

Exploratory Study on the Coverage of Rural Development News on Ethiopian Radio:

Case Study of 8 PM (Evening) News

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**A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of Journalism and Communication
Addis Ababa University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Journalism**

**Addis Ababa
August 2007**

Addis Ababa University
Faculty of Journalism and Communication

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Acknowledgements

My major thanks go to my advisors. It is my pleasure to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to my external advisor, Dr Kristin Skare Orgeret for her frequent and regular contact to make my work better. With out her constructive and valuable support, this paper would not have been finished. I also thank the internal advisor, Dr Vaidyanathan Natarajan.

I sincerely thank to all my friends and families who support me morally and financially either directly or indirectly, from a piece of paper to a lab top and encouraging me all time. Particularly, I want to say thank you to Abay, Abel, Antony, Azeb, Aski, Ashu, Dave, Denni, Ephi, Zewge, Gojj, Hiwi, Prof, Tsega, Teddy, and others.

I am also grateful to thank Ato Demake Deboch who helps me to analyze the data by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and others support.

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Acronyms

ADLI – Agricultural Development – Led Industrialization

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

DA – Development Agent

ENA – Ethiopian News Agency

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERTA – Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

ERM – Ethiopian Radio Magazine

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

MoFED – Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

MoI – Ministry of Information

NGO – Non Government Organization

PM – Post Meridian

SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency

SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TGE – Transitional Government of Ethiopia

WIC – Walta Information Center

Abstract

The study was conducted to explore the extent of the coverage of development issues on Ethiopian Radio's evening 8:00 Pm news. Moreover, the research tried to examine the priority Radio Ethiopia gives to development issues the chief goal of the country. Since it has a large audience, a wide coverage, and is aired daily, Ethiopian Radio evening 8:00 Pm news was purposely selected.

To assess the main objectives of the projects, the researcher employed content analysis to gather quantitative data. To develop and support this data and to arrive at a comprehensive conclusion, interviews were conducted with journalists and other relevant bodies. The data obtained through interviews were discussed and analyzed qualitatively.

The researcher selected a sample of a month, from April 9 to May 8, 2007. The news items' content was categorized into different groups in a bid to answer the research questions. One of the research questions was to what extent radio covers rural development activities.

For the conceptual frame work, different development theories and the Ethiopian development plan were briefly reviewed. Since the government development plan heavily depends on the concept of Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), which gives emphasis to rural development, it will be taken as a subject of the study. It is the assumption of the research project that media are a promoter and supporter of the development activities of the country and that journalists have to set agenda purposely for the salient issues. Hence agenda setting theory was used as a central theory

The findings of the research revealed that Ethiopian Radio as an agenda setter was rather weak. Rural development news items got relatively little coverage and frequency distribution during the selected period of a month.

The research paper argued that rural development as a national agenda could get better coverage and frequency.

CHAPTER ONE

I. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Research

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is currently implementing the second phase of the Five Year Development Strategic Plan which aims at improving the living standard of the people and mitigating the deep rooted problems of the country. The Second Five Year Strategic Development Plan has been worked on since 2005 and focuses on the rural and agricultural activities.

To maintain the aim of the country's development plan, people must exert their concerted efforts to realize the goals and missions of development policies and strategies of the country. To have common missions and understanding on policies and strategies, there is a need for a national consensus among the different nations within Ethiopia.

The policies and strategies of the rural and agricultural development of the Ethiopian Government which was compiled by the Ministry of Information (MoI) (2002) underlines that the development policy of the country will be implemented effectively, if and only if there is a clear understanding of the ideas, objectives and missions of the plan by farmers, journalists, and other pertinent groups of society. It is the assumption of this present research paper that media, here, have profound roles to play in creating a clear and common understanding by providing information about the development strategies and policies that mainly focus on the rural and agricultural sector which is the bases of the economic development of the country.

If governments want active involvement of the people in development activities, media are believed to be a tool for mobilizing them. Schramm (1964) cited in Melkote and Steeve (2001; 117) supports this idea.

The task of the mass media of information and the 'new media' of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilizing human resources behind the national effort.

As it is stated by Schramm, (1964) since media have the potential to create common understanding by raising significant and worthy ideas, developing and expanding capable media is crucial.

In relation to the expansion of media in Ethiopia, a significant change was seen following the downfall off the Derge Regime and the ratification of the Broadcasting Bill in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). Ellene et al (2003:33) justify that the landmark in the history of Ethiopian media was when the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in May 1991.

According to the MoI (2006) currently there are about 53 newspapers and 15 magazines in the Ethiopian market which publishes on different issues such as politics, economics, social, sport, religion, art, trade and business, among many others.

There are also a handful broadcast media in the country such as Ethiopian Radio, Radio Fana, FM Addis 97.1, Amhara Radio, Debube Radio, Demetse Weyane, FM Addis 96.3, and Fana FM, Ethiopian Television and Addis Ababa Council Television called Etv2.

The aforementioned media have the basic roles of informing, entertaining and educating people as it is known from the classic theories of public service (e.g. Keane 1991; McQuail 1983/1994; McLeish 2005). As it is known, all media do not allocate equivalent time and space for all issues. The time allocated for education, information and entertainment are varied as different media have diverse aims, interest and editorial policy. However, the common purpose of establishing the government and the private media is to promote the social and economic well being of the Ethiopian People (Ellene et al: 2003:55).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although media currently are expanding in terms of numbers of publications in Ethiopia, most of them are likely to focus on sensational issues. When we compare private media with the government media, the latter is considered more suitable to cover hard issues like development activities because it is their mandate to prioritize the country's development plan (Bereket 2003). The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1992 (article 4:1) stated that the press stands for the pursuit of fundamental freedom, peace, democracy, justice, equality and for the acceleration of social and economic development.

The editorial policy of the government media in Ethiopia which is designed to realize development throughout the country is supposed to underline the roles that the media play. "The aim of the editorial policy of the government media has to secure overall development and prosperity in the country by eradicating poverty and harmful traditional practices" (Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency-ERTA, 2002:9).

Despite the fact that the editorial policy of the government media has recognized the main role of media in promoting policies and strategies of rural and agriculture activities that are supposed to bring development in the country, there are still signs that journalists and media institutions hardly cover development issues.

It is the assumption of this research project that there is a tendency among journalists, also in government media, to give less emphasis to rural and agricultural activities than to others less relevant for the progress of the country. Journalists, particularly private media, give more emphasis to sensational issues and only pay attention to development issues when they represent failures.

Moreover, Abel (2006) indicates that most Ethiopians believe government owned media are likely to forget the development issues by giving a lot of attention to political and propaganda purposes. Chugn (2002:3) also says "Most government media in Ethiopia give more emphasis to political agenda rather than development issues."

Besides, according to Waisbord (2006) news that have some relation to development are highly criticized that they are not educative but purely informative. They are also often not well framed.

In a nutshell, media are likely an under utilized force when it comes to foster development in the country. The role of media as an agenda setter, as well as in framing stories to initiate people for mass participation and for development seems to have been minimal in Ethiopia.

1.3. Objectives of the Research

1.3.1. General Objectives

The research paper tries to explore and analyze the frequency and the quality of the Ethiopian Radio's coverage of rural development, which is a focal point of the country's development plan.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Moreover the research project will attempt:

- To assess the priority Radio Ethiopia gives to rural development news.
- To appraise to what extent journalists understand and focus on rural development news.
- To examine how Radio Ethiopia frames rural development news.
- To find out how Radio Ethiopia sets rural development issues on their agenda and
- To identify the information flow; from media to farmers or vice versa.

1.4. Scope of the study

The research project focuses on the evening (8 PM) news hour, which is broadcasted in the official language Amharic in National Radio of Ethiopia. The period between April 9, 2007 and May 8, 2007 was chosen as the period of research. On April 15, during the period of conducting the research, the evening news changed its name from 'Zena File', which literarily means 'news file' to *Zena Metsehet* or 'news magazine' but continued to broadcast in Amharic daily at 8 PM.

The evening news at 8 PM was selected since it is considered at Ethiopian Radio's flagship news and therefore receives due attention by the station. Furthermore, earlier research has shown that farmers mainly use radio to get information about the government's development plan and strategies, especially through this evening program (Eyob 2006:85). In addition the evening news at 8 PM is repeated later the same evening at 10 PM and hence reaches late listeners too.

1.5. Research Questions

In a bid to show the extent of coverage of development news on the National Radio of Ethiopia's evening news at 8:00 Pm, the following research questions are raised.

- How much of the evening news covers rural development activities?
- Does the news give priority to rural development activities?
- Does the evening news frame rural issues in a manner that can be said to bring development?
- To what degree does Ethiopian Radio through its flagship news put development issues on the national agenda?
- Do the radio journalists support the development strategies of the country?
- Do journalists understand and focus on development issues in accordance with Ethiopian Radio's editorial policy and the government development plan?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study will enable Ethiopian Radio to consider their news coverage of rural development issues. The research project's findings will hopefully be important in pointing out to officials and other pertinent bodies of the radio station how to focus on development issues.

Specifically, journalists, by being aware of the importance of covering development issues, may try to find ways in which development issues can get better news coverage. In a broader context, the study will also enable other media outlets to reflect upon how to give attention to development news in their coverage.

Moreover, the paper will take part in filling some knowledge gaps in relation to radio's role in addressing development issues and the findings may help other researchers and media professionals to carry out further research within this field.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Due to financial and time constraints, the research project did not include other media outlets like Ethiopian Television or other regional radios which are following the same government editorial policy. Moreover due to poor documentation of the Ethiopian Radio the researcher did not get the chance to collect long range data retrospectively. Besides, the method employed for the research, content analysis, itself has brought some limitation on the paper. Content analysis method does not tell us how the coverage of an issue influences the audience. It could have been highly interesting and probably made the project more comprehensive if the research had included opinions of the anticipated audience who are living in the rural areas, but this was not feasible within the limited time frame. Thus the effectiveness of the messages of rural development conveyed by the station has not been addressed in this study. Nevertheless the quantitative content analysis was combined with qualitative interviews with central news actors that gave useful information and helped answering the research questions more thoroughly. Lack of local research findings and well-documented material in relation to the topic of the study were also another limitation that should be mentioned.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The research thesis has five chapters including this introductory portion. The second part is the literature review and conceptual framework, the third is the methodology of the study, chapter four presents the findings, discussion and analysis, the last part, chapter five is the summary of the findings and the conclusion.

1.9. Background of Ethiopian Radio

The establishment of Ethiopian Radio took place in 1930. National Radio of Ethiopia was a pioneer broadcasting station. It is also one of the first broadcasting media stations in Africa (Ethiopian Radio Magazine-ERM 1999).

Radio Ethiopia is hence 77 years old. The magazine published by the station divides the historical development of the Ethiopia Radio into five phases.

1.9.1. Between 1930 and 1935

This period is emergence of Ethiopia Radio for the first time in the country. In July 1930, His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I put the foundation stone in the place of Nefas Silk to build the radio station. Four years later the station began telegraphic communication with Cairo-Egypt, Djibouti-Djibouti and Eden–Yemen (ibid). The whole construction of the station was carried out by the Italian company- Ansolodo. Ansolodo agreed to build the radio station at Nefas Selek in Addis Ababa. The official launching of the radio station was declared by the speech of His Majesty Emperor Haile Selassei I on September 12, 1935. (ibid)

The period after the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassei in 1930 was described as the first period of development and the expansion of the broadcast media in Ethiopia.

1.9.2. The period from 1935-1940

In Ethiopian history, this period was known as the invasion of Italian aggressors. Like other institutions, Ethiopian Radio was under the control of the Italian officials. The main aim of the station during this period was to disseminate their propaganda to Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia. According to the Ethiopian Radio Magazine the Italian interests in the station were clearly manifested even on the station's ID. It said 'This is the Voice of Italians in East Africa'.

During this period, all the news and programs were aired live. There were no recorded news and programs. Kebede Michael, the first Ethiopian news announcer, disclosed to ERM (1999) that the station had the capacity of covering Asmara and Mogadishu in Amharic, Somaligna, Arabic, Oroomifa, and Italian languages. According to ERTA (2004), the station began its transmission in a good way during Italian Colonization because Italy wanted the station to be used at large to propagate its agenda for the East African countries.

1.9.3. From 1940 to 1974

After the defeat of the Italian forces, the radio station began transmission in a new spirit in English, Somali, Amharic, and Arabic for national and international listeners. In 1942, the Ministry of Information under the Ministry of Secretary started to manage the station.

The installation of transmitters in different towns helped the station to broaden the range of coverage. According to ERTA (2004), around 1956, the installation of the Geja Dera 100 Kilowatt transmitter and others brought about a huge change in the history of the station. The installation of Geja Dera transmission helped the station to transmit in English and French to West Africa and West Europe, in Arabic to Eastern and Central Asia and North Africa, and in Swahili to Eastern and Central Africa.

On the occasion of the 35th celebration of the coronation of His Majesty Haile Sellasei I (1966), he inaugurated the medium wave transmitter, which had a capacity to cover most of the country. Hence, during that time the name of the station also changed from Addis Ababa Radio to Ethiopian Radio.

1.9.4. The period from 1974 to 1991

During the period of the Derge regime, the station was used for a mere propaganda purpose. Zealous songs and poems were frequently aired. Its name again changed this time to 'The Voice of Revolutionary Ethiopia' (ERTA 2004).

As the name indicated, the main aim of the station was to disseminate information mostly to teach, aware, mobilize and agitate people about the revolution (ERM 1999). 90 % of the coverage was used to advocate and promote the political ideology of the then government. Broadcasting in Tigrigna language was started during this period.

On March 12th 1977, the Derge nationalized the former Radio, Voice of Gospel, which had been owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation since 1963. This station was re-named the External Service of Radio Ethiopia. Programs were transmitted daily to

East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and West Europe in English, French, Somailgna and Arabic (Elleni et al 2003).

1.9.5. Since 1991

According to ERM (1999), this period is considered to be marked by the proliferation of the expansion of the coverage. Moreover, the transitional government banned censorship of media contents by the supreme law of the land, endorsed press proclamation, which gives the right to freedom of expression and creating good working environment.

However, as emphasized by Gebrmedhin (2006:8) some writers argue that the right of freedom of expression and to information provided in the 1995 Constitution and the 1992 Press Proclamation, have been questioned due the processes around the 2003 Draft Press Law.

The government has hired professionals in the field, and has forwarded their recommendations among stakeholders (Ibid). Ethiopian Radio has repeatedly expressed its wishes to do better in promoting democracy, economic and social development, and promote rural and agricultural activities and others.

Presently Ethiopian Radio, by adding two more local languages, is broadcasting in eight local languages, namely Amharic (the official language of the Federal Government), Afaan Oromo, Tigeregn, Somiligna, Afar, Harari, Agnuak, and Nuer and in three foreign languages Arabic, French and English. According to Gebreamilake (2007), Radio Ethiopia covers 170 hours weekly in all these languages. From the totality of the coverage, Amharic language has 73 hours weekly.

The Ethiopian Radio coverage developed step by step. Currently, with the installation of other new transmitters in Metu, Robe, Arbaminch, and Bahir Dar, the coverage has reached at about 80% of the population. However, the numbers of coverage given by written documents do vary. Elline (2003) stated that the coverage of Ethiopian radio is 70% of the population. Zemene Magazine (2005) and Gebreamilake (2007) increased the

coverage of Ethiopian Radio to 80 %. The Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (2004) estimated the coverage to be 90 % of the Ethiopian population. Even if the percentage of the coverage somewhat varies, it seems clear that the station currently reaches a large audience. (SIDA 2003)

1.10. Evening News (Zena File and News Magazine)

'Zena' is an Amharic word which means 'news'. As explained in the introduction, since April 15, 2007, the name and the format of '*Zena File*' have changed to '*Zena Metsehet*' which means '*News Magazine*'. Zena file airs news daily, except Sunday. The entire program of the evening news at 8 PM is repeated the same night at 10 PM.

According to Gebreamilake (2007), the 8 PM news, which are organized by the Ethiopian Radio news room, has been given due attention because important issues are aired during this news hour. The evening news is indeed the station's flagship news, it is broadcast in prime time covering issues of national importance. Moreover, the majority of the people especially farmers who are in the field for the daily routine work are usually at home at this time of the evening.

The evening radio news is read by one anchor (person acting as the main presenter in a program involving several components) and consists of a range of voice reports (broadcast news piece in the reporter's own voice) and back announcements (where the names and details of an interview or records are given immediately after the item). The evening news has its own news jingle (short musical item used as a station ID for the specific program or news). The anchor reads the headlines (initial one sentence summary of the news event) first to inform the listeners as well as to catch them. The news is supported by sound bites (a short piece of audio said to sum up a particular truth or point of view, able to stand alone) and direct speech. According to the BBC's work book, direct quotes can be used to add impact and life to the story (Allen 2003:59).

The news generally includes many major local and a few major foreign issues. Very often 25 minutes are allocated for news. But for the Ethiopian Radio's news magazine, only 20 minutes are given to the daily news stories.

CHAPTER TWO

II. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2. Media and Development

In this chapter, some of the relevant theories and issues which have direct relation to media and development are summarized and the development policy and strategy of the current Ethiopia government are discussed briefly. The role of media in development, the definitions of development and to what extent media are integrated with it will be revised.

2.1. What is development?

It is difficult to give a precise and single definition of development. The word development can be defined differently by different scholars in accordance with their field of studies. Rogers (1969), Nyerere (1974), Todaro (1992), Lund (1994), Khiabany (1999), Melkote and Steeves (2001), Madzingire (2001), Chugn (2003), and others have given different definitions of development.

To start with Rogers (1969:18), he defined development as a type of social change in which new ideas were introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capital incomes and improve social organizations.

Madzingire (2001) also says development must encompass more than material and financial statues of people. “In addition to improvement in per capital income and living standard, it also involves adequate changes in institutional and social structures, attitudes, norms, customs and beliefs.” (Madzingire 2001:5)

Another researcher Khiabany (1999:1) gave his own point of view in a broader manner. He stated that development is a change in politics, economic and social organization.

Melkote and Steeves (2001:34) wrote that although most would agree that development means improving the living conditions of society, there has been much debate on just what constitutes improved living conditions and how they should be achieved.

Another writer, Chugn (2003) defined development qualitatively. “Development is defined as the qualitative improvement which includes the fulfillment of basic needs, the reduction of poverty and inequality, gainful employment and participation of the society in it.” (Chugn 2003:3)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on the other hand lists eight indicators of development as the baseline. “The MDGs have set quantitative targets for the reduction of poverty, and improvement of health, education, gender equality, the environment and other dimensions of human well-being.” (MoFED 2004:1)

Wang and Dissanayake (1984:5) describe development from a social change point of view.

Development as a process of social changes which have as its goal the improvement in the quality of life of all or majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they exist and which seeks to involve the majority of the people as closely as possible in this enterprise making them the masters of their own destiny.

The Late Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere (1974) had a different perspective of the development. He said roads, buildings, increase of crops output and other things of this nature are not development. They are only tools of development. For him development meant the development of the people.

Nyerere (1974:26) underlined that an increase in the number of school buildings is development only if those buildings can be and are being, used to develop the minds and understandings of people. Nyerere also related development to freedom.

The above mentioned definition and discussion clarify how difficult it is to simply define the word development and how elusive its meaning is. There is no single, fixed, common and final definition of the concept of development.

Lund (1994) advised us to examine the context to pin down development. In her research, Lund says development is multifaceted. It is impossible to talk about one encompassing

concept. Thus, she concluded that the definition of development must be made operational relating to the problem one is trying to solve (Lund 1994:15).

Moreover, whenever, development issues are raised, three paradigms are always mentioned currently. After World War II, different scholars involved themselves in studying development. Since 1945s there have been three main groups of development theories. These three different development theories defined development differently. These are modernization, dependency, and multiplicity theory. Let us review them briefly.

2.2. Modernization Theory

This theory was the first on development theories after World War II. It was dominant in academic circles from around 1945 to 1965. As Servaes (1999) indicated modernization theories supported the transfer of technology and the socio-political culture to developed societies to traditional or underdeveloped societies.

Proponents of modernization theorists conceived development as a spontaneous, irreversible process that every society passed through. They defined development in quantitative, predominantly economic, growth indexes such as income, volume of saving and levels of investment. Servaes (1999) pointed out that the modernization paradigm considered underdevelopment in terms of perceptible, quantitative differences between rich and poor countries.

The modernization theorists stated a solution to bridge the gap between the developed and the underdeveloped. Underdeveloped countries had to follow similar footsteps to the ones of the developed countries. "Development means bridging the gaps by means of imitation process between traditional and modern, retarded and advanced or barbarian and civilized sectors and groups to the advantage of the latter." (Ibid 1999:19)

In modernization paradigm, mass media were considered as magic multipliers of development benefits and as an agent and indices of modernization. Moreover, the

theorists believed that mass media were highly powerful, with direct and uniform effects on people.

Modernization theory was criticized for its ignorance of the complex processes of change and the little attention it paid to the consequences of economic, political and macro cultural processes on the local level.

2.3. Dependency Theory

The second group of theories emerged in Latin America in the 1960s and was influential until the early 1980s. Dependency supporters believed that development and underdevelopment are interrelated processes. Servaes (1999) revises dependency theory as the reproduction of socio-economic and political structure at the periphery in accordance with the interest of the central power, i.e. development in the center determines development in the periphery.

Servaes (1999) underlines that dependency theory, unlike modernization theory, which was oriented on economics and political view, was a multi dimensional process.

The central view of dependency theorists is that there is no universal path to development, that development must be conceived as an integral, multi dimensional, and dialectic process that can differ from one country to another. In other words, every society must define development for itself and find its own strategy. (Ibid 1999:6)

The role of mass media was not considered as a merely positive value within the dependency paradigm. The subscribers of this theories believed that mass media have the potential to widen the knowledge gap between the information rich to the information poor (Melkote 1999: 375). Moreover, mass media were not independent variables but seen as dependent on environmental factors.

The dependency paradigm proponents are heavily criticized by their strategy to solve the impact of the center. They argue each peripheral country should dissociate itself from the world market. However, many non aligned countries were simply too weak economically. Self reliance is a difficult option in the context of the present world (Ibid 1995).

2.4. Alternative Development (Multiplicity) Paradigm

Multiplicity theory and Another Development are other names of the alternative development paradigm. The concept of alternative development was first articulated in the industrialized nations of Northern Europe. The proponents of alternative development defined development as the issue of welfare, equality and democratic rights i.e. development means people centered development and in harmony with the environment to improve the chances of self-reliance and a sustainable resource-use. (Servaes 1999)

Todaro (1992) cited in Servaes (1999:76) defines development as a multi-faceted and multidimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.

Servaes (1999) reiterated that development must represent the entire gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system.

Lund (1994) highlighted the definition given by the supporters of the alternative development paradigm.

Development is thus not only an economic issue, it is a social and moral one, and may be more than anything else a political one. The key word in such an alternative development model is poverty alleviation, which means creating strategies to raising the productivity of the poor. (Lund 1994:7)

According to Melkote (1999) the alternative development paradigm put emphasis on reducing inequalities and on improving the condition of the poorest of the poor by meeting their basic needs. They were also encouraging an active participation of the people in development activities by prioritizing small, indigenous technology. This theory consists of stimulation the potential for change within a community. The concept of grassroots participation in the development process has become a key notion. The role of mass communication here was to narrow the knowledge gap between the information rich and the information poor. Moreover, communication was considered as a catalyst for change. The alternative development theorists also stress the participation of the people at

the grassroots. People should define their own problems and try to identify solutions to them.

The critics of Alternative Development have focused on the inadequate concern with the role of external factors and the process of globalization. (Lund 1994)

2.5. The Current Ethiopian Government Development Policy

The present government of Ethiopia has currently worked out the second five year development plan. One of the fundamental goals is prevailing instantaneous and sustainable economic development by eradicating deep-rooted poverty in the society.

According to MoI (2002), the development plan which mainly focuses on economy gives priority to the agricultural and rural sector for the realization of the plan. The agricultural and rural development is still taken as a guaranty for the implementation of the 2nd five year strategic development plan of the country.

As mentioned above, the working document published by the MoI (2002) underlined that the strategic development plan of the incumbent government of Ethiopia is Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization (ADLI), which is mainly based on the rural and agricultural activities.

SIDA (2003) cited in Eyob (2006:84) highlighted the policy, ADLI, which has the aim of maximizing the productivity of agricultural output in the country and which is expected to be implemented by millions of farmers nationwide.

Thus, the overall development plan of the country will be practical if the rural and agricultural activities are carried out in proper and intended way by using new technologies and innovations. The current government of Ethiopia believes that other sustainable developments will follow when there is a proper implementation and realization of the rural and agricultural activities (MoI 2002). MoI reiterated the government believes that mobilizing the society at all levels is indispensable for the realization of the development plan.

2.6. Role of Mass Media in Development

It should be reminded that, there are countries like China that believes in the possibilities of promoting development without vibrant media and democracy. However, it is clear that mass media facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, opinions etc among individual, friends, families, nations, etc. The exchange of information is also helpful for the development of the country and it has the power to mobilize people for mass participation. Lerner (1964) stated that mass media can and should play an important role in politics, economics, and social organization that development is thought to require. (Lerner cited in Khiabany 1999)

The task of providing 'clues' to better things in life was given to the mass media. The mass media was regarded as 'the multiplier'. People's experience should have been multiplied by the spread of mediated experience through mass communication. (Ibid 1999:3)

Another scholar Lihamba (1994) cited in Madzingire (2001) mentioned the importance of communication as a socio-political function.

The role of communication (mass media) in development is to expound major socio economic development priorities to increase say agricultural productivity, to promote social welfare, health issues etc. Communication plays a socio- political function" (Madzingire 2001:5)

Bindra (2004) highlighted the nexus of media and development. He underlined that few countries in history have enjoyed meaningful development without having a vibrant media sector. Mass communication is one of the key enablers of political freedom, which in return is one of the keys that unlock development (Bindra 2004:1).

Wilbur Schramm (1964) cited in Khiabany (1999) also emphasized the high correlation between the indices of modernity and availability of mass media. Mass media, in Schramm's view, could function as a 'bridge to a wider world' and could provide 'clues as to what better things in life might be'. According to him the flow of information could serve to widen people's horizon and experience, encourage them to pay attention to development needs, and by changing individuals' attitudes to create a climate which would stimulate development policy. Moreover, the role of mass media was to speed up

and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilizing human resources behind national efforts.

Fair (1989) pointed out in her research, cited in Khiabany (1999), that the media were seen to act as a powerful force in the creation of social changes or influence on audience members' attitudes, behaviors, or knowledge.

Likewise, Adam Burke (1999) cited in Eyob (2006) writes that information is crucial for the success of many development programs. There is often strong interrelationship between poverty and a lack of access to relevant information.

It is possible to conclude that there are some relations between media and development. However, to use the mass media to facilitate and bring development, journalists have to give due attention to development by setting an agenda which helps to inculcate the ideas and to win the attention of the audiences.

Therefore for this research paper, which tries to examine the coverage of rural and agricultural development in the national radio's evening news, agenda setting theory is very important as a theoretical frame work.

2.7. Agenda Setting Theory

We have seen above how, according to classic public service theory, the universal role of media is to disseminate educational, informative and entertaining issues to the public. To be able to help in the process of bringing changes in people's attitudes and experience the media have to set an agenda for particular and important issues. Especially, there are times that media would have the role of diffusing new ideas and innovation by creating awareness. To diffuse new ideas and innovations, the news media have to set a purposeful agenda to disseminate salient information to the target audiences.

Any issue may seem trivial when we hear or read about it for the first time. But if an issue has been raised frequently through the media, the chances increase that people will

give attention to it. McCombs and Shaw (1974) cited in Em Griffin (2006:395) believed that the mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agendas to the public agenda. The two scholars elaborated that listeners judge important issues what the media judge as important.

Em Griffin stipulated the following in his book, 'The First Look at Communication Theory', concerning the function of the media: "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers (listeners and viewers) what to think about" (Griffin 2006:396)

Another scholar Miller (2005), is also clarifying the importance of agenda setting for the journalist to influence the society by raising an issue. According to him, agenda-setting helps the journalist to bring about societal awareness of important ideas. It is believed that journalists have the potential to transfer important items to the public agendas. Media agenda is the set of issues addressed by media sources and public agenda is the issues the public considers important.

McLeish (2005) refers to the media's agenda-setting function as the media's initial selection of an item on the basis of it being worthy of coverage. "People will discuss what they hear on the radio and are less likely to be concerned with topics not already given wide currency." (McLeish 2005: 59)

In general, McQuail (2000) defines agenda-setting as "a process by which the relative attention given to items or issues in news coverage influences the rank order of public awareness of issues and attribution of their significance. As an extension effects on public policy may occur".

Agenda setting has many uses in our society. It gives the media power to establish what news we see or hear and what part of the news is important to see or hear. Therefore, agenda setting is used for many purposes to establish the media agenda and to retrieve the opinion of the public. In addition to setting the agenda, media make some issues more salient.

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.(Griffin 2006:402)

Media not only set the agenda for what issues, events or candidates are most important but also transfer the salience of specific attributes belonging to those potential objects of interest (ibid 2006:401).

To sum up, the common assumption of agenda setting is the ability of the media to influence the visibility of events by purposely choosing what we see, hear or read in the media.

2.8. News

People give different definitions to the word news. Some say news is simply the information that helps to show the world. According to Cowie (1989) Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary, “News is new or fresh or recent information reported in the media.” Gans (2004:80) defines news as information, which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of the profession summarizing, refining, and altering what becomes available to the sources in order to become the information suitable for their audience.

Strentz (1989) defined news differently in a rather straight forward manner. His definitions of news are “News is what is reported in the paper” and further “News is something that you know today and that you didn’t know yesterday.”

McLeish (2005) stated that “News is that which is new, interesting and true. ‘New’ in that it is an account of events that the listener has not heard before or an update of story previously broadcast. ‘Interesting’, in the sense of the material being relevant, or directly affecting the audience in some way. ‘True’, because the story as told is factually correct.”(McLeish 2005:53)

McLeish reiterated that news has been called the ‘mirror of the society’. But, he continued, mirror reflects the whole picture, and news certainly does not do that. Radio news like all other news is highly selective. Thus McLeish’s idea somewhat echoes the agenda setting theory. News will always show a selected part of the reality. This is central to this research project. Furthermore, within this research project news is seen as the newest and most salient information provided regularly at a fixed time for the listeners by the media institution.

News is currently considered as a basic source of information for the large society. Due to that British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) puts the news first. The logo of BBC, ‘Putting the News first’, tells us news gets priority worldwide for its importance. There are Broadcasting Corporations, which have always promised “You give us 22 minutes, we will give you the world.” This motto also gives us some clue about the news which has the power to cover the most important worldwide issues. Within a short period of time, news has the potential to disseminate salient information to the listeners.

Supporting this idea, Roscho (1999) underlines that news is continually desired and offered in the course of communication, because it is a valuable commodity of social exchange. Roscho (1999) also defined news as a human desire to know the state of the surrounding social and physical environment.

Schudson (1995) has listed seven goals of news. According to him the news media should provide citizens with fair and full information so that they can make sound decision as citizens. Moreover, the news media should provide coherent frameworks to help citizens comprehend the complex political universe. They should analyze and interpret politics in ways that enable citizens to understand and to act. The news media should also serve as common carriers of the perspective of all varied groups in society. The news media should provide the quality of news that people want and the news media should represent the public and speak for and to the public interest

2.9. Radio

Like newspaper, television and other mass media, radio also plays an important role in disseminating information. However, even more than other media radio is powerful enough to disseminate the information without limited boundaries. Radio is peculiar from the other mass media due to its speed, and low costs (McLeish 2005). According to McLeish radio has expanded into an almost universal medium of communication. It covers most of the world on short waves linking the continents in a fraction of a second. “Radio as a medium of education, excels with concepts as well as facts. It has a capability with any subject that can be discussed, taking the learner (listener) at a predetermined pace through a given body of knowledge.” (ibid 2005: 9)

According to McLeish (2005) because of its relatively low cost and because it does not require the education level of literacy, radio is particularly well suited to meet the needs of the poor and disadvantaged. This means that among people who can not afford the price of other media, like TV and newspapers, and uneducated people who often live in the rural areas, radio can be used at large.

Yoon (2004) also stated the importance of radio. “Radio is one of the most important instruments used to promote ‘modernization’ to the people”. The potential of radio is indeed very great. It can cover a wide range of areas and reach more people than any other media. Radio is cost effective and therefore the most useful medium for developing countries, like Ethiopia, where a large part of citizens live in rural areas and are illiterate.

III. Chapter Three

3. Study Design

This chapter deals with the design of the study, sampling techniques, data collection and data analysis methods.

3.1. Method of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent Ethiopian Radio Evening News (8 PM) - '*Zena File*', which later changed its name to News Magazine, covers development issues. The evening news was selected due to its large audience and attention given to it by the station. Moreover, according to Gebreamilake (2007), since the main audiences of the station are commonly at home at this time of the day, most salient and national issues are covered during this period.

This research project examined the coverage of rural development issues because the country's development plans largely lean on the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) which gives priority to rural and agricultural activities. Hence, the extent of coverage of agricultural and rural activities in the evening news was studied by using content analysis method.

In order to respond to the research questions, the researcher combined quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative methods are research techniques mainly dealing with numbers and measurable features. Whereas qualitative methods allow for smaller samples and are more interested in the depth of the data, quantitative methods tolerate larger samples and make generalization easier. The research typically can be replicated or repeated, giving it higher reliability. Validity refers to the truthfulness of the research project's findings and relates to whether the researcher really measured what he/she thinks he/she measured, or what others think was measured. In this present case it might relate to whether the study of the evening news at 8 PM, really says something about the Ethiopian Radio's coverage of development issues, which I argue it might.

The researcher used content analysis because it is a proper method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Kerlinger 2000 cited in Dominick 2006). Systematic means content to be analyzed is selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules; objective means the analysis should yield the same results if another researcher replicates the study; and quantitative means the study is accurate representation of the body of the message. The quantitative analysis was combined with qualitative interviews with key news reporters to obtain information and details that the quantitative analysis could not provide.

3.2. Subject of the Study

To assess and examine the role of all Ethiopian media in development is an unattainable aim. The research, therefore, selected national radio of Ethiopia for the reason that it has a direct relation and impact on the rural and agricultural activities, owing to its cost effectiveness, coverage, usage, portability, unlimited boundary etc. “Radio was (is) a channel for national campaign to persuade the people about specific and selected health and agricultural practices” (Servaes 1999: 31).

Moreover, radio is the main and most powerful sources of information for people in Ethiopia especially those who are living in the rural areas. It is the assumption of this project that radio is important in realizing the government’s five years development plan of the country, which depends on ADLI that aims to maximize productivity. It is also believed that farmers mainly use radio to get information about the government’s development plan and strategies (Eyob 2006:85).

Radio Ethiopia is hence chosen as a subject of study purposely owing to the aforementioned facts about its potential strengths.

From the evening radio broadcast, news was selected as a sample for this research because by its nature, news is powerful to disseminate information in a precise manner.

Moreover, according to Gebreamilake (2007) the evening news has a relatively large audience. The 8 PM evening news is aired for twenty to twenty five minutes daily.

3.3. Sampling Methods and Sampling Size

News broadcasted from April 9, 2007 to May 8, 2007 was taken as a sample. One reason that the data was limited to one month was due to poor documentation of the radio station. One of the difficulties that most researchers face while collecting the sample retrospectively, is that the research is inevitably affected by the availability and comprehensiveness of archival sources (Deacon et al 1999:120). As a solution to the meager material in the archives of Ethiopian Radio, the researcher recorded the sample material daily while the news went on air.

3.4. Method of Data Collection

All the 8 PM evening news aired during the specified time was recorded. These news items were categorized into different sections, mainly development and others. It was enumerated first to show how many news items were aired in one month and to what extent development news were covered. News items which had direct relation to rural and agricultural development were reexamined again in detail. Each news items was taken as a sample unit.

Since content analysis by its nature has shortcoming in the way that it might lack some depth, the researcher held qualitative interviews with reporters in order to study whether the radio journalists support the development strategies of the country and whether they understand and focus on development topics in accordance with Ethiopian Radio's editorial policy and the government development plan. A reporter, senior reporter, a sub editor, editor, the head of newsroom division and the head of national language department (representing the deputy head of the station) were interviewed. The data gathered through interviews from the above mentioned journalists helped the researcher to know their overall interests and know how about the editorial policies and the government's development strategies. Moreover the interviews used to identify the challenge they are facing to cover development issues.

The researcher conventionally selected one journalist from each position within the news room for the interviews (total four). This is because most journalists were not available in the office due to field works and others reasons. Nevertheless, head of newsroom division and head of National Language Department were purposely included.

Furthermore, in order to better understand how the government officials reflected an interview was conducted with the acting head of the public relation and information bureau in the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development.

3.5. Defining Categories

To assess the extent of the coverage of development news in the evening news hour, coding lists were prepared for the news contents. Each content category tried to answer a specific question of the study.

1. To what extent development news items are covered in one month. (It is measured in duration and in figure). How many and what types of news were covered in the specified time span? To this end the researcher categorized the items into 11 adequate groups. These are listed as follows:
 - **Politics:** parliament discussion, political parties' activity, diplomatic discussion, good governance, human right and democratic activities, regional administration meetings, youth's, women's and others' forums that focused on political issues.
 - **Social:** education, health, gender issues, youth and culture
 - **Economy:** investment, small and large scale industry, trade, constructions, science and technology.
 - **Rural development:** all rural and agricultural activities.
 - **Foreign:** all news focused out of Ethiopia
 - **Sport:** local, national and international sport activities
 - **Business-rural:** market price of crops, export market in relation to rural products
 - **Business-general:** such as currency, treasury bill, stock market

- **Weather–rural:** announcement which have direct relation to agricultural activities
- **Weather –general:** weather forecasts which are focused on cities and towns.
- **Others.**

These items are ordered in accordance with their weight. McLeish underlines how “the process of selection, the reason for rejection and the weight accorded to each story item (treatment, bulletin order and duration) are matters that deserve the utmost care.” (2005:59)

2. Placement of the news: The priority given to rural development news was identified by the placement of the news story in the evening news program. To identify the placement, the researcher set two categories.

a. Inclusion of the news in the headlines.

Are stories about the rural and agricultural activities included in the headlines? If a specific issue is included in the headlines, it is possible to say it has been given more attention than the stories that are not included in the headlines.

b. Placement of the news in the running order.

Radio can further emphasis the importance of a subject by its placement in the running order of the news program (McLeish 2005). Items presented at the very beginning of the news bulletin are considered to have greater influence than those coming later. The type of useful information will be naturally dependent on the particular needs of the audience in the area covered by the station (McLeish 2005:174).

Moreover, according to McCombs and Shaw (1977) media agenda establishes the position and the length of story as the primary criteria of prominence. Some findings suggest that media priorities also are part of the agenda setting function and may affect people’s behavior.

3. Repetition. In Ethiopian Radio's evening news, the news stories, which are considered the most important are covered in the introduction of the evening news and then again in the news analysis which is part of the news magazine. If one issue is repeated, it is an indication that it has got significant value. Moreover if one issue is read repeatedly, there will be a greater chance that the audience remembers it.
4. Theme of the news. This refers to the central message or the dominant theme of the news.
 - a. To mobilize and create mass participation
 - If the news acts as a catalyst and focus for celebration, enabling individuals to act together, forming a common consciousness.
 - Moreover if the news try to mobilize public and private resources for the personal or community ends, particularly in an emergency.
 - b. To adopt new innovations and technologies
 - If the news contributes to the artistic and intellectual skills and knowledge, providing opportunities for new and established performers of all kinds,
 - c. To motivate farmers to do their usual activities in a better way for further benefits.
 - If the news provides information about jobs, goods and services, and helps to shape markets by providing incentives for earning and spending.
 - d. To be aware and prepared for further action
 - If the news disseminates ideas, new beliefs and values to promote diversity and change, or they may reinforce traditional values to help to maintain social order through the status quo.
 - e. To report to the officials or the public
 - If the news acts as a watch dog on power holders, providing contact between them and the public.
 - f. To clarify policies and strategies

- If the news helps to develop agreed objectives and political choice, and enables social and political debates, exposing issues such as strategies and policies and options for action,
 - g. To report the progress
 - If the news acts as a multiplier of change, speeding up the process of informing a population, and heightening an awareness of key issues,
 - h. Others
5. Type of the news format
 - a. Hard news
 - b. Soft news
 6. Forms of news presentation
 - a. Taped: voice report by reporters, it tells us the news story is given better coverage and hence is considered more important than for instance a story presented in a bulletin.
 - b. Bulletin: is a relatively short presentation read by the anchor in studio. The news story is hence given less coverage.
 - c. Discussion: this type of presentation not only gives a wide coverage for a specific issue and the speakers, but it is also live and interesting. The news story has hence been given important coverage.
 7. As a general principle, the aim of the news story can be one of the following three
 - a. to inform
 - b. to educate
 - c. to entertain
 8. Duration: This category helps to know how long coverage a specific issue is given in the news hour.
 9. Origin of the story: this helps to know who the main and common sources of the news story are. In this specific project it may also help the researcher to identify whether and to what degree farmers are being used as sources by the radio journalists. Thus, for this research project it is particularly interesting to study whether the origin of the information given in the development news stories came from any of the following sources:

- a. Farmers
 - b. Development Agents
 - c. Agricultural Experts
 - d. Higher Officials
 - e. NGOs
 - f. Foreign Experts
 - g. Others
10. Who report the news? This category helps to see whether and how often the journalists of the station set agenda. Does the news story originate from
- a. Staff journalists
 - b. News agencies
 - c. Others
11. How is the news story covered? What form of report is used to release or impart a given message, in this case in relation to development and agricultural news? This question relates to the prospect of the journalists to set the agenda.
- a. Events (conference, meeting, workshop)
 - b. Interviews
 - c. Press release
 - d. Press conference
 - e. Referring to other documents
12. What is the tone of the news? Does it appear
- a. Positively
 - b. Neutral
 - c. Negatively

3.6. Data Processing and Presentation.

The data gathered through coding lists were first presented quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the results were then discussed. Data which were obtained through interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

3.7. Unit of Analysis

All news items during the specified time and more specifically rural development news were the units of analysis of the study.

3.8. Inter-Coder Reliability

Two to six coders would be employed in a content analysis method (Dominick 2006:162). The researcher provided training to two coders. Dominick (2006: 162) says careful training of coders is an integral step in any content analysis and usually results in a more reliable analysis. The trainings included revising definitions, clarifying category boundaries, and revamping coding sheets until the coders were comfortable with the material and procedures.

Testing the reliability of the coders is one of the steps that must be carried out by researchers who use content analysis method. In the content analysis method, the reliability of the coders must be measured. “If a content analysis is to be objective, its measures and procedures must be reliable. A study is reliable when repeated measurements of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions.”(Ibid 2006:166)

“Inter-coder reliability refers to levels of agreement made among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument.” (Ibid 2006:166).

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where,

M is the number of coding decisions which two coders agree

N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and the second coder, respectively. Thus the coding reliability between the two coders was 0.92. This number is believed to be more than sufficient because most published content analysis typically report a minimum reliability 0.7 (ibid).

IV. CHAPTER FOUR

4. Introduction

In this chapter, data obtained quantitatively from content analysis and qualitatively through interviews are presented, discussed and analyzed. The presentation and discussion of this chapter is based on the general and specific objectives stated in the first chapter. As mentioned above, the data obtained by using content analysis were uploaded and changed into percentages by using the Scientific Package for Social Science (SPSS). Tables and graphs are used to present the data more elaborately in accordance with their importance.

4.1. Presenting, Discussing and Analyzing Findings

From April 9, 2007 to May 8, 2007, 411 news items were aired during the 8:00 Pm evening news. From the news items aired during the specified period of time, 27 news items contained entirely rural developments issues. Most issues relating to or important for the rural development were commonly incorporated in, or overlapped with, weather announcements and business reporting. 21 rural related business news items and 5 rural related weather news items were observed during the sample time.

4.1.1. Frequency of the News Type and Their Percentage

Types of news	Frequency	Percent
Politics	104	25.3%
Social	31	7.5%
Economy	45	10.9%
Rural development	27	6.6%
Foreign	67	16.3%
Business rural	21	5.1%
Business general	20	4.9%
Weather rural	5	1.2%
Weather general	27	6.6%
Sport	29	7.1%
Others	5	1.2%
Headlines	30	7.3%
Total	411	100.0%

Table A, frequency distribution in terms of numbers of stories during one month

From the total 411 news items collected using the content analysis method, the majority of the total news items of the news were politics. 104 (25.3%) items were political stories.

Amazingly, foreign news was listed in the second position of the list of frequent story types. Although the Editorial Policy of the Ethiopian Government Media and Head of the National Languages Department of the Station, Gebreamilake Teka (interview, May 12, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound) makes clear that the station gives more priority and outsized the coverage for the national and local issues, the SPSS findings shows that foreign news got the second largest coverage of the evening news of the station during the sample period. According to the Editorial Policy and Gebreamilake the station gives minimal air time for foreign news items. However, 67 news items of the 411 news stories were foreign stories. This was 16.3% of the whole news coverage. Economic news which possessed 31 news items was leveled in third rank by sharing 10.9% of the entire coverage.

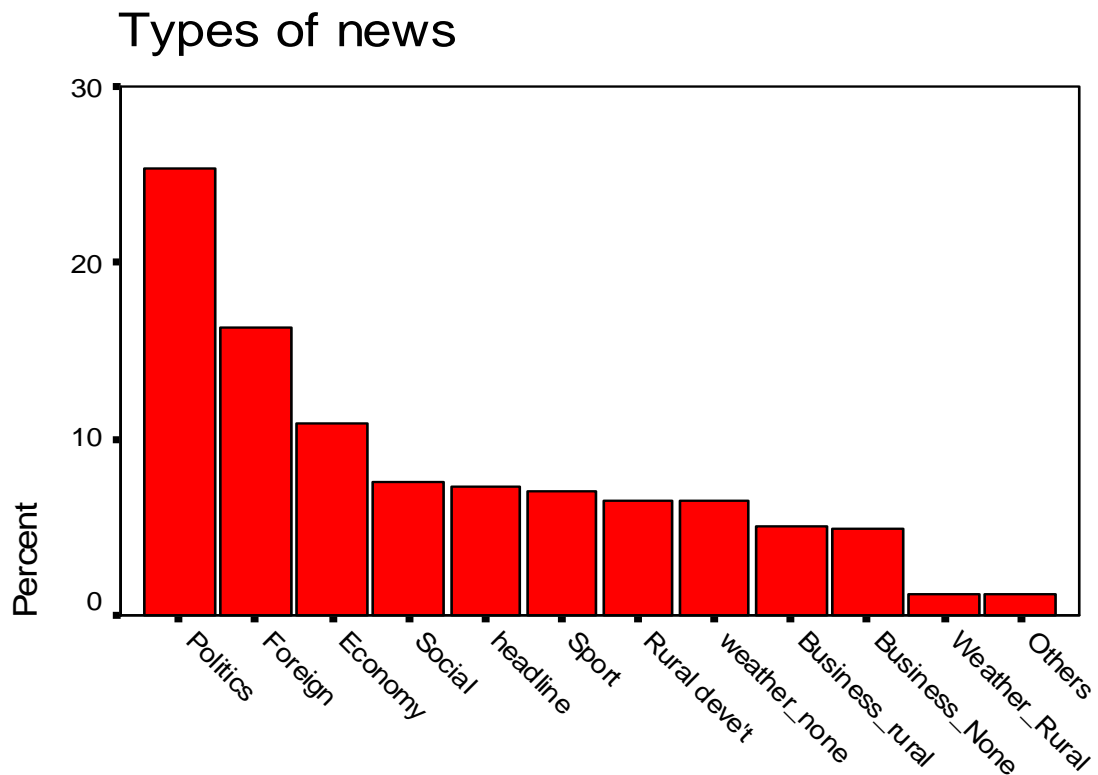
Surprisingly the rural development news which is the main target of this study was listed at seven by sharing 6.6% of the totality of news stories i.e. 27 news items were rural development stories. It is unfortunate that although the radio station has the aim of broadcasting or covering development issues at large, such coverage was minimal. The coverage rural development was given in terms of numbers of stories presented was less than the coverage given to foreign and even to sport news items which were listed in 2nd and sixth ranks respectively. All the news items which are incorporating the government's most important policies and strategies are described objectives-centered or objectives-driven. Sport and foreign news are not mentioned in these lists. Hence, the findings indicate that the coverage given to rural development by the station is questionable. This is because the coverage given to rural development issues are incongruent with the government plan as well as the editorial policies of the government's media.

On the other hand since the radio station began business and weather reporting during the research period, some issues relating to, or essential to the rural activities were broadcasted. The duration given to issues which are supplementary and important to rural development in business and weather reporting were systematically identified. The numbers of news and the duration given to the rural development issues in each news items were counted as an entity. Therefore, 21 business and five weather news items entirely covered issues which could be helpful for the farmers or for the rural development of the country. There is a common understanding that weather broadcast is usually aired for the benefit of farmers. Unfortunately, the findings of this paper reveal that the announcement of weather conditions made during the sample time often was not directly relevant to agricultural activities. Its announcement was heavily for the benefit of the urban dwellers. For instances, to be specific, the weather news aired during the sample time were largely about the weather changes of the cities.

The frequency distribution according to news types revealed that there was huge coverage gap between the highest and the lowest items. Of the total of 411 news items, 104 focused on politics. At the other extreme, only five weather news items which focused on rural and agricultural activities were counted. It was the least news items covered by the station in the research time. This was only 1.2% of the total number of news stories that broadcasted during the sample time. The following bar graph (Figure 1) shows the descending order of the frequency of the different story types.

Acting head of the public relation bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Girma Damite (Interview, May 21, 2007 in Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development) disclosed that the government plan overemphasized the prioritization of the agricultural and rural development activities for its full implementation: “Agricultural and rural development is the pillar and the core sector of the government’s development plan. It is in the primary list of the activities to be done by the government to practical its five year plan.”

However, from a point of view that wants to promote information about rural development, it is unfortunate these issues were not given frequent coverage. From the findings we see that rural development issues were listed as number seven in descending order in terms of number of news stories.



Types of news

Graph A, Type of the news in number of stories

The 2002 editorial policy of the government media suggests the selection of the news to take the news values such as significance and timeliness into consideration (ERTA 2002). Above all, during the selection process of the news, priority is usually supposed to be given to issues which relate to development. This is because the development plan is considered the pillar of the country by the government. As it was mentioned before, the editorial policy stated the most significant and development related issues on objective-centered and suggested to be run first in the news order.

On the other hand, my informant Gebreamilake Teka, Head of National Language Department, says

As a government media, Ethiopian Radio has the role of getting rid of poverty and promoting development throughout the country. Therefore, the main focus of the programs and the news is to alleviate poverty that persists in the county and the news is focusing on issues which alleviate the poverty of the country. As part of this, the main concern of the station is reporting or covering rural and agricultural activities at large. (Interview, May 12, 2007 in Ethiopian Radio)

Gebreamilake commented that though there is no limited time and number to cover news items by prioritizing the issue, rural development issues are currently getting sufficient coverage. He reiterated that it does not mean that other issues are totally forgotten.

There is no limited time for each news items. However, since the government policy and strategy focuses on rural and agricultural activities, they will get priority and wider coverage by the station. Currently the coverage given to rural development is sufficient. (Interview, May 12, 2007 in Ethiopian Radio)

However, Seid Muhe, Head of the Newsroom Division, disagreed with Gebreamilake's idea of sufficient time allocated for rural development news. Although the government policy mainly centered on rural development, its coverage in the national radio news hour is relatively small. He mentioned the limited time given for the news hour by the station as a major reason for the insufficient coverage news items related to rural development.

Seid also added that there are certain conditions that the station overemphasized on some particular issues in the news hours.

Whenever the country is under certain political problems or pressure that put up a clear and present danger on the sovereignty and integrity of the country, the majority of the coverage of the news may be titled to political issues. (Interview, May 13, 2007 in Ethiopian Radio)

According to Seid, rural development events and activities, which do have less importance, less quality and news value, still are educative at some points and get coverage in order to fulfill the government's development plan.

Although there is a common understanding to cover rural development issues at large, it is still a surprise that only 27 news items were covered in the evening news during an entire one month.

Other anonymous journalists who were part of the interviewees also admitted that political issues frequently take the highest coverage in the station's evening news hours. Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) indicate the main perspective of most developing countries is that media have an important role in aiding the government efforts. To support the government efforts, large coverage shall be given to development plans and activities in the country. From this it is possible to conclude that Ethiopian Radio gives less emphasis for the government development plan than what probably is needed, but covers the government's politics to a much larger degree.

The findings, thus, entail that Ethiopian Radio evening news, which was aired during the sample time were heavily focused on political issues.

4.2.2. Duration of the News Type, Maximum, Minimum and Their Percentage

This section classified the findings of the data in relation to the duration given to each news items during April 9, 2007 to May 8, 2007. Maximum and minimum, sum of the whole news in seconds, and the range are presented in different sections on the following table.

The maximum column shows the maximum duration registered for one news items in each category. Likewise the minimum column shows the minimum duration recorded. The sum total of the duration of each news items is also included

Types of news	Sum (in second)	Max (in second)	Min (in second)	% of Total Sum
Politics	10224.00	440.00	12.00	28.5%
Social	3094.00	197.00	13.00	8.6%
Economy	4192.00	221.00	26.00	11.7%
Rural development	2852.00	222.00	30.00	8.0%
Foreign	3883.00	188.00	15.00	10.8%
Business rural	1780.00	154.00	30.00	5.0%
Business general	1082.00	120.00	10.00	3.0%
Weather rural	313.00	90.00	33.00	.9%
Weather general	2194.00	121.00	10.00	6.1%
Sport	2930.00	140.00	73.00	8.2%
Others	584.00	212.00	30.00	1.6%
Headline	2700.00	90.00	90.00	7.5%
Total	35828.00	440.00	10.00	100.0%

Table B. maximum, minimum and summation.

4.2.2.1. Presenting Each News Items of the Total Duration

As it can be seen in the above Table B, during the thirty sample days of the evening news hours, 411 news items were on air for 35, 828 seconds (10 hours and 35 minutes).

As it was indicated in Table A, political news stories were given the dominant place in the frequency distribution of the coverage. The same happened in relation to time allocation. Political issues have got 10,224 seconds during the period of one month. This meant the station devoted 28.5% for political issues of the whole time of the evening news hours of the specified sample time. Direct relations were observed between the frequency of the news and the duration given to the news items. Political news, 104 news item and 10,224 seconds, had the lion's share of the coverage during the period under study.

Economic and foreign news items took the second and the third rank with 4,192 and 3,883 seconds respectively. Social issues were recorded in the fourth with 3,094 seconds and sport news items were the fifth with 2,930 seconds. Rural development news followed after the sport news with 2,852 seconds and was listed in the sixth rank. The findings here show that the sector, which is repeatedly listed as the most central issue of the government development plan, received only 8% of the whole evening news time.

However, business general, rural weather and others news items were given the least duration. Especially weather news items that focused on the agricultural activities got only 313 seconds which means only 0.9 % of the whole evening news time.

Griffin (2006) and other of the agenda setting theorists suggested that if an issue receives a frequent and large coverage in the media, listeners will give due attention to it. McLeish (2005) also commented that people will discuss what they hear on the radio and be less likely to be concerned with topics not already given wide coverage. Therefore, there is an interconnection between the duration given to the issues and the retention of the listeners to the issues. From this point, political issues will possible receive large attention among the listeners. However, the rural development will receive relatively little consideration.

Besides, the length of the story was taken as criteria for being an important topic on the public agenda by McCombs and Shaw (1977). If the media give large coverage in terms of time, it is believed that it sets agenda purposely in order to promote some important issues of the country. In addition, Berger (1998) certainly indicates the need to give significant space as well as time to development issues by the main stream media.

From the findings and the scholars' point of views, it is possible to say that Ethiopian Radio, as an agenda setter as well as the supporter of the national development plan, gives limited time for rural development when we compare to the total time of the news items as well as to the concern given to the issue by the government, editorial policy and other policy makers. 27 news items (2, 852 seconds) for rural development news from 411 total items (35, 828 seconds) is minimal. Moreover, since the majority of the audiences of the station are rural people, issues which are pertinent and relatable to them are supposed to be covered at large. They are currently being presented issues, which are neither directly related to nor relevant for their day to day activities.

4.2.2.2. Presenting Maximum and Minimum of the Time Allocated for Each News Items.

The findings unveil that there was also a huge discrepancy between and/or among the news type in accordance with the duration given to the items. The longest news report in the material from Ethiopian radio's news magazine was of the type of politics (440 seconds), the minimum length of a story within this category was 12 seconds. From the totality of news items, business general and weather general news stories were the shortest in time. The shortest news story within each of these categories scored 10 seconds. Rural weather scored the least maximum time during the research period. The longest rural weather report was 90 seconds. This shows that there is a huge difference between and among the news types in accordance with the duration given to the items. Although it had got relatively little time from the whole evening 8 PM news hours, a rural development news items scored the second maximum time from the whole news aired on the time span. Still the maximum priority is given to political issues.

4.2.3. Placement of the news

Order	Type of the news										
	Pol itics	Social	Econo my	Rural Dev't	Foreig n	Business- rural	Business- general	Weather rural	Weather general	spor t	othe rs
1	21	2	4	3							
2	19	2	7	2							
3	15	1	9	2	3						
4	13	5	1	4	7						
5	6	4	3	8	8						1
6	11	6	2	4	7						
7	4	5	5		15						1
8	4	1	5	2	12				5		1
9	6		3	1	6	3	5	3	7		1
10	3	3	4	1	1	6	4		4	5	1
11	1	1	2		4	4	5		4	8	
12	1				3	3	4	1	4	4	
13		1			1	3		1	2	6	
14						1	1		1	4	
15						1	1			1	
16										1	
Total	104	31	45	27	67	21	20	5	27	29	5

Table C News items in relation to running order in number

The above table shows that the running order of the news items in the news' schedule while broadcasting. In the thirty days of the sample time, 411 news items were aired. From these news items, 21 political news items were aired at the very beginning of the news. This means that for 21 days political items were given the priority of the station news items in the running order. As it can be seen in appendix F, 70% of the political news was placed among the first four stories of the news cue sheet. 20.2% of the totality of political news items was aired first during the sample time.

Rural development issues were placed as the first story only three times in the material studied. Although the numbers of rural development news items are relatively small during the sample time, rural development news was the third category next to politics and economics to be broadcasted first. 10% of the thirty days of the rural development news items were aired at the very beginning of the transmission of the news. Only two social and four economic news items took the first running order in thirty days.

As can be seen in the table C and appendix F, the majority of the news items in the first four running orders were politics. 68 political news items were aired between the first and the fourth story in the running order for one month. Media professionals agree that when stories are read first, the implication is that they are considered the most important story that the media institution has to broadcast at the time. Therefore, from the data obtained through the content analysis, politics had got priority also here.

According to Gebreamilake, news items are broadcasted in accordance with their news values. Moreover, most objective-centered issues such as development policies strategies are given the first place in the running order. The rest is ordered in relation to their importance and relevance. Seid also shares the ideas of Gebreamilake. National issues are listed in the first order by evaluating their news value as well as their importance to the country. He reiterated that specifically if there are Wereda issues, which are somehow educative and of importance to rural people, they will probably be put first. Seid admitted that though they tried to cover some minor development activities, sometimes political issues dominated the first order (interview, Ethiopia Radio, May 13, 2007).

One remarkable point here about the findings is that there is a direct relation between the number of news items and the position of the news in the running order. Politics took the first place both in frequency of the stories and in the running order during the specified time of research.

The content, importance, news worthiness, and stakeholders' interest in the news are the criteria to select and order the items in the evening news. Therefore, according to their explanation news items that make a good story, that are important and newsworthy are usually read first. We have seen how the majority of the first news in the running order was politics. On the other hand, rural development items were presented as the first news story on three days in the material. Here, it can be said that journalists seemed to have overlooked the importance and newsworthiness of issues of rural development as they rarely selected them at least within the time when the sample was taken. Gans (2004) noted as criteria for news selection, if large numbers of the people are affected by the story, journalists tend to consider the story as important. However, in this case the

situation is the contrary. 85% of the country's citizens are farmers and live in the rural areas. Thus, it is believed that the issues of rural activities will draw a large audience.

A reporters and an assistant editor stated that news items of rural development do not get priority in the running cue sheets. Rather political issues are getting wider coverage as well as priority in the evening news in Ethiopian Radio. In opposition to this, an editor and Seid argued that rural development issues are always getting the first position in the running orders. However, the findings of this paper justified that political issues by large were given priority and that rural development got less priority.

Here, the researcher wants to mention that there are differences of the knowledge of journalists not only in relation to their suggestions on the coverage and the priority given to rural development, but also in relation to their knowledge about the editorial policy. Some of the informant journalists have little knowledge of the government editorial policy of the media with regard to development activities. Two of them said nothing about the editorial policy in relation to rural development while they were interviewed. The other two suggested in a broader manner that the editorial policy focuses on the government development plan. They did not to mention specifically what the editorial policy stated about the coverage and the focus of the rural development plan.

McCombs and Shaw (1977) suggested that media agenda establishes the position and the length of the story as the primary criteria of prominence. According to the agenda setting theorists placing broadcasting news first in the news order (or articles on the first page) is the way to show the prominence of the story. This is because news broadcasted first tends to have more prominence and suggests more urgency than other stories listed later.

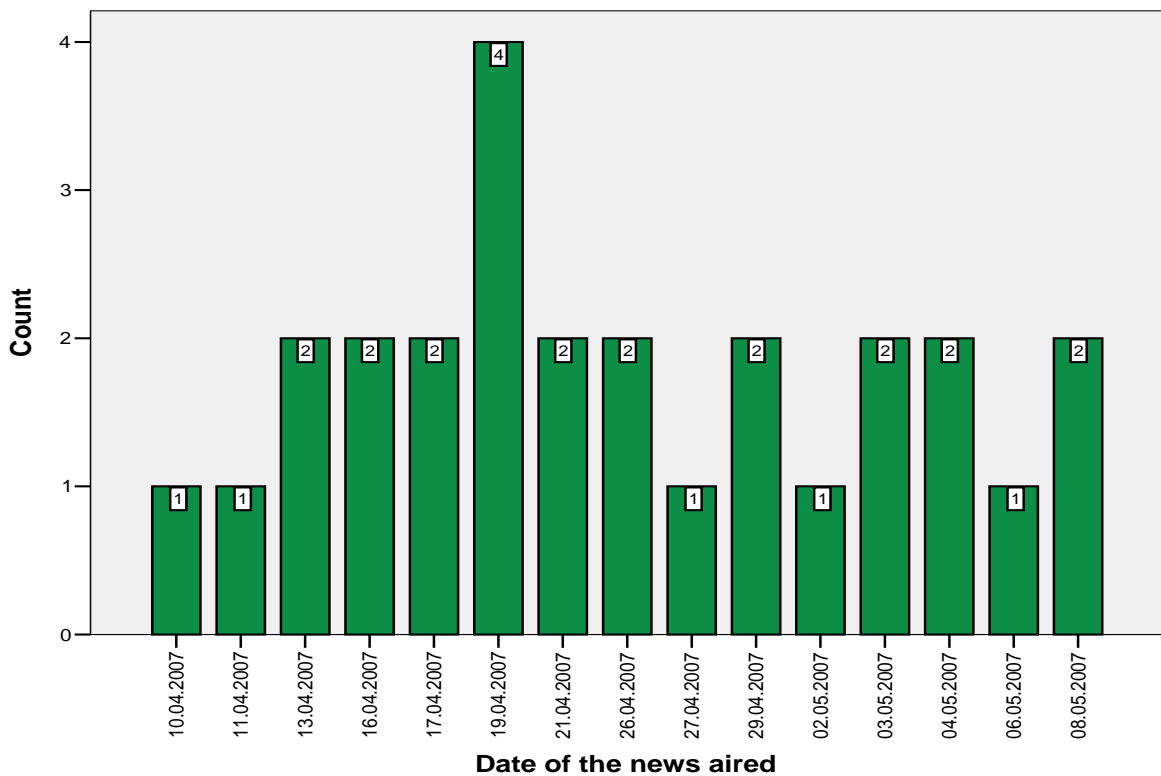
McLeish (2005) also comments that items presented at the very beginning of the news bulletin have greater influence than those coming later. Thus, news aired on the radio can emphasize the importance of the subject by its placing. Therefore, Ethiopian Radio's performance as an agenda setter for the public on rural development, when seen from McLeish, McCombs and Shaw's views, can be leveled as poor. Moreover, covering 2, 852 seconds of the total 35, 828 seconds, 27 news items of the total 411 news which most

are listed in the middle of the running order may not be a guarantee in realizing the role of the media to promote and support the development plan of the country.

4.2.4. Discussion of Data Concerning on Rural Development

The main objective of this research project is trying to explore the coverage of rural development in Ethiopian Radio at evening 8:00 Pm. The following data presentation attempts to discuss different and specific aspects of rural development.

4.2.4.1. Frequency of the News Items in Accordance With the Day Aired



Graph B, frequency of news in the month's days

From the selected 30 days, rural development received coverage 15 days. Nine of these days two stories about rural development were included in the news. Five days, there was one story. Large coverage was seen on April 11, 2007. At this day, four news items of rural development were read in the radio news. In accordance with the attention given by government to the issue as well as the number of people who may benefit directly from

the rural development news (estimated 85% of the total population), covering development issues only half of the month seems relatively insufficient. This is because, as Gans (2004) stated above, if large numbers of the people are affected by the story, journalists tend to consider the story as important and take a guarantee of the criteria of news selection.

4.2.4.2. Aim of the Rural Development News.

Type of the news	Aim of the news				Total		Forms of the news		Total	
	Informing		Educating		Count	Row %	Hard news		Count	Row %
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %			Count	Row %		
Pure development	25	92.6%	2	7.4%	27	100.0%	27	100.0%	27	100.0%
Business rural	20	100.0%			20	100.0%	20	100.0%	20	100.0%
Weather rural	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5	100.0%	5	100.0%	5	100.0%

Table D Types of the news Verses aim and form of the news

The widely accepted role of the mass media in society was categorized into three, namely informing, educating and entertaining the listeners, viewers or readers following the classic public service definition mentioned above. The role of rural development issues was discussed within these three categories.

As it was mentioned before, during the sample time, 27 news items of rural development were aired. Of the 27 news items, 25 (or 92.6%) of them were found to have the aim to inform the society and only two news items (7.4%) were purely educating. No rural development news was mentioned in the form of entertainment. This was not so surprising since the items presented within a news format seldom takes an entirely entertaining form. According to Ali (2000) informing or/and educating people about the need of national development is the widely accepted role of the mass media. However, the research finding of this paper revealed that most items of Ethiopian Radio news are informative, not educative. The rural development issues covered during the sample period were largely endeavored to inform and did not focus on explaining topics in a more educative manner. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the Ethiopian radio's

evening news is not playing the role of educating the people in general and the rural community in particular about rural development topics.

Sometimes business reports included information which seemed most important for the rural development, for example, reporting the price of cereals, vegetables and other cash crops like coffee. 20 news items either inclusively or exclusively raised issues of the rural development or the agricultural outputs. All of these news items had the role of informing the rural people/ farmers. The same was true in the weather broadcast. From the five news items which were read in the research period, only one of them was covered in a more educational manner, providing background and explanation.

Golding cited in Fissaha (2007) gives emphasis to the role of media as a promoter of national progress by stressing the educational function of news by raising awareness about events and issues. The educational role of the media is not least important for the issues of rural development, business reporting and weather announcements. According to the findings in the study, the Ethiopian Radio is likely failing its role in this regard.

4.2.4.3. Types of the Rural Development News

Types of news are commonly divided into two broad groups: hard news and soft news. All rural development, business and weather announcement in the studied material were hard news. As rural development is closely linked to human beings and their behaviors there should be room to cover rural development issues within the format of soft news. However, no news item within the category of rural development was covered in the soft news format. All rural development stories, business reports and weather announcements were covered in a hard news format. Gebreamlike (2007), points at the fact that there is a wrong understanding among journalists about the rural issues. Since journalists consider that urban topics, both hard and soft issues will reach large audiences, they are rushing to cover them. Many journalists are content to cover mostly sensational and urban issues. On the contrary, issues related to the rural development activities in the countryside are either not covered at all or when covered not presented in soft news

forms. The research findings also showed that journalists hardly presented the rural development news in entertaining ways.

4.2.4.4. Repetition of Rural Development News.

Type of the news	repetition of the news				Total		news included in the headline				Total	
	yes		no		Count	Row %	yes		no		Count	Row %
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %			Count	Row %	Count	Row %		
development	3	11.1%	24	88.9%	27	100.0%	10	37.1%	17	62.9%	27	100.0%
business rural			20	100.0%	20	100.0%			20	100.0%	20	100.0%
weather rural			5	100.0%	5	100.0%			5	100.0%	5	100.0%

Table E, types of news Verses repetition of the news and inclusion in the headlines

The current news format of the Ethiopian Radio’s news magazine, allows for repeating of some important and national issues. News, in a bulletin format, may be repeated in the news analysis with voice over. Repetition is one of the manifestations of giving emphasis and priority to the specific issues. Moreover, it will be easier memorized by the listeners if one issue is read again and again. According to agenda setting theorist to diffuse new ideas and innovation, the news media have to purposely, frequently and regularly disseminate salient information.

The findings of this research project, however, from the 27 news items of rural development during the sample time of the news on Ethiopian Radio show that only three news items were repeated. Thus the frequency of the repetition of the rural development news stories was only 11.1%.

By the nature of the news format, weather announcement and business reporting were not repeated. Hence, it is possible to argue that Ethiopian Radio failed to inculcate new ideas and innovations by raising the issues repeatedly in their news magazine.

4.2.4.5. Inclusion of Rural Development News in the Headlines.

It is commonly assumed that if a news item is considered as an important and national issue, it may have a chance to be included in the headlines. As it has been presented in the above table E, from the totality of news items covering rural development, 10 news items were included in the headlines of Ethiopian Radio news hours. This was 37.1% of the totality of news of rural development. The majority of the rural development news items were not read in the headlines, either they were considered less newsworthy or they were totally neglected by the journalists. Thus, the inclusion of rural issues in the headlines is still insufficient since the radio station is considered as an agenda setter for national issues.

4.2.4.6. Forms of the News

Type of the news	Form of the news				Total	
	Bulletin		Voice over		Count	Row %
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %		
Pure evelopment	8	29.6%	19	70.4%	27	100.0%
Business rural	11	55.0%	9	45.0%	20	100.0%
Weather rural	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5	100.0%

Table F. Types of the News Verses Forms of the News

For the purpose of this research, forms of the news were divided in to three. These are bulletin, voice over or voice reporting and discussion. News items which were short and read by the anchorman or anchorwoman were listed as news bulletin format. If the news items were supported by different natural sounds, sound bits and read by the reporters they were categorized as voice over. It is clear that voice recorded news items would need more coverage time than the bulletin news. Most broadcasting organizations invite guests either in the studio or outside the studio for discussion in the news hours. This kind of news format gives opportunity to the people to present their ideas by their own accent without being paraphrased by the journalists. The message is sent by the original sources. Moreover, it gives not only ample time for the speaker to cover issues but also make the issue more interesting and lively.

Therefore, the researcher tried to analyze the forms of the news from the content analysis. As presented in the above Table F, eight news items of the rural development were read in bulletin format. This was 29.6% of the total amount of rural development news items. The rest 19 news item or 70.4% in terms of numbers of the news reports was the voice over news items. The discussion or interview category was not found in the evening news of the station during the sample time.

Although most news of rural development news was covered in the voice over format, pertinent bodies of the sector do not communicate directly with the audience. This indicates that the radio reporters give not only no coverage on discussion, but also short and paraphrased versions of the ideas of the sources.

Business reporting and weather announcement have their own allocated time and assigned reporters, and they were mostly aired in the voice over format. From the 20 news items, nine were covered in the voice over format. This means 45% of the whole business news in terms of numbers of stories. The rest 11 or 55% of the news were reported in the news bulletin format. Weather announcements were produced in a better way because 80% of the stories or four of five news items were reported in the voice recorded.

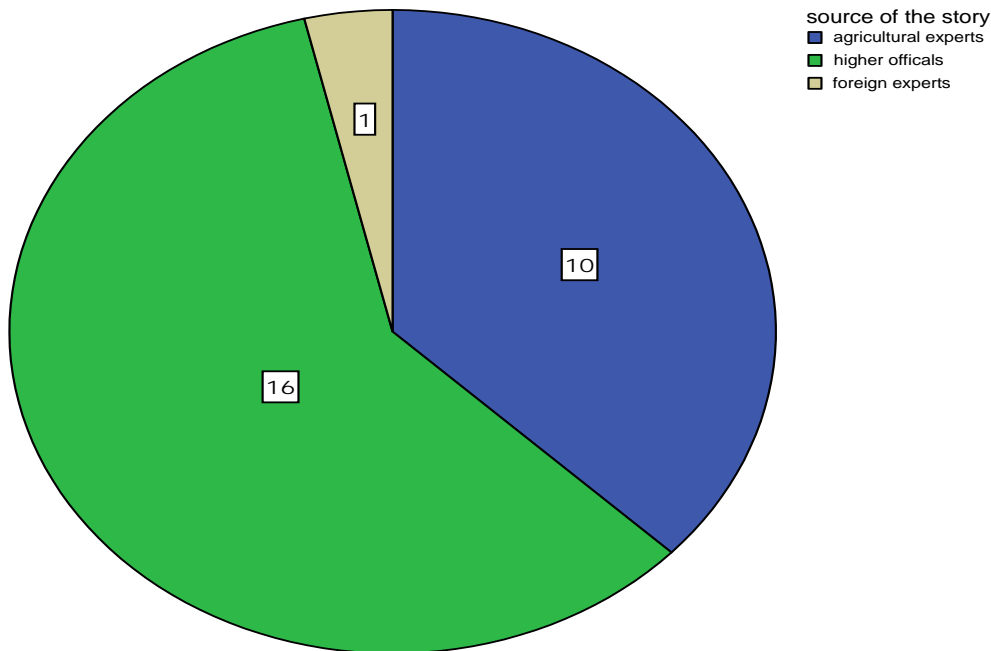
4.2.4.7. Origin of the News Story

Type of the news	Source of the story						Total	
	Agricultural experts		Higher officials		Foreign experts		Count	Row %
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %		
Development	10	37.0%	16	59.3%	1	3.7%	27	100.0%
Business rural	16	80.0%	4	20.0%			20	100.0%
Weather rural	2	40.0%	3	60.0%			5	100.0%

Table G. Types Versus Sources of the Story

The above Table G shows the frequency of the original sources of the information used to cover the stories. From the story covered by the station about rural development, 10 items used agricultural experts as their sources. As it is defined in chapter three, experts of rural and agricultural development at federal, regional, and district levels are listed as agricultural experts. The speech or interviews with ministers of the rural development

and agriculture were also included in this list. Hence, 10 news items or 37% of the news of rural development in terms of numbers of stories were obtained from agricultural experts. But higher officials took the lead to be the original source of the news in Ethiopian Radio. 16 items (59.3%) of the information of rural and agricultural development were obtained from the higher officials. One news item used foreign experts as its source. On the contrary, farmers and development agents (DA) who are working closely with the implementation of the policies and strategies and expected to be the prominent sources of information were not referred to as sources or mentioned in the Ethiopian Radio news studied.



Graph C: Sources of the Story

Most of my informant journalists agreed that farmers, agricultural experts and higher officials are the original sources of the information for rural development issues (interview, 2007). Seid mentioned that rural and agricultural development officials at different levels, development agents and experts, and NGOs who work closely with farmers and stakeholders of the field are the main sources of the news about rural development. But, the information obtained through interviews and the findings from content analysis showed huge variations. Farmers, DAs and agricultural experts, the most

important stakeholders of rural and agricultural activities who were supposed to be the main source of the information were not used as sources to any large degree; whereas other officials repeatedly were referred to as sources for the rural development issues.

The receivers of the information were never used as information providers in the news material studied. This means they are merely passive receivers of the information in direct contrast to the aims of the alternative development paradigm discussed in chapter 2 where the participation of the people at the grassroots is stressed. According to the alternative development theories people should define their own problems and try to identify solutions to them. In the analyzed material most of the issues were sourced from different sections out of the sector. This implies that most of the issues of rural development which is a focal point of the country's development plan are consistent with other sections or most of the higher officials want to encourage and report about it. However, it is unfortunate from the participatory perspectives that farmers, DA's and others agricultural experts are not used as sources by the station.

Here, development of communication is not only the dissemination of an innovation of new ideas that is full of promise by officials, but the grass root expression of its needs, participation by putting the emphasis on the needs and the view points of the individual and groups at the grass root level, becomes the key for promoting development (Yoon 2004). However, from the findings of the data, the main stakeholders of the rural development are passive actors in providing information. The findings indicated that the information flow goes from the officials and others top agricultural experts to farmers and other rural dwellers as a top-down flow of information. Yet according to this one way flow of information in the radio broadcasts limits the use of radio in rural development to very specific aspects (Robin 2001).

Like rural development, weather announcement did not use agricultural experts as sources to any large degree. Only two news items were found from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The remaining three news items were sourced by higher officials.

A huge difference of sources occurred within the business reporting. From the totality of business reports, which were related to the agricultural market, 80% or 16 items were from agricultural experts. The reason why this amount of news reports used agricultural experts as sources was that most information was dispatched from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Only four news items were found from the higher officials. This was 20% of the total rural weather news stories.

Even though the reactions and opinions of farmers are not included in the news, business and weather announcement were by far better than rural development in the way that they referred to agriculture experts as a source of information.

4.2.4.8. How/ Where the information was obtained.

news covered by	Information obtained								Total	
	Events		Press release		Interview		Other documents		Count	Col %
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
staff journalists	12	80.0%	17	94.4%	11	64.7%	2	100.0%	42	80.8%
news agencies	3	20.0%	1	5.6%	5	29.4%			9	17.3%
others					1	5.9%			1	1.9%
Total	15	100. %	18	100.0%	17	100.0%	2	100.0%	52	100.0%

Table H. News covered by Versus Information obtained

The most common contributors of news for Ethiopian Radio are news agencies, such as Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) and Walta Information Center (WIC), and assigned reporters by the station and others which include regional information bureaus. Journalists of the aforementioned institutions usually gathered information through interviews, press releases, press conferences, and events such as meetings, conferences, workshops, and from documents.

The information obtained from events, through interviews, press release, press conference and other documents are rewritten to be suitable for broadcasting by the journalists of the above institutions. The journalists write the news by selecting certain angles.

As can be depicted from the above Table H, the Ethiopian Radio Newsroom mostly used the news reported by the staff journalists. From the 27 news items of rural development during the specified period, 20 (74.1%) of them were covered by staff reporters. One journalist clarified that she/he was sometimes covering development issues by his/her own interest. The others informants said they only covered development issues when they are assigned by the editor, not by their interest. Two of the interviewees had not covered such issues yet, but they said if they get the chance, they may cover it.

As it was indicated previously, the above statement inclined to say that reporters are less committed to set agenda and to report on rural development issues in accordance with the editorial policy and the government development plan. Gebreamilake and Seid strengthened this assumption. They stated that journalists of the station are generally not enthusiastic to cover rural development. They mentioned this problem as one of the challenges of the station (This issue will be discussed further in the later part of this chapter).

Both Gebreamilake and Seid unveiled that the previous tendency of the station was to cover issues heavily based on events. Currently, a new style to design news projects at managerial level as well as at a newsroom level was introduced. Reporters in the newsroom are responsible to propose projects to cover different news items including rural development. The interviewees reiterated that staff reporters have started designing projects to cover issues especially on rural development. Moreover, the newsroom mostly assigned staff journalists to cover rural development events nationwide, particularly events held in the capital city. This might be the simple reason why the number of the news covered by staff journalists took the lead.

Although there was a common trend that the station mostly used news written by the news agencies (WIC and ENA), only six news items in the material (22 percent of the total number of stories) were aired from the news dispatched from the two news agencies. According to the findings, others sources were insignificant to provide development news.

As can be displayed in Table J, 85% of the news or 17 news items from 20 of the rural business news were covered from press releases. After the newsroom has begun its news magazine format, the Ministry of Rural and Agriculture Development usually dispatched press releases of business reports directly to the Ethiopian Radio. From events, interviews and other documents, only one item each were covered in the analyzed material

Of the five weather announcements, four (80 percent of the total number) were reported by the station's reporters. The newly designed news format of the station helped an increased coverage of rural weather forecast which was reported by the staff journalists. The newsroom recently has allocated time and assigned reporters for the daily weather announcement. Reporters who are assigned for the weather broadcast usually interview experts of the National Meteorology Authority or sometimes they interview experts from the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development. As a result the coverage done by the staff reporters and the interview format took the lead.

However, most rural development news items were obtained from events as meetings, official visits, conferences, workshops etc. 51.9% of the news or 14 items were covered from such events. Media, as an agenda setter, have to plan to cover issues purposely either through interview and/or from events. Especially if the news media want to carry out investigative journalism, only covering the authorities' planned meetings and conferences will not do. However, in many countries, the role of mass media in national development is primarily played out through announcement and coverage of ceremonials and traditional events (see e.g. Napoli 1999).

The interview, which is considered as the main tool of gathering information from sources, was the second most used format in the analyzed news material. 12 news items were results of interviews carried out by the staff journalists. This was 44% of the total amount of news about rural development. Only one news item was covered by referring to other documents.

Interviewed journalists mentioned that though there are many possibilities of gathering information, they use interview and events to gather facts and data. Moreover, news

agencies are the main source of the news for rural development. Gebreamilake witnessed that local news agencies like ENA and WIC are refined in the government development plan; they don't have a problem of underestimating the development activities in the rural areas. However, rural development news items which were covered through interviews at large indicate that the Ethiopian Radio journalists are setting the agenda purposely. Seid, here, mentioned that there is a new initiation of designing projects to cover rural issues.

The following table will try to clarify the reportages of the station.

The news covered by	Information obtained through					Total
	Events	Interviews	Press release	Press conference	Other documents	
Staff journalists	11	8	0	0	1	20
News agencies	3	3	0	0	0	6
Others	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	14	12	0	0	1	27

Table I. The news of rural development coverage versus the Information obtained

As can be depicted from the above Table I, though 20 news items were covered by the staff reporters, 11 items were obtained from events. Only eight news items were reported by staff journalists through interviews with the sources.

According to FAO (1998:6), radio news should offer information on issues of local interest through discussion, interview with representatives of local interested groups and testimony of individuals on their experience. From this, we can conclude that although the importance of collecting the information through interview or discussion is valuable for the station, the majority of the news items of the rural development were coverage of events.

Business reporting was also mainly covered by staff journalists. 18 news items (90% of the total amount of news stories about rural business) were reported by the Ethiopian

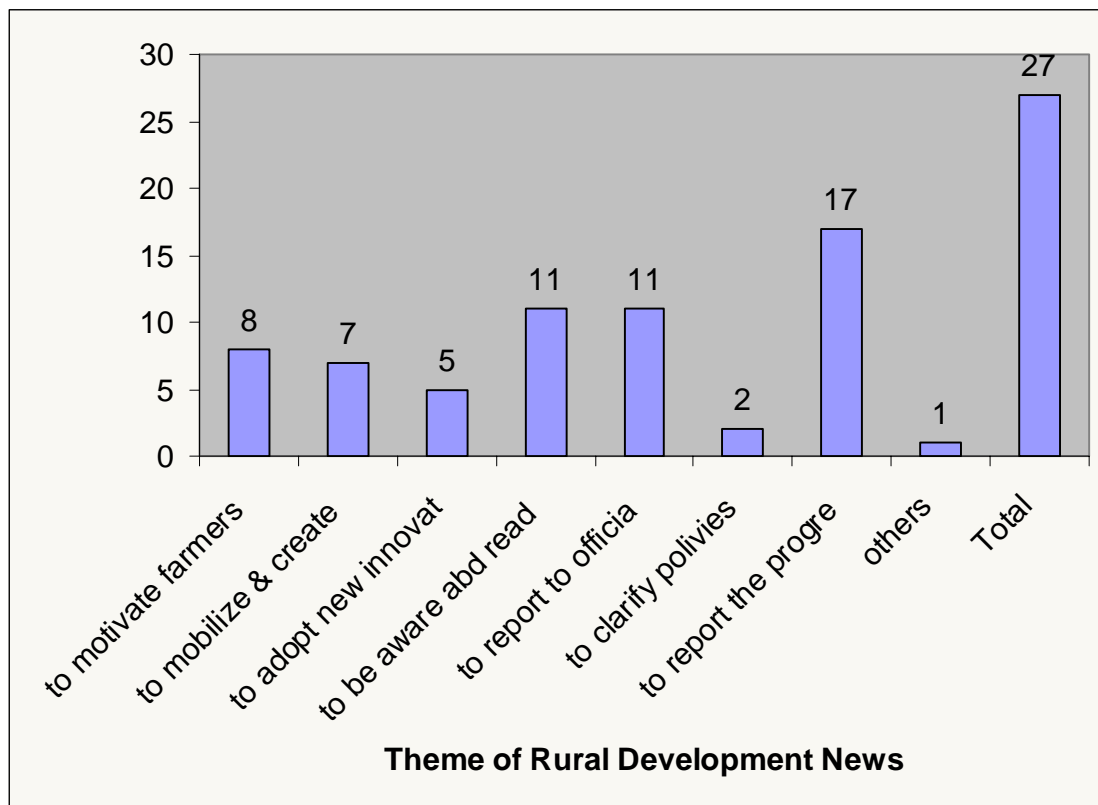
Radio journalists. Only two news items were covered by the other news agencies. The increase of the coverage of the number of the business news by the staff reporters does not need further reasons. This is because the information of business news is directly dispatched to the station daily from the information providers. In this context most business information, which are press releases are faxed to Ethiopian Radio from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Girma, the Acting Head of the Public Relation Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development says the ministry tries to provide recent information to the news agency and Ethiopian Radio through press release and interviews (interview, May 21, 2007).

		Type of the news					
		rural development		Business rural		Weather rural	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
The news covered by	Staff journalists	20	74.1%	18	90.0%	4	80.0%
	News agencies	6	22.2%	2	10.0%	1	20.0%
	Others	1	3.7%				
Total		27	100.0%	20	100.0%	5	100.0%
Information obtained	Events	14	51.9%	1	5.0%		
	Press release			17	85.0%	1	20.0%
	Interview	12	44.4%	1	5.0%	4	80.0%
	Other documents	1	3.7%	1	5.0%		
Total		27	100.0%	20	100.0%	5	100.0%

Table J, Types of news versus covered by and obtained from

4.2.4.9. Theme of the Stories

Although the magnitude of the themes varied, all the suggested themes listed in the categories were somehow raised in the analyzed news. Whether the news items were rural development or business reporting, the majority news items were reported for the sake of reporting the progress of the activities without any noticeable amount of critical thinking. Except the weather announcements, the largest number of reports reported the progress of the ongoing development projects. 17 news items of rural development and 15 items of business were covered to report the progress of such activities.



Graph D, themes of the news

11 news items of rural development tried to inculcate messages in an attempt to make the audience aware and ready for further actions. As part of the major duty of the news to inform the society, 11 items were also covered in regards to report to the officials as well as the public. These news stories did not try to transfer messages for further actions. They just reported to inform.

The coverage of rural development of the thirty days in question did not aim to motivate the rural people for mass participation to any large degree. Only eight news items were written from an angle that seemed to have as its aim to motivate the public for further actions. Like motivating rural people, news aimed at mobilizing and creating mass participation had got less coverage. Only seven news items of rural development aired aimed to mobilize and create mass participations during the research period. “As one of the modernizing agents in underdeveloped societies, government intended to use the media to contribute to national development goals.” (Fissha 2007:13). Therefore, it is

possible to conclude that Ethiopian Radio is not in line with the modernizing role of the media.

Scholars like Lerner have also argued that the news should inform the public about how to adopt new technologies and innovations for their further development. In an interview, Girma in addition said the ministry wishes to hear about the news which helps the farmers to adopt new technologies and innovations. However, even though the interests of the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development and the scholars of development studies focus on the adoption and innovation of the new technologies as a central theme of the news, not much was done by the Ethiopian Radio newsroom with regard to this point. Only five news items in the material focused on adoption of new technologies and innovations which could be helpful for farmers and other people who are engaged with rural activities to boost their productivity as farmers.

However, mass media have been seen as a mobilizing agent for national building by diffusing new technologies and innovation in the modernization theory, Romano (2006) cited by Fissaha (2007). Ali (2000) also stated that one of mass media's roles is to encourage people to accept and practice new ideas and findings. Like Romano and Ali, Napoli (1996) sees it as the great mission of the media in the Third World to develop and modernize the nations. Although the scholars emphasized the role of media to modernize the nation, Ethiopian Radio news gave less coverage to the theme of modernizing the rural people.

Surprisingly, although one of the main roles of media is clarifying the government development policies and strategies which are directly relevant to the public at large, Radio Ethiopia gave such news minimal attention. Only two news items in the selected material focused on clarifying government's policies and strategies.

Gebreamilake and Seid stated in interviews that the rural development news has the aim to highlight different themes such as to mobilize and create mass participation, to adopt new innovations and technologies, to motivate farmers to do their usual activities in a better way for further benefits, to be aware and prepared for further action, to report to

the officials or the public, to clarify policies and strategies, and to report the progress. However, informant journalists agreed that most rural issues are covered for the sake of reporting the progress of the government's activities without critical analysis to inform the society.

Informant journalist reiterated that news is sometimes written with a theme to motivate farmers and rural people to do their usual activities in a better way and to mobilize and create mass participation. It is unfortunate that journalists are not usually writing the news of rural development in the angle to adopt new ideas, innovations and technologies, and to mobilize and create mass participation. Moreover, it is a pity that Ethiopian Radio news, as the findings and the interviews show, hardly covered issues that clarify policies and strategies of rural development of the government.

Although journalists do not mention the news, which are mostly read for the sake of informing the public and the officials, it was ranked in the first list of the SPSS findings. There is a discrepancy between the news the journalists argue that they put most emphasis on (to motivate farmers for further actions) and the news stories that the content analysis discovered actually were given most attention (to uncritically report the progress of the activities and the projects).

Development news should concentrate on the issues, alternatives and opportunities in using modern methods, training and technology to advance agricultural output (O'Connell 1996), however, the findings of the research shows that Ethiopian Radio gave modest attention for the theme of using new methods and technology for productivity during the sample time.

To motivate farmers and society in general were seen at large in the business reporting next to reporting to the officials and the public. This might be because most business reports were focused on market and crops' prices. These reports were deliberately formed to encourage farmers either to supply or reserve their crops.

In the rural weather news stories, news items which focused on motivating farmers for further actions and to be aware and ready for another action got large coverage. Three news items of the weather stories aimed to motivate farmers for further action and five items informed farmers to be aware and ready for actions.

4.2.4.10. Tone of the News

During the one month sample time, all rural development news items, business reporting and weather announcement had a positive tone. The news items did not discuss the practical implementation of projects, advantage and disadvantage of development plans, and other background and related issues. Almost all the news items seemed to try to transfer positive images of the ongoing development projects and other activities carried out in the rural areas. None of the observed development news stories did critically evaluate, examine or report the relevance of development projects to national and local needs. Other negative impacts and side effects of the activities were not interpreted nor analyzed critically. The positive information forwarded from officials and other sources were merely presented 'as they were'. This means that all the news items of Ethiopian Radio were framed in a positive angle and tone. According to the informant journalists, if they report all the negative aspects of the development activities, the editors do not allow the news to air. Thus reporters censored themselves and refrained from framing the news critically.

Girma does not complain about covering news from a positive angle. He said since farmers are less educated and resistant to accept new activities, emphasizing positive aspects to the activities are advisable to curb what he saw as irrelevant opposition to them. However, it does not mean that the role of media is only telling about the advantages of the government projects. They should tell farmers about the possible challenges or disadvantages or side effects of the activities too.

In connection with this fact, Golan and Wanta (2000) cited in Teshome (2006) mention that positive media coverage does not always lead to positive public perception towards the specific issue.

As mentioned by Napoli (1996), covering an apparent success story, for instance to promote positive messages on health, environment, and child care and family planning do not necessarily result in the intended outcome. Even though the rural development news ideally should provide information on the development and its processes with information about the background and the impact of the project, the policy and speculate about future development (O'Connell 1996), all the news on rural development within the studied evening news of Ethiopian Radio, presented rural development as raw information without context, analysis or discussion.

Therefore, narrating the story without explanation and investigation is not enough. Moreover, covering issues only in a positive tone is not a guarantee for Ethiopian Radio news to create positive attitudes and perceptions in the listeners' minds. Thus, only raising positive issues of rural development projects led by government will not guarantee for the realization of the government policy or the over all development of the country.

4.2.5. Challenges of Covering Development Issues

As we have discussed above, the coverage of rural development issues is not proportional when we compare it with the attention officially given by the government. It is believed that there might be hindrance to cover rural issues which are mainly obtained from rural and remote areas. Reporters, sub-editors and editors, as well as the head of newsroom division and the head of national language department listed the main challenges they are facing in attempts to cover the core issues of development of the country (Interviews, Addis Ababa 2007).

The major challenges that the informants mentioned include poor infrastructure in the rural areas, lack of skilled and trained man power in the discipline and an ill-informed perception of journalists towards the development policy as well as the implementation of rural and agricultural activities. Due to these challenges, journalists in the station do not set the agenda as it is intended to cover issues that can promote, advocate and facilitate rural development.

To this end, informant journalists and respected heads of the Newsroom and the National Language Department suggested improving journalists' perception towards the rural development plan, policy and strategy as well as the government media editorial policy as a solution to curb the challenges. Moreover, creating a sense of responsibility and accountability among the journalists on the major development policies of the country could solve the major challenges that the station has faced. Providing journalistic training on major rural development plans and policies is also suggested as a solution. Here, although the problem of infrastructure is not part of the duty of the station, the interviewees suggested that if the government gives due attention to improve the quality and quantity of major facilities in the countryside, the coverage of rural development activities may improve accordingly (interviews 2007).

V. Chapter five

5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter consists of the summary of the findings and the possible conclusions.

5.1. Summary of the Findings

In a bid to explore the coverage of rural development issues in Ethiopia Radio news, the attention given to the sector by the government and by the editorial policy of government media, the importance the issues represent to the public, and media as an agenda setters were taken as the major criteria for the assessment.

1. The Ethiopian Radio newsroom gives a relatively small amount of coverage of rural development issues. Although the editorial policy and government development plan anticipated a lot from the station to cover the focal issues at large, the frequency and the coverage of the matters were not as they were intended. The frequency of 27 news items and the coverage of 2, 852 seconds during the month in question show that there is a certain lack of integration between the role of the media and the implementation of the development policy. Thus, coverage of the development news by Ethiopian Radio was incongruent with the government development plan. Moreover, the station as an agenda setter should give better and more frequent coverage on particular and salient issues like rural development. However, rural development items received minimal coverage, although it has large audience. Like rural development, the categories of rural market and rural weather did also receive minimal coverage.
 - Although the editorial policy considers significance and timeliness of the news as criteria for the selection, the station has to take into account the importance of the issues and its impact on the audience as well as the priority given by the government as a major criterion.
 - Moreover, development issues which are listed as purpose- driven shall be mentioned frequently. This is because Bindra (2004)

strongly highlighted that countries do not enjoy meaningful development without having a vibrant media sector.

2. Although they are few in numbers and frequency, rural development news got the second maximum air coverage of a single news story next to politics.
3. News items which were presented in the first orders have the potential to influence and impart salient information. Most rural development news items were aired in the middle of the news running order. Almost two-third of the news items of rural development were aired in the middle of the news. On the other hand political news items were to a very large degree aired as the very first news story in the evening news' schedule.
4. Although, as the major goals of journalism are to inform, educate and /or entertain the society, the majority of the rural development news items were purely informative. Ethiopian radio news almost didn't write news stories in an educative form that could enable people to acquire knowledge, Moreover to present news in a more entertaining manner, either in the form of hard news or soft news format were not heard at all within the selected material.
5. Repetitions and inclusions of news items in the headlines are an indicator of prioritizing the issue in question; however, they are not practiced in relation to the development news in the Ethiopian Radio evening news analyzed.
6. Even though farmers and development agents are the main contributors in relation to the implementations of the rural development sector, they were not used as sources in any of the news items of rural development during the research period. Higher officials were the dominant sources of the news, and hence, the flow of information was top to down.
7. As media practitioners, journalists have the responsibility of setting particular issues on the public agenda. However, Ethiopian Radio staff journalists did not set rural

development issues on the national agenda as they are intended to. More than half of the news items were covered from events which were organized by somebody else and none of the stories were results of processes of investigative journalism.

8. Although the main target of the station are explicitly stated to be to motivate farmers to adapt new ideas, technologies and innovations and to clarify policies and strategies and to create attachment among the people, few of the news item had the mentioned themes or were presented in a manner that inspired to these aims.
9. All the news items analyzed were covered in a positive tone although this paper has argued that the stories would have been qualitatively better from a professional journalism point of view, if they were covered from different angles, also critical, in order to give a wide range of different information about the activities of the government.
10. Wrong perception of journalists towards the government's development policy, and the editorial policy, poor infrastructure, lack of knowledge of the journalistic profession and the discipline were found to be the major challenges that hamper the coverage of rural issues accordingly.

5.2. Conclusion

From the findings of this study it can be concluded that the Ethiopian Radio's activities and the Editorial Policy are indifferent courses of action. The nexus between the coverage of the radio station and the development plan is not observable. This means the media are not in a place of supporting the development plan of the country.

The target audience of the station is to a large degree rural people, however they are not used as sources of information. Rural people are reduced to passive recipients of information. The higher officials and Minister and State Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development are the dominant sources.

The stories written in the newsroom are neither well framed nor analyzed critically. The messages are not targeted to bring development in the country. Besides although it would possibly have more important influence on the audience's perceptions if the news was presented in a more educative manner, almost all the news stories of rural development are purely informative.

From the findings of this analysis, it is possible to conclude that Ethiopian Radio is not in a position to promote rural development which is considered being the focal point of the country's development plan. Moreover, journalists are not only less likely set rural development issues on the national agenda, but they also tend to cover these issues poorly. In other words Ethiopian Radio news room is weak as an agenda setter in relation to development issues.

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Appendix A, Coding Sheet for the Whole News Items

1. Date _____
2. Number of news _____
3. Contents of each news

Running Order	politics	Social	Economics	Rural dev	sport	Foreign	weather		business		other
							rural	gen.	rural	gen.	

4. Total duration of the whole news _____
5. total duration of the agricultural and rural development news _____

Appendix B, Coding Sheet for Rural Development News

News _____ , Date _____

1. Does this news included in the head line

Yes	No

1.1. Does the news repeated

Yes	No

2. Placement _____ (write in number)

3. Aim of the news

Informing	Educating	Entertaining	all or two of the three

4. Type of the news

Hard news	Soft news

5. Form of the news

Bulletin news	Voice recorded new	Interview

6. How long it is _____

7. Sources of the news (who are the informant)

Farmers	DAs and other agricultural experts	Officials	NGOs	Foreign experts	others

8. Who covered the story?

Staff journalists	News agencies	Information bureaus

9. Where does the information obtained

Events	Press release	Interview	Press conference	Other documents

10. Ton of the news

Encouraging	Discouraging	Neutral

11. Theme of the news.

- A. To mobilize and create mass participation
- B. To adopt new innovations and technologies
- C. To motivate farmers to do their usual activities in a better way for further benefits.
- D. To be aware and prepared for further action
- E. To report to the officials or the public
- F. To clarify policies and strategies
- G. To report the progress
- H. Others

Appendix C, Question for Journalists in the Ethiopian radio

Your genuine answers are very crucial for my study findings. Thank you in advance.

1. Name
2. Position
3. Responsibilities in the station. Educational background
4. How long have you been working in the newsroom?
5. How do you get news ideas?
6. Since the station has nation wide coverage, do you focus on the rural and agricultural activities? If yes, how often?
7. How do you cover rural and agricultural development?
8. What are the themes of rural and agricultural activities covered in the news room?
What does the editorial policy say about the role of Ethiopian radio with regard to rural and agricultural development (in general development)?
9. What kinds of news are getting priority in the evening news hour?
10. What are the sources of the rural and agricultural development news? (you can mention more than one)
11. How long do you give for rural and agricultural development news?
12. Do you cover the rural and agricultural activities by your interest or by the assignment?
13. Whenever you cover development news, do you have a stated criteria or do you give a special attention for rural and development news? Or what are the criteria to select the news?
14. Do you have specialized skills of reporting rural and agricultural activities? What are the challenges of covering rural and agricultural development?
15. What must be the role of news to prevail development in the country?

Appendix D, Questions for Editors in Ethiopian Radio

1. Name
2. Position
3. Responsibilities in the station
4. Educational background
5. How long have you been working in the newsroom?
6. How do you get news ideas?
7. What are your major focuses on the newsroom?
8. What kinds of news are getting priority in the evening news hour?
9. In which order you list rural and agricultural issues in the running order of the news?
10. What are the sources of the rural and agricultural development news?
11. How long do you give for rural and agricultural development news?
12. If you use the news dispatched from the news agencies, do you rewrite them? Why? In what way you rewrite them?
13. What does the editorial policy say about the role of Ethiopian Radio with regard to development issues (rural and agricultural development)
14. What are the role of news to fulfill the editorial policy
15. What are the themes of the rural and agricultural development news you are covering?
16. What is your opinion on the coverage of rural and agricultural development in Ethiopian Radio newsroom?
17. What are the challenges of the station covering rural and agricultural development?
18. Do you assign reporters in rural areas and if yes how often?
19. What must be the role of news to prevail development in the country?
20. Why does the station give priority for the evening news?
21. What issue are most interests the journalists when they are assigned to report or when you assigned?

Appendix E, Question for Higher Officials of the Station

1. What kinds of news are getting priority in the evening news hour?
2. Why does the station give priority for the evening news?
3. Who are your audiences?
4. What are the main targets of the editorial policy, or which issues are giving much attention to be covered?
5. What does the editorial policy say about the role of Ethiopian Radio with regard to development issues (rural and agricultural development)
6. In which order you list rural and agricultural issues in the running order of the news?
7. How long do you give for rural and agricultural development news?
8. What are the prepositions that the editorial policy listed to cover the rural and agricultural activities in the news?
9. What must be the themes of the rural and agricultural development news to bring development in the country?
10. What is your opinion on the coverage of rural and agricultural development in Ethiopian Radio newsroom? Do you think that it is sufficient? Or what kind of improvement needed?
11. What are the challenges of the station covering rural and agricultural development?
12. What must be the role of news to prevail development in the country?
13. What issue are most interested by the journalists when you assigned or when they are assigned to report
14. What are the activities you are doing to correlate the editorial policy and the station activity
15. Some scholars stated that media institutions give most priority to political agenda. What are your comments to the trends the Ethiopia radio follows?

Appendix F, News Items in Relation to Running Order in Percentile

Running order	politics	social	economy	Rrural devlopment	Foreign	Business rural	Busines s general	Weath er rural	Weath er general	sport	Others
0											
1	70.0%	6.7%	13.3%	10.0%							
2	63.3%	6.7%	23.3%	6.7%							
3	50.0%	3.3%	30.0%	6.7%	10.0%						
4	43.3%	16.7%	3.3%	13.3%	23.3%						
5	20.0%	13.3%	10.0%	26.7%	26.7%						3.3%
6	36.7%	20.0%	6.7%	13.3%	23.3%						
7	13.3%	16.7%	16.7%		50.0%						3.3%
8	13.3%	3.3%	16.7%	6.7%	40.0%				16.7%		3.3%
9	17.1%		8.6%	2.9%	17.1%	8.6%	14.3%	8.6%	20.0%		2.9%
10	9.4%	9.4%	12.5%	3.1%	3.1%	18.8%	12.5%		12.5%	15.6%	3.1%
11	3.4%	3.4%	6.9%		13.8%	13.8%	17.2%		13.8%	27.6%	
12	5.0%				15.0%	15.0%	20.0%	5.0%	20.0%	20.0%	
13		7.1%			7.1%	21.4%		7.1%	14.3%	42.9%	
14						14.3%	14.3%		14.3%	57.1%	
15						33.3%	33.3%			33.3%	
16										100.0%	
Total	25.3%	7.5%	10.9%	6.6%	16.3%	5.1%	4.9%	1.2%	6.6%	7.1%	1.2%

Appendix G. Names of the Interviewees

A reporter, Ethiopian Radio evening news, anonymous, May 14, 2007 in Ethiopia Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

A senior reporter, Ethiopian Radio evening news, anonymous, May 14, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

A sub editor, Ethiopian Radio evening news, anonymous, May 13, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

An editor, Ethiopian Radio evening news anonymous, May 12, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

Seid Muhe, Head of News Room division, May 13, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

Gebreamilake Teka, Head of national language in Ethiopian Radio, May 12, 2007 at Ethiopian Radio compound, Addis Ababa.

Girma Damite, Acting Head of public relation bureau in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, on May 21,2007 in Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Addis Ababa.

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 acknowledged.

Name_____

Advisor_____

Signature_____

Name_____

Date of Submission_____

Signature_____

Place of Submission_____

Date_____