which beats are female journalists more successful than their male counterparts?

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledge.

Advisor

Name: Rahel Zewdu

Signature: 

Date of submission: 17/2/11

Place of Submission:

Name:

Signature:

Date: