

The Role of Media in Social Development: The Case of South Radio and Television Agency, Bonga Branch in Decha Woreda, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of media in the social development of the community in South Radio and Television Agency Bonga Branch Radio (BBR) in Decha woreda, Kafa Zone, Southern Ethiopia. The study addresses the contribution of media in changing the audience's knowledge, attitude, and practices in the community's social activities. To address the objectives, the researcher applied mixed research approaches and descriptive design. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study and analyzed through qualitative and quantitative methods. The data were collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. To determine the sample size for the study, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed. Three Kebeles were selected purposively and 106 respondents participated in the study. The findings show that Bonga branch radio station is contributing to social development through influencing the behavior (attitude, knowledge, and practice) of the community. The study also reveals that the acceptance of the role of radio in the community is high since it transmits its different programs and news content in the ethnic language of the community in which the members can easily understand. Even though the media is playing its role in the community's social development, different challenges have been observed in the branch radio station. Based on the finding, recommendation has been forwarded that the local government bodies should change their outlook towards the media organization. The media management should take the improving measures, such as the journalists and technician capacity building, the transmission coverage of the radio station, and revision of the news and program content format that will enable the media to meet the satisfaction of the audience.

Keywords: *Bonga, Ethnic Language, Media, Radio Broadcast, Social Development*

Introduction

The role of media in development lies in their capacity and capability to teach, manipulate, sensitize, and mobilize people through information dissemination. The media also chart a course for the public in line with the agenda-setting theory, thereby creating in the minds of the people, issues that should be viewed as a priority, including development programs. The media lead to the formation of behavioral change through establishing values for the society or nation and thereby building a climate of change in the society or nation. This involves the dissemination of news and information in response to a basic human need, which is the "right to know" (Lang, 2001, p.171). Better-informed citizens are more empowered, which in turn encourages politicians to be responsive. Besides, media provide mechanisms for feedback from the citizens on matters that affect them. Community participation in a development activity

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with full knowledge of its purpose will allow the community members to grow individually and as a community (Park, 2014, p.39).

For development to be just and sustainable, citizens must productively participate in the decisions that shape their lives. Participation requires an informed citizenry. A free and independent media supply timely and relevant information to citizens allowing them to change their behavior and to demand higher social standards for society. Access to information helps citizens hold their governments accountable by providing easy access to information to users of public services; the media empower citizens to demand quality and accountability from their governments (Lang, 2001, p. 99).

Media catalyze positive changes in society by providing information that influences public opinion. Media lead to an increase in awareness, and they change the behavior across social issues. Numerous studies over the last 40 years from around the world have provided evidence of the catalytic role played by the media in providing information that influences public opinion leading to social change. The impacts can be seen across social issues such as education, public health (including maternal health and child behavior), and climate change. Well-executed media campaigns reach audiences *via* a medium they pay attention to, leading to increased knowledge and changes in behavior. If information access is linked positively with the target population there will be a probability of higher participation and awareness creation for environmental degradation (levels of literacy, information access, and equality, *etc.*) (Lang, 2001, p.101).

The establishment of media especially radio in Ethiopia started during the imperial period. As an information source of local and national events, the Ethiopian national radio serves the people, and the establishment of the radio station in *Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region* (SNNPR) is a recent phenomenon. To serve the SNNPR, the first radio station FM 100.2 opened in 1998 (Ethiopian Calendar) at the regional level. Currently, different radio stations with a variety of ethnic languages are serving through educating, entertaining, and informing the people of the region. South Radio and Television Agency is a media that belongs to the public with ten branches around the region and Bonga branch is one of the local media which is serving the study area's community in their ethnic language (SRTA, 2016).

As far as the impact of media on the development is concerned, different studies have been conducted (Serawit, 2017; Tadese, 2017; Mesfin, 2014), and most of them have attempted to emphasize the assessment of radio and developmental journalism. However, no study was

conducted on the role of this branch radio station on the community's social development since the broadcasting of this media through the ethnic language is a recent phenomenon. Besides, there are complaints from different sources on the media specifically, those which cover their transmission in the ethnic language in the society established by the government for propagating purposes. The conceptions are also that the branch media serves the local government machinery than the community. Hence, it was argued that there was an immense need to study the branch media broadcasting in the ethnic language especially the radio to analyze its actual impacts on people's access and dissemination of information in the community. So, this gap initiates the researcher to study the issue to analyze the role of Bonga branch radio on the social development of the community.

Therefore, this article is intended to assess the role of Bonga branch radio station in the social development of the community in influencing the attitude, knowledge, and practice through the information of the social content programs that it transmits in the community's ethnic language. Based on this, the specific objectives are: (i) analyzing the social content programs of Bonga branch radio transmission in the community's ethnic language, (ii) examining the contribution of the social content of radio programs in the community's behavioral (knowledge, attitude, and practice) change, and (iii) assessing the challenges of the branch radio station while serving the community.

Review of Literature

The Definitions of Basic Concepts

The Concept of 'Development'

Though the term development usually refers to economic progress, it can apply to political, social, and technological progress as well. These various sectors are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them. It can be broadly defined in a manner applicable to all societies at all historical periods as an upward ascending movement featuring greater levels of energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, mastery, enjoyment, and accomplishment. Development is governed by many factors that influence the results of developmental efforts. There must be a motive that drives the change and essential preconditions for that change to occur. The motive must be powerful enough to overcome obstructions that impede that change from occurring. Development also requires resources such as capital, technology, and supporting infrastructure (World Bank, 2013).

Development is the result of society's capacity to organize human energies and productive resources to meet challenges and opportunities. Society passes through well-defined stages in the course of its development. There are nomadic hunting and gathering, rural-agrarian, urban, commercial, industrial, and post-industrial societies. Pioneers introduce new ideas, practices, and habits that conservative elements initially resist. At a later stage, innovations are accepted, imitated, organized, and used by other members of the community (*Ibid.*). Organizational improvements introduced to support the innovations can take place simultaneously at four different levels: physical, social, mental, and psychological. Moreover, four different types of resources are involved in promoting development. Of these four, physical resources are most visible, but least capable of expansion. The productivity of resources increases enormously as the quality of organization and level of knowledge inputs rise. Developmental pace and scope vary according to the stage the society is in. The three main stages are physical, vital (vital refers to the dynamic and numerous social energies of humanity that propel individuals to accomplish), and mental (Servaes, 2008, p.38).

Today, mental resources are the primary determinants of development. Where people drove a simple bullock cart, they now design ships and aircraft that carry huge loads across immense distances. Humanity has tamed rivers, cleared jungles, and even turned arid desert lands into cultivable through irrigation. By using intelligence, society has turned sand into powerful silicon chips that carry huge amounts of information and form the basis of computers. Since there is no inherent limit to the expansion of mental resources, the notion of limits to growth cannot be ultimately binding (*Ibid*, p.41).

The Notion of 'Social Development'

Social development or social change is the phrase that refers to the alteration of social order within a society. It may also refer to the notion of socio-cultural evolution or 'social progress'. This is the philosophical idea that society always moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It is about an attempt to qualitative changes in the structure and framework of society that helps to better realize its aims and objectives (Servas, 2008, p.46). Social development could, thus, be regarded as a process of social change, not merely a set of policies and programs instituted for some specific results. This process has been going on since the dawn of history. But during the last five centuries, it has picked up in speed and intensity and has witnessed a marked surge in acceleration. The basic mechanism driving social change is increasing awareness leading to better organization. Life evolves by consciousness and consciousness in

turn progresses by the organization. When society senses new and better opportunities for progress, it develops new forms of organization to exploit these new openings successfully. The new forms of organization are better able to harness the available social energies and skills and resources to use the opportunities to get the intended results (*Ibid.*).

The Media

The media has been variously defined by scholars of mass communication among which one of the commonly accepted definitions is that it is referred to as a collective means of communication by which the general public or populace is kept informed about the day to day happenings in the society. It is also said to be an aggregation of all communication channels that use techniques of making a lot of direct personal communication between the communicator and the public. While talking of mass media, however, the word “mass” means a large number of people or a collection, and “media” means organs or channels. Hence, mass media is a collection of organs of communication and information dissemination that reaches out to a large number of people. The information circulation is not only confined within members of the public but the media also serves to coordinate the information flow between government and the public and vice versa. More importantly, the media is also referred to, as “the fourth realm of the state”, *i.e.* the fourth pillar in support of the essential tripod of government; the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judiciary (Catalan, 2011, p. 198).

Mass media is any media that is intended for a large audience. It either takes broadcast or print media forms. Broadcast form of Media is also referred to as electronic media and is peculiar to radio and television technology. Print media, on the other hand, operates in the form of newspapers, magazines, journals, and other print materials. The *internet* is the most recent form of mass media. Mass media has become a huge industry in the world market on which many people around the world rely on information, news, and entertainment (*Ibid.*).

The Role of Media in Development

Development refers to a change process geared at improving or making better, the life and environment of man. Seers (1985), cited by Subba (2017), posited that development involves the creation of opportunities for the realization of human potentialities. The media comes in the development process through what is called “development communication”. This is the type of communication that is consciously packaged by the sender such that the message content or the information sent could persuade, encourage or convince the receiver or target audience to adopt an attitude and participate in actualizing a development plan or goal. In

certain instances, the message sent aims at making the target audience adopt a positive attitudinal change towards development (Park, 2014).

The influence of mass media on human behavior has been a subject of research over the last 50 years. Over time, the sociological capability of media has gone beyond the primary cardinal functions of information, education, and entertainment. The role of mass media has assumed the creation of the environment for solving socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political issues that have provided fertile grounds for the debate on media use (*Ibid.*). In fact, the media is described as performing three functions or roles of information, education, and entertainment. These are the conventional social functions the media render to the public, but which is equally applicable in a broader sense in national development pursuit. It could be said that through educating, informing, and entertaining, the media thereby makes the society, and its members, or the nation as well as the leadership of the very society, aware of the importance and need to undertake certain processes of national development. Also attached to these three basic roles of media is another role of persuasion, where media is seen as virile tools of applying persuasive efforts to influence people's actions towards a particular direction. The mass media are, therefore, seen for their role in furnishing the public with the necessary information to achieve development or change goals (Chowdhury, 2004, p.28).

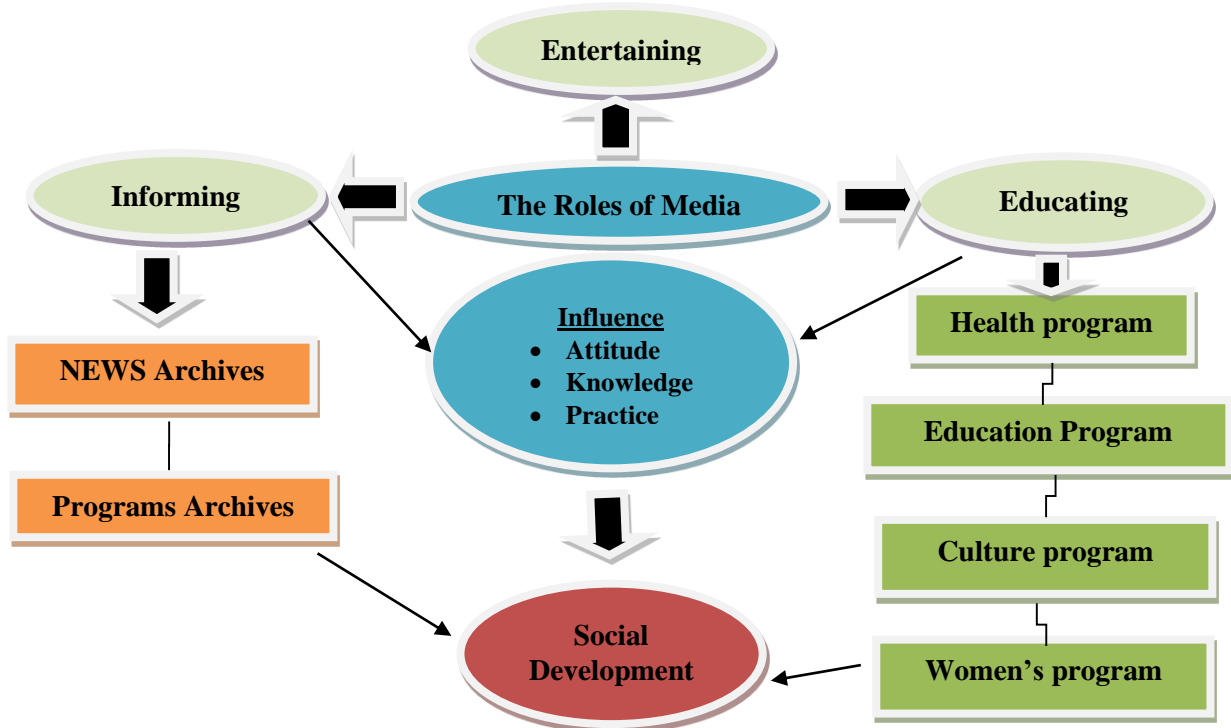
Radio and Community Development

Through its information and awareness dissemination capability, radio has demonstrated excellent efficiency in mobilizing and empowering community members towards their civil duties. In certain quarters, radio has been used as a tool for giving voice to the isolated and marginalized groups as well as bringing their needs and aspirations to the notice of the government. In many countries, community radio has become an integral part of national development (Peter, 2004).

Moreover, the development of frequency modulation (FM) transmitting technology has given radio an edge over other forms such as TV and the internet. With more effective audience coverage, radio is capable of meeting the socio-economic and socio-cultural needs of its audience. Hence, this unique feature has made radio more useful in grass root development. Through its widespread coverage, radio has contributed much more effectively to both rural and urban development. The potential impact of radio includes but is not limited to helping to identify the community's needs and interests. This helps development workers to design an appropriate need assessment plan and to come up with the right approach and strategy for

effective socio-economic intervention. Over the years, radio has served as the most trusted agent of change. It has played a very vital role in building vibrant communities, and sensitizing group action (Peter, 2004). In general, independent media improves the social and economic status of the people by providing quality information with which they make sound decisions in everyday life. Among different types of mass media, radio has become the medium of choice as it is less expensive and more accessible for the community (David, 2004, p.169).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Own Sketch, 2019.

Materials and Methods

The study employed a mixed research approach with a descriptive design. The quantitative method was used to measure the information which applied to quantity/numerical information collected through a questionnaire. The qualitative research method was employed to analyze, narrate, and discuss the qualitative information, which was collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Accordingly, the analysis of the data result was done by using both the explanatory and statistical methods. To do so, the study has relied on primary and secondary data. While secondary data were gathered by reviewing relevant documents, journal articles, books, and internet sources, primary data were collected using questionnaires, key informants interview, and focus group discussions.

As mentioned above, the study is meant to assess the role of the South Radio and Television

Agency in the social development of the community, specifically Bonga branch radio broadcasting in ethnic languages in *Decha woreda* of Kafa Zone, SNNPR. *Decha woreda*, found in Kafa Zone of SNNPR at about 467 km to the south-west of Addis Ababa, was selected purposively because it accommodates three indigenous ethnic people called Kafa, Chara, and Na’o. These ethnic languages are among the five ethnic languages broadcasting in the branch radio station. Unlike other *woredas*, this *woreda* is very wide and divided into one municipal town and 57 rural *kebeles* (ZCTO, 2016) out of which 3 were selected for the purpose of this study. However, to ensure the representativeness of the sample respondents, the researcher applied a systematic random sampling. In so doing, Yamane (1967) formula [$n=N/1+N(\alpha)^2$] was employed to determine the sample size at a 91% level of confidence (where ‘n’ is the required sample size, ‘N’ represents the total household population, and $\alpha=0.09$ is the margin of error). There are 775 households in three *Kebeles* and out of which 298 households are in *Erimo*, 251 in *Oggeya*, and 226 in *Shashi Kebeles*. By using the indicated formula and then distributing the same proportionally, a total sample of 106 households constituted the sample size.

Table 1: Summary of the Sample Size Distribution

S.N.	Sample <i>Kebeles</i>	Total Population (N)	Sample Size (n)
1	Erimo(K1)	298	41
2	Oggeya(K2)	251	34
3	Shashi(K3)	226	31
	Total	775	106

Source: Own Computation, 2019.

The key informant interview of semi-structured nature was also employed to collect relevant information from eight members of the selected branch radio station. The key informants included: one manager, two case managers (program and news archive), two editors (program and news archive), and three journalists (one from each of three ethnic language department). Besides, three key informants from public institutions (one from each - Health, Education, Women Affairs) and one from NGO (Action Aid Ethiopia) making the total key informants twelve.

Moreover, 5 FGDs were undertaken, each group consisting of ten discussants selected randomly out of the radio listening groups created by both Action Aid Ethiopia and the branch radio station in the study area. The group members were heterogynous as they comprised of different sex, age, and ethnic background. This instrument also helped the researcher to triangulate the data generated through the individual respondent.

Results and Discussion

This section will address the social content programs of Bonga branch radio station which is transmitting its programs in the ethnic languages and analysis will be made in line with the objectives of the study by covering the formats of the programs followed by discussions and interpretations.

Health Program

Among different social issues, health issues are the most important ones in any society. To develop either socially or individually, one should stay healthy; otherwise, individual development will remain meaningless. A healthy population can contribute a lot to its wellbeing and social development. Concerning this, the media shoulders responsibility in helping the community to live a healthy life. According to Lang (2001, p.8), media broadcasting should provide a means for the solution of more serious problems of social life. Radio personnel should develop methods of communicating with their audiences on issues of urgent or general concern related to health. According to the household respondents and key informants, concerning the above-noted issues, Bonga branch radio is working closely with different governmental and non-governmental organizations that are working on health-related issues in the community. Specifically, the *Kafinoonoo* language program of BBR has a program called ‘*NOO'WOO*’ that transmits every Wednesday from 8:07 pm-8:19 pm and every Tuesday from 7:10 am-7:22 am. In *Na'o* language the program is called ‘*PAYKIN*’ and in the *Chara* language, it is called ‘*HATSA*’ which can be translated in English as ‘our health’. The program broadcasts every Tuesday from 9:34 am-9:46 am in *Na'o* language and in the case of *Chara*, every Friday from 9:30 am-9:40 am. The data in Table 2 below show the response of the household respondents about the branch radio station role in the community’s health and related issues.

Table 2: Household Responses on Health Program

The Role of Radio Station in Health Issues	Programs Broadcasted									
	HP		EP		WP		CP		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Social program more interesting and influencing listeners attitude	30	28.3	19	17.9	26	24.5	31	29.2	106	100
Social program more interesting and influencing the audience’s knowledge	29	27.3	20	18.8	27	25.4	30	28.3	106	100

HP= Health program, EP=Education program, WP=Women program, CP=Culture program

Source: Own Survey, 2019.

As summarized in Table 2 above, for the question raised to the household respondents, “Among the social content programs of the radio, which program is more interesting and influencing the listeners' attitude?”, 30(28.3%) replied that as audiences of Bonga branch radio, the health program is interesting and influencing their attitude. Another question raised by the researcher as to “which type of the radio program is more interesting and influencing the knowledge as an audience?” 29(27.3%) of the respondents agreed that the health program of Bonga branch radio is more interesting and influencing their knowledge.

To sum up about the reaction of the household respondents in Table 2 above, out of the total household respondents who have been asked by the researcher, 59(55.66%) of them answered that, among the social content programs of the radio station, the health program transmitted in the ethnic language is more interesting and influencing their attitude and knowledge.

