Comparative Study on the Practice of University Based and Municipal Based Community Radio Stations in Ethiopia: The Case of Debre Markos University and Finote Selam Community Radio Stations

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ABSTRACT: *This study is on the practice of university and municipal based community radio stations in Ethiopia. The study focuses on owners' intervention and community members' participation in the administration and production of news and programmes. The study aimed at exploring the challenges and opportunities in the practice of community radio underpinning ownership of municipality and university. Qualitative research methodology has employed to conduct the study. The finding of the study showed that university based community radio stations are financed and operated by the university that are considered as the opportunity of Debre Markos University community radio. Due to this, there is high intervention of University management that hinders the autonomous decision making endeavor of the radio station. The study also found out high turnover rate of volunteer's is a challenge of university-based community radio. On the other hand, municipal-based community radio stations face major challenge like poor management, poor program quality, lack of finance, technical problem, facility problem and lack of qualified human power. Moreover, the study found out that imposition of limit on air time utilization and the regulatory bodies' dense intervention and malfunction are common across radio stations. It is conclude that community radio stations are a fate of the leaders to manipulate ordinary citizens. Therefore, it is recommended that the regulatory body, Ethiopian broadcast authority and board of stations should scrutinize the ownership, control and participation of the people in the process of program design and administration.*
Key Words: Community Radio, University based, Municipality based.

I.   Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Community media are now widely recognized by government and international development community both for its reach and practice. This media serve poor and marginalized communities and have received grand support from the community. Community media are dynamic entities, in which some people see them as process or communities using technology to take control of their own development while others see as more as communication tools or institutes organized around information and communication technologies. In general, community radio is a hybrid unique communication process shaped by some characteristics and distinct culture, history and reality of the community it serves (Lubulu, 2011).

The personal and unique character of radio makes it one of the most appealing and universal mass media for participatory communication and development (Tomaselli & De Villiers, 1998:147). It has the capacity to reach large audiences, both young and old, including those in remote, underdeveloped and impoverished areas of the developing world (Tavhiso, 2009). Community media is characterized by localism, diverse participation, storytelling and deliberation and empowerment (Johnson, 2007). In relation to this, Serveas (2007) underlines the four principles of community broadcasting as ownership control, community service, community participation and a non-profit business.

Specifically, community radio gives room for the community to participate in the program package and production. It is also argued that radio could be the supreme possible communications apparatus in public life especially in developing countries like Ethiopia where there is a limitation in choice of media (McKay, 2009). As Daniel Miller (1998) puts it 'Tuning into the radio becomes a sort of tuning into sociality'. Located in the borderland between public discourse and private enjoyment, radio can be a device for communication and a

medium for educational practice and experimentation. It may also serve as a tool for propagating educational and research outputs.

UNESCO (2003) report on media and communication encouraged the use of broadcast technology in many similar, isolated and impoverished developing countries. Thus, the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority has already engaged in putting such broadcasting technologies into practice in its educational programs.The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) is the independent federal statutory authority responsible for the licensing and regulation of the press in Ethiopia (Proclamation No.533/2007).

According to the authority community radio in Ethiopia is expanding alarmingly more than public/state and commercial broadcasting services. Currently, there are 42 community radio stations licensed from Ethiopian broadcasting station (EBA, 2017). Thus, the study intended to investigate the major practical differences of community radio stations operated at the university and municipality in Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Ethiopian broadcast authority Proclamation no. 533/2007explains that community radio can be territorial or geographical township, village, and district. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory, can have a community radio. According to the Ethiopian broadcast authority report (2017), more than 42 community radio stations have licensed, among these 28 of them are already started broadcasting service. Although community radio numbers continue to increase, as different research output indicated there are various challenges which obstacle them.

The hypothesis of the researchers is that the community stations owned and operated by the university or municipality is not for community because the one who is finance and supply facilities are dominantly use a mouth piece. Thus, the researchers tried to see it in a comparative study to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

Several studies have been carried out on the practice, challenges, prospects and generally community radio stations in Ethiopia. For instance, Matiwos (2006) carried out a study on, "the challenges and prospects of community radio in Ethiopia: the case of Harar community radio". The study found out that world view concerning various challenges encountered by campus-community radio stations. The findings clearly identify, it is not possible to take Harar community radio as a well-organized community radio station. However, the radio station still has the support and trust of its audience.

Another researcher, Getahun (2006) conducted a study entitled on "The theory and practice of Community Radio in Ethiopia: The Case Study of Sidama and Kore Radio Development Initiative." The research tried to assess the theory and practice of community radio in Ethiopia. Lack of legislation in the past, political interference, shortage of finance, lack of written and audio materials about the community; shortage of skilled human power as well as low level of awareness about the concept of community radio are among the challenges in the development initiative of the two stations. Likewise, Destaw (2012) has conducted a study on the practice of *Kombolcha* community radio. The study examined the practice of *Kombolcha* Community Radio. It provided good access, but the quality of the signal and the representation of the community culture in the output of the station's programs were found to be poor. The participation of the community was also found to be poor in the overall activity of the station. Furthermore, Kassahun (2012) carried out a study on a topic, "Community Radio for Social Development: The Case of Jimma Community Radio" and found out that Jimma community radio has a great impact on the community's development.

As long as our effort went, there is no research so far on the comparative study between university and municipality based community radio stations in relation to community participation, ownership and program issues. Thus, the researchers tried to explore the challenges and opportunities in the practice of community radio underpinning ownership of municipality and university particularly, on Debre Markos University and, Finote Selam municipality community radio stations.

Having this in mind the study tried to address the following research questions:
1. What are the challenges associated with university based and municipality community radio?
2. Is there any relationship between community radio ownership and practical challenges?
3. How to discharge the challenges faced in community radio stations?
4. What are prospects appreciated by both Debre Markos university and Finote Selam community radio stations?

1.3 Objective of the study

Generally, the study aimed at exploring the challenges and prospects in the practice of community radio in the case of Debre Markos University and Finote Selam community radio stations. Specifically, the study attempted to:

➢ Investigate challenges associated with university and Municipality based community radio stations;
➢ Trace the relationship between the ownership and practical challenges;
➢ Explore the prospects in the practice of community radio;
➢ Recommend strategies to overcome challenges in due course of the practice.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study will draw the attention of government and the concerned body towards solving loopholes of university and municipality based radio stations in Ethiopia. The study will also have immense significance to researchers in the area by providing a foundational basis for further studies into challenges of both types of radio stations in Ethiopia. It will also definitely add resource to available literature and will be used to promote informed decision making and policies to the regulatory bodies and guide them in the right direction on matters concerning both types of community radio broadcasting.

II.   Literature Review

This chapter reviews literatures encompassing the definition and functions of community radio, and challenges and prospects claimed by different scholars in the area.

2.1 What is CommunityRadio?

Community radio can be defined differently by different authors. But most of them seem to agree on features like geographical areas; popular participation in the making of programs and ensuring their voices are heard; the venture is not for profit-making through commercials; and involvement of volunteers in running the programs with only a handful of permanently employed staff.

Community radio has different nomenclatures across the world. Predominantly referred to as community radio in Africa and the Caribbean, the term alternative radio is used in Latin America and the United States. In Europe, it is also known as free or association radio and in Australia it is called ethnic or aboriginal radio (Girard 2001: VI). More recently, Rodriguez (2001) coined the term citizens media in an attempt to overcome binary categories traditionally used to theorize alternative media. While used widely, the term alternative suggests its own lesser relationship to dominant media. British theorist John Downing (2001) prefers the term radical media to refer to any small scale media that express views alternative to hegemonic perspectives. The African Charter of Broadcasting, Windhoek (2001) defines community broadcasting as broadcasting which is for, by and about the community whose ownership and management is, representative of the community that pursues a social development agenda and which is non-profit.

Community radio should be managed or controlled by one group, by combined groups, or of people such as women, children, fishing folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens. Community radio should also be accessible and be neither the expression of the political power nor the expression of the capitalist. It should continue to be controlled democratically by the population at the grassroots and serves on the bases of non-commercial relationship with its audiences. The mission of community radio should be group development as it informs, motivates discussion, entertains and broadcasts music and poetry that regenerate the collective soul (Serves, 1999:260).

Community radio should have the aspects of non-profit making, community ownership and control as well as community participation. Community radio is neither the expression of political power nor the expression of the capitalist; but it is the expression of the population. Michel (Delorme, 1983). Community radio is an act of participation in the process of community creation. Howley (2005) refers to community media as grassroots or locally oriented media access initiatives predicated on a profound sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content, dedicated to free expression and participatory democracy and committed to enhancing community relations and promoting community solidarity. Kasoma (2002: 22) defines community radio as a sound broadcasting station that serves a specific section of a society known as a community, which is a collection of people, usually living in the same area, with common interests that include having a common history, traditions and cultural background.

Community broadcasting helps people accumulate and integrate knowledge that they can use to make decisions. It involves people in the community in the processing, dissemination, utilization and evaluation of information. This is based on the assumption that the local people are not only the recipients of development efforts but are also the pioneers/initiators of development as well. The overall philosophy of community broadcasting is, therefore, the self-motivated participation of people in the use of radio to facilitate and speed up socialimprovement. It is also a form of people's participation and people's empowerment.

2.2 Characteristics of community radio

Different writers explained the characteristics of community radio in different ways. From those some of them are following (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001; Rama and Louw, 1993).
1. The restricted circuit of coverage
2. Absence of external restrictions
3. Equal opportunity of access for the community members
4. Funding system
5. Unprofessionalism
6. Community Ownership and Control

2.3 Importance community Radio

As scholars in the area of communication argued, one of the most important reasons for having community radio is to enable community members to speak to themselves and to those outside their community about the issues that matter to them. Village or community radio can also help to achieve the following:
1. A community radio can help to organize the community.
2.   A community radio can easily become the medium for mobilizing people to solve common problem or address a common issue.
3.   A community radio can bring development to the community. Information about health and disease control can be discussed on radio with community members interacting with health workers.
4.   A community radio helps a community to realize the abundant resources it has for solving its own problems.
5.   It expands the list of options that a community has. For example, if there is an invasion by birds in a farming community, a community radio can organize a group discussion where members of the community discuss various options for tackling the menace.It can bring government's attention to the needs of the people. It can be a medium for addressing and solving the problem posed by insecurity, poverty, natural disasters, harmful cultural practices, infrastructural decay and so on.
6.   A community radio will bring cultural development and relevant entertainment to a community. Very often, people in the rural areas are made to listen to foreign music on commercial radio. Local artistes will feature prominently on community radio for the enjoyment of the community. This will encourage artistes to do more. Community radio can serve as a way to preserve and renew a community's or a people's cultural heritage.
7. Among other benefits, community radio addresses the need of the individuals also. It is often a source of relaxation, entertainment, advice and information to individuals to help them in making decisions. The medium of communication increases the understanding of rural people and enriches their knowledge of issues while at the same time spurring their creativity. Because of its contents which must include successful people who matter, community radio guides social behavior by offering role models. When one looks at these benefits to the nation, there is only one conclusion (Udoakah, 1998).

2.4 Challenges of Radio Broadcasting in Ethiopia

Jemal (2013) states that broadcasting in Ethiopia faces three basic problems related to that strategy of radio distribution, which directly affect its effectiveness while using radio as a tool for the education of the rural people in community development efforts. The first problem is that, "there is no interaction between producers and consumers before programs are planned, produced and broadcast. The type of radio programs and their contents are decided, planned, and broadcasted by the experts and journalists (radio managers, program producers and reporters) who are confined themselves within the studio's compound. In this case, the broadcast system follows a giver- taker pattern, where radio broadcasters (educated elite) are virtually taken as not only the sources of information, knowledge and wisdom but also the givers while audiences are considered as takers (Ibid). Second, these programs are conceived in the studio, with very little or no consultation with specialist

agencies and virtually no coordination between them and the communication specialists. As this strategy does not allow audience participation and involvement, it also has no room for the consultation of various stakeholders, i.e. education and development agencies, who are engaged directly in the development endeavors. The third problem is related to the unavailability of guidance at the reception end. The open broadcast strategy follows "a shot in-the-dark approach" to radio programming

2.5 Debre Markos University and surrounding community Radio

According to the editorial policy (2015) Debre Markos University Community Radio FM 97.7 is a radio station established under the university to serve the community within and around the university. The radio station has issued under Broadcasting Proclamation No 533/07 Article, 28 radios broadcasting license and registered under No 33/2007 with ownership of community radio and allotted frequency of 97.7. Debre Markos University and surrounding community radio got a broadcasting license from Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority on June 2015 and start broadcasting on June 2016.

Debre Markos University and surrounding community Radio produce and broadcast their own programs and participate in operating the station. It is community space for people to meet and collaborate the university staff and surrounding community. Participants in the radio get satisfied in making radio in a unique fashion and also help to transform community life (Editorial policy, 2015).

The station has a plan to givean opportunity to the community to fill the voices overlooked by the mainstream radio stations ownership among a handful of big media corporations. The radio has initiated the youth to actively participate in the programs. Besides, it serves the community as a platform to over its feeling, opinion and views. Debre Markos University as a major stakeholder uses the station to disseminate its philosophy, to inform and educate the community (plan document, 2016).

Debre Markos University and surrounding community Radio Stations has a daily six hours transmission. According to the editorial policy (2015) no one can make money from the community radio. The community radio station, young and old, with all abilities, backgrounds, and interests, can come together to make a difference to their community. The communities they serve, and the groups and individuals within those communities, gain a voice with which to be heard. They gain diversity in the programming available, and they gain a forum for sharing experience, discovering fresh perspectives, and supporting community activity (plan document, 2016).

2.5 Finote Selam Municipality and surrounding Community radio

According the editorial policy Finote Selam municipality community radio (2015), the establishment process starts and gets license from the Ethiopian broadcast authority in the end of 2007E.C. The nameof the radio station is Finote Selam municipality radio FM 98.8. After the construction and installation of the equipment on 29 August 2015, the transmission trial is started by broadcasting music on air. The main services of the community radio is transmitting information through radio and provide a development forum for the community; encourage participatory community development; promote active involvement of underprivileged groups such as women and young people; intensify the sharing of information within the community of West Gojjam. The customers of the station are mainly the society of Finote Selam town administration. The station is administered and led by board, which incorporates representatives of different members of the community. The board members comprised of seven members, who are elected without any consideration of qualification other than being members of the community.

III. Research Methodology

This chapter presented the method adopted in conducting this research. The study area for the study is Debre Makos University and Finote Selam community radio stations. These community radio stations were purposively selected since the researchers are familiar with them and they are easily accessible. The researchers have employed qualitative research approach to explore the challenges and prospects of university and municipality based community radio stations. The qualitative methodological approach is used in conducting the research because it provides rich and detailed information in the local context. In this regard Flick argued as:

"Qualitative research is oriented towards analyzing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts (Flick, 2002: 13)."

3.1 Tools of Data Gathering
A qualitative research methodology provides a holistic and inductive approach which gives for the researcher the opportunity to develop a descriptive, rich understanding and insight into of the beholders. Therefore, in this research the researcher used in-depth interviews and document analysis as a tool of data collection.

3.1 Interview
Polit and Hungle (1991) describe interview as a method of collection of data involving one person (the interviewer), asking another person (the respondent) questions and these are conducted either face-to-face or by telephone) and now, also through email). The purpose of this is to acquire information from the respondent. As Lindolf (1995) argues that the most important way of understanding others and their activities is by asking them. Interviews are, therefore, the most widely used method of data collection (Jensen, 2002:40). Data collection through interviews is advantageous in its high response rates, control over the interview process by the interviewer, who is able to put the respondent at ease by using effective interpersonal skills. It is also possible for ambiguous questions to be clarified by the interviewer during the interview process. Furthermore, respondents are encouraged to expand on their own experiences when the interviewer uses open-ended questions (Appleton, 1995).
To this effect, the researchers have conducted in-depth interview with managers and news room staffs (reporters and a technician) of both radio stations. It also interviewed the board chairman of both community radio stations. In due course of the interview four interviewees from Debre Markos University and four from Finote Selam community radio stations were interviewed. The researchers interviewed the manager and board chairs of the radio station in order to get in-depth data about what the radio stations practical strategies are and how they have been employed to meet the station's goals. For the reporters and technicians, they include in the interview in order to deal directly with the programs and activities in the station.

3.2 Document Review
This method acted as a supplementary to the data that gathered via interview in order to triangulate. Although Sarantakos (1998:277) warns that documents maybe biased since they represent the views of their authors. He further notes that they are advantageous because they enable the researcher to acquire information more easily and faster. With this method, the researchers able to obtain ground information from both community radio past and on-going documents. The document analysis was conducted with a number of documents and publications that provide pertinent information background knowledge about the work and activities of the radio station.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis
The data mainly was qualitative data in which it collected through interview and analysis of documents. The data were gathered by using tape-recorder was transcribed data and then the relevant data were categorized for analysis. The categorization is normally made based on their relevance and adequacyto the essential ideas of the research questions raised in this study. Finally, all the data were arranged logically and present with respect on the central research questions.

IV.   Data presentation and Analysis

This section of the study basically presents and analyzes data that have been collected via interview and document analysis in the perspective of challenges and prospects of community radio both Finote Selam and Debre Markos university community radio stations. The researchers have presented the data thematically in a qualitative method of analysis.

4.1 Challenges of DMU Community Radio

The first question is about the challenges that Debre Markos University community radio faces in due course of reportorial tasks. All the interviewees stated that the issue of programing, the intervention of university management and volunteer's turnover are major challenges.
As the news room staffs responded Debre Markos University community radio station faces different challenges. According to the station manager "the primary role of community based university radio stations is to broadcast alternative programs that are not typically address on commercial and/or national radio. However,

the programs in the station are beyond the specific community's interest. In the production and broadcasting process, students and members of the community are not involved at large".

Another worthy issue in the station is the manipulation of the community radio station as mouth piece of university management. According to the data from the reporter,

> *"Our station is growing drastically to ensure maximum community participation, so that it does turn into a mouth piece of people in power. Our media closes to the community in the form of grassroots press, but still there is a manipulation of the top management of the university that they need to frame what issue treated in the program and news content"(Personal Interview, January 2019).*

The above statement is opposite to the principle of community radio that has mentioned by Teer-Tomaselli and Villiers (1998). According to them the major objective of community radio is to encourage widespread community participation in broadcasting, to provide an opportunity for horizontal communication between individuals and groups in the community and to stimulate more free and open debate of community issues. It is also contrast to the editorial policy of the radio station. The editorial policy document (2016) stated that the station has its own board members organized from different community members but is operated under the university president office. Sometimes the university management intervenes on the program content when the station covers negative side of the university.

Additionally the station manager stated that,

> *"As a principle the radio station has its own structure; one executive who oversee policy and the general direction of the radio station, and another who concerns with the day to day operation of the radio station, but practically the radio station is responsible only for the president office of the university" (Personal Interview, January 2018).*

One of the reporters of the station stated that the program of Debre Markos University community radio is not substantially different from state owned national and regional stations in the country. One of the justifications to say this is that the dominance of entertainment programs and government office and event oriented news stories.

4.2 Opportunities of DMU Community Radio

The study revealed that radio program producers in Debre Markos University community radio have a strong appreciation of the importance of engaging their community and exploiting different strategies to engage community of listeners with agricultural and health programs. There is a community voice on air, which encapsulates pre-recorded interviews with community members as well as live phone-in programs as the station manager stated.

The researcher asked how volunteers have participated in the station. The station manager addressed that every interested volunteer do have the right to work in the station voluntarily with some technical assistance from the reporters of the station and capacity building trainings.

In addition to this, the station manager also pointed out,

> *"The station tries to increase the participation of community members across departments in program production; it could go further than phone-call to make the participation more viable. In order to maximize this effort the station scheduled programs that entertains volunteers and amateurs across departments to engage in the production process" (personal Interview, January 2018).*

Another opportunity for the station is the finance system, which is fully financed by the University. The 2017 annual budget document indicated that the university is allocated more than two million Birr for operation and administration of the station. Such type of budget allocation allows the university to have dominant interest over the radio station; the community's interest could be marginalized. Howley (2005) explained that community radio is characterized by access, public participation in production and decision making and, predominantly financing by community. However, covering the full expenditure of the station is led to eradicating of the autonomous right of the radio station and high conflict of interest between the station's editorial policy and the university management.

4.3 Challenges of Finote Selam Community Radio

According to the respondents of interview and annual report (2017), Finote Selam municipality community radio station faces many challenges. Those challenges are:

1. *Poor Management*: the management of the station in board members makes the management shallow and fragmented. Because board members are looking the issues of the community radio as extra-task. Due to this, many decisions are not made on time and at time of necessity.

2. *Poor program quality*: Challenges of community radio in Finote Selam municipality community radio is unable to produce program content. As the board chairman stated, "This happens due to unemployment of skilled journalist and finding volunteers besides like of skilled practitioners" (Personal Interview, January 2018). The production quality of programs is below the standard; community agendas are not yet addressed. There is a vast disparity in the quality output of broadcast generated community level and that generated to West Gojjam as a whole. As editorial documents (2015) indicated that Finote Selam municipality community radio station heavily depend on volunteers who are preparatory and college students working in their free time, when they graduate, they would leave the station. According to the station manager, "the feedbacks especially given by the listeners are treated with caution because the station is operated not professionally and everything that the listeners would like to be aired goes hand in hand with the stations".

3. **Financial problem:** As the manager notes that one of the biggest challenges facing Finote Selam municipality community radio is how to sustain itself financially. The station often struggle to attract advertisements in West Gojjam zone listeners. However, it is not successful because the agricultural communities in the rural area do not have much income and culture to pay for community radio. Thus, the station unable to pay license and renewal fees for the Ethiopian broadcast authority as well as the newsroom professionals do not get paid their salary regularly.

4. **Technical problem:** although the station is established with the close assistance of the municipality technical facilities needs more maintenance and consecutive update. However, the community radio station this is a great challenge to maintain the equipment easily. Tinny problems may be waiting for months and such type of problem interrupts the program transmission for days.
    According to the technician, "the station program interrupts frequently up due to technical problems. Moreover, the station and the practitioners do not have a guaranteed security". Additionally, the board chairman stated the station faced attacks from a political protest in the town last year. In this case, the transmitter has broken down and the station programs has been stopped for months" (personal interview, 2018). The researchers tried to trace from a station letter as Finote selam municipality community radio stop broadcasting from August 2016 to October 2017. Besides some technical issues of the station, the transmitter capability is low due to the location and tower point is in a low land area. Due to this, the transmitter cannot reach the expected areas. Madamombe (2005) points out that "Their transmitters may reach only a few miles, but community radio stations are enabling isolated communities across Africa to voice their own concerns. Thus, the community catchment area should be addressed in the angle of the transmitter.

5. **Transportation and other service related problem**: Transportation problem is the major challenge for Finote Selam community radio. As the reporter stated, only below 10% of the contents of the radio programs are collected from the field because of transport is not available to reach many areas. As majority of the reporters are voluntary students they face challenges to work in the station due to transport problem.

6. **Lack qualified human power:** Almost all volunteers have not undergone any specific training in issues of community radio broadcasting. The general audio production is given in-house training arranged by the station itself. As the station technician stated,
    "Our community radio shall employ people who have the expertise in radio broadcasting.
    Almost all of the volunteers who are recruited at this radio station do not have the expertise
    and as such they lose touch with the listeners".
Additionally in the interview, the manager of the station mentioned that "the community radio problem is shortage of qualified human power. Theoretically, community radio is run by volunteer journalists from the community; in the beginning the volunteers can serve the station. However, many voluntaries leave the station an d search for better opportunities and jobs somewhere after they got experiences" (Personal interview, January 2018).

4.4 Opportunities Finote Selam Community Radio

As the data found from the station manager, the participation of the community in program design creates a sense of community ownership. The station believed that ownership is also influenced by the origins and status of the radio station within the community and the production team itself. Notably, the efforts made by the program producers to engage the community; their outreach skills and experience, and whether or not they are community members themselves. When the station manager explain this issue,

> *"When the community believes as the radio program is not relevant to them, they will not listen. So, program producers tried to ensure the relevance of program content to listeners. The listeners also perceive as the content is relevant and inevitable to listen"*
> *(Personal Interview, January 2019).*

Lastly, the manager stated that sense of community ownership, which was achieved by ensuring community voices are included in the program content because it helped to reassure listeners that the program content is relevant to them. The listeners are more likely to listen and learn from one of their community members (through peer learning) than from experts. The researchers tried to collect interview documents from listeners (either live or pre-recorded). The study reaffirms that the programs allow listeners to interact with producers, give feedback on previous programs and suggest ideas for future programs.

The reporter added that,

> "Our *Community radio station normally receives considerable numbers of letters and/or telephone calls from listeners. Feedback from the audience about the station's programs is crucial to maintain and sustain the programmes quality. This process is very useful to the station personnel and also to the audience in order to reinforce the community-station linkage"* (Personal Interview, January 2019).

The researchers want to know the participation of the community in the program production. In line to this, the reporter stated that the radio program producers usually find ways of encouraging more ordinary people and grassroots leaders to take part, either as guests or contributors on the talk shows, phone-ins and other programs.

4.5 Common Challenges for both Community Radio

In this part of analysis the common challenges for both community radio stations are discussed. As participants responded community radio stations initiates the community to listen it since they do not have alternative media around there though the quality of the program is under inquiry.

According to the Debre Markos University community radio board chairman, the success of both radio stations can be explained by the accessibility of the medium; both illiterate and preliterate community members can listen to broadcasts in their Amharic language. In both community radio stations program areas of community's interest cover agricultural issue, health and educational system of the community. Butthere is no communication with community on the program content at Debre Markos University community radio.

1. Interruption of broadcasting

Both station managers noted that the stations are aired for limited broadcasting hours due to power outage and lack of petrol for alternative power from generator. They said some programs are repeated for several days because the producers do not produce new contents as a result of power supply (electricity) or nobody on ground to anchor and due to insufficient manpower. There have been times when news stories repeated for days and copy from other government and commercial media outlets because there was nobody to write news.

The interviewees further noted that the regular broadcasting time of the station is very short compared to the time they should have been running due to the low capacity of the transmitter which eventually shutdown after been overworked. They also said if the station needed to extend the broadcast time it needs more hands to enable the station run shifts, since the same people would not be taxed to work all day and all week. Moreover, the interviewees also noted that, "the station was almost known for starting transmission late schedule, which was characterized by lateness of volunteers on before the station's opening time or probably just lack of motivation from them to work for the station".

2. Ethiopian broadcast Authority intervention

Despite community radio stations autonomous operation is expected free, high intervention of the Ethiopian broadcast authority, the regulatory body of Ethiopian press, is viable. Both radio stations are regulated by the external authorities, as Finote Selam community radio station manager pointed out, regulations are extended to content limitation and thematic area identification. According to Debre Markos University community radio station manager, "there is an external restriction from Ethiopian broadcast authority instead controlled by the

target community in which we represents" (personal interview, January 2018). That is, members of the target community are the key players in all aspects of the station's activities, and they have authority either to suspend or cancel the license of the radio station". The community is involved in different ways ranging from policy making and management to giving comments and opinions to shape the program productions according to the need and pre-dispositions of the community (Rama and Louw, 1993).

3. Malfunction of board members
According to the editorial policy of both community radio stations, the management board is organized to assist the managerial roles and functions of community radio. However, it is only functional to listen only annual report and plan of the station superficially. Practically, the management board general assembly summit is taking place biannually aimed at assessing the radio station's activities. If the activities do not meet the standard required by the General Assembly and some lapse is feasible on quality in line to the standards comments are shown. But practically the board and the General assembly is not functional according to managers' response. According to Finote Selam community radio station manager,

> *"The board members of the station are coming to us when somebody, (government communication office and, Ethiopian broadcast authority ....) ask them to attend meeting or when they want to visit what is going on. This is the only option that Finote Selam municipality community radio board members are going to the station" (personal Interview, January 2019).*

The board is not meant to represent the community interest in daily operation of the station activity. This may affect the community's participation in molding the content of the radio programmes and to use the station as a means of sending information. The strong point what both managers stated that comments and criticisms related to content are actively encouraged.

V.   Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion
Based on the data analyzed and the findings, the researchers forward the following conclusion remarks.
- The practice of community radio in relation to community participation is very low and it is not different from the mainstream media platforms in both forms of community radio stations.
- University based community radio station provides an opportunity to the students of department of Journalism and communication students to learn in practice, which is measured as a bi-lateral function for the students and the station.
- In term sense of ownership, municipality based community radio station is better in participating the community members in the program due to this, there are considerable number of letters and/or telephone calls from listeners. Such type of feedback enables the radio program to make sharp decisions on designing the content and format. While the programs of University-based community radio stations do not substantially different from mainstream commercial and public national and/or regional stations in the country.
- The basic themes of both community radio stations are agricultural issue, health and educational system of the community.
- University-based community radio station face high level of intervention the university management and it is another fate of the government appointed people with the power instead of the voiceless.
- In both radio stations, entertainment programs in general and music from the library in particular are highly dominated because of lack of working at field reports.
- Challenges like lack of transportation service for the reporters; poor management; shortage of qualified human power; poor program quality, shortage of finance and lack of employee journalist are major challenges that municipality based community radio.
- Meanwhile, the over control of the regulatory body in determining on the transmission capacity and time is the substantial challenge that both radio stations face in common. In addition to this, the managerial structure and the functionality are under quest in both radio stations.
- Although community radio encourages engaging volunteers in the task there is no any positive enforcement mechanisms i.e. incentives to endorse their service.
- Generally, the study concludes as the community radios are not for community and they are not operated by the will of the community. They are really another tool to manipulate the community. Therefore, it is for the University management and the town administration.

5.2 **Recommendation**

Based on the above conclusion, the researchers recommend the following strategies to discharge the challenges that community radio practitioners face during the operation.

1. In order to overcome managerial problems the management of the stations should incorporate the representatives from all community groups; politicians, farmers, scholars, youth, students etc.
2. Regular pre-service and in-service training is useful to minimize the lacking of skilled human power.
3. Financial problems lead to violation of independence because it leads to conflict of interest. Therefore, it is organizing listening group members and tried to collect money from the community members and commercials shall be practiced in order to solve the problem.
4. Resource related problems should be solved during the time of establishment. Budgeting once and establishing makes the radio stations act independently. Thus, it should be operated and the necessary capital should be allocated once and the stations must run alone. And also it is crucial to outsource some air times for sponsors and also designing a project with partners is crucial.
5. Fundamentally, the radio stations are opportunities to get informed citizenary in the university and the town. Therefore, the management of the university and town should subsidize the stations without interference; the subsides should not to get favor.

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