In this program, different role models in different health issues like family planning, service delivery in health institutions, environmental sanitation, etc. who have received recognition along with their name and fame have been called by BBR to talk and to discuss on the issue and their achievements so that others can learn from their experience. Also different health-related issues like the service delivery of hospitals and health centers, epidemic breaking, etc. are covered through this program. To this, one of the study participants explained in her words:

I like the health program of the branch radio. I especially like the way people with health-related experience narrate their stories, which motivate others to follow and to succeed like them. I have been informed about how to care about the sanitation of our environment and my family's health focusing on preventive mechanisms. In addition to this, I understand the benefit of using family planning programs and delivery care services at the health center. My family members got information about the health-related issues from the health program of the BBR. This is because we are a regular listener to the radio program which transmits all its programs in the language we understand.

The key informants from the media reveal that when the journalists of the branch radio traveled to the communities to collect data to prepare programs and news, the community informed them about the benefit of changing the behavior because of the health program of BBR. This is due to transmitting the information while interviewing experts who are regarded as role models in domestic and environmental sanitation activities. Most of the participants of FGD indicated that the listeners have been given chance to share their experience and practice in their day-to-day activities to further motivate other listeners of the community.

The use of radio has been tested in various community development projects. According to Mark & Warnock (2007), radio is the most viable medium for community development

intervention. Radio, he argues, is more accessible and cost-effective than other forms of media. One of the advantages of radio over most other forms of media is its ability to communicate more effectively to an audience without a barrier in distance, level of literacy, or language diversity. From the above household response, key informant interview, and the focus group conversation, it can be concluded that the branch radio station's health program is contributing to influencing the audience's attitude and behavior. It can be observed from the data that health-related information from the media by their native language has the power in bringing change in the community.

Educational Program

Education is an important cure for ignorance and poverty. Educated citizens contribute much to a given society. Empowering community members through education and training is the central part to fight illiteracy in the community. Encouraging youths and children to give due attention to their academic development is the important role the media should play. According to the program format of the BBR, there is a program that is related to educational activities. The program is called '*DOOYOO*', in *Kafinoono*, and the program is aired every Tuesday from 7:55 am-8:15 am and every Friday from 7:50 pm-8:05 pm.

Similarly, the *Na'o* language program of the radio has a program called '*XUSU*' which can be translated as an "educational program". The program is aired every Saturday from 10:32 am-10:42 am. It is aimed at transmitting different educational issues that can encourage children and youth to attend their education properly. It also informs the community to give due attention to educational matters.

The data by the individual household respondents in Table 3 below shows responses given to the questions raised by the researcher as "In which educational activities the branch radio's educational program is contributing?" According to the response of 32(30.2%) of the household, it is contributing to increasing educational quality. Yet, for 47(44.3%) of the respondents, it is contributing to minimizing school drop-out, and for the remaining 27(25.4%), it improves students' performance.

Table 3: Household Response on Educational Program

The Role of Radio Station in Education	Indicators	Frequency	Percent
The branch's contribution to education	Increasing educational quality	32	30.2
	Minimizing school dropout	47	44.3
	Improving student's performance	27	25.5
		106	100
The social content of programs that influences listeners' attitude	Education program	19	17.9
	Health program	30	28.3
	Women program	26	24.5
	Culture program	31	29.3
	106	100	
The social content of program that influences the listeners' knowledge	Education program	20	18.9
	Health program	29	27.3
	Women program	27	25.5
	Culture program	30	28.3
	106	100	

Source: Own Survey, 2019.

Among the social content programs transmitted in Bonga branch radio station, the question “which type of social program of the radio is more interesting and influencing the audience’s attitude?” is raised to the respondents. The reaction to the question implies that for 19(17.9%) of household respondents, the educational program of BBR is interesting and influencing their attitude. However, for the question raised as “what type of radio program is more interesting and influencing their knowledge?”, 20(18.8%) of the household respondents agreed that among the social content programs of the radio station, the educational program is more interesting and influencing their knowledge.

To generalize the household’s reaction related to the raised issue in Table 3 above, it has been confirmed by all 106(100%) of the household respondents that the educational program transmitted in the radio station is contributing to increasing educational quality, in minimizing school drop-out and improving students’ performance. In addition to this, 39(36.7%) of the household respondents believed that this social content program (education) is contributing to changing the community’s behavior by influencing their attitude and knowledge as can be observed in Table 3 above. Based on the above explanation of the household respondents, one of the radio journalists who participated in the individual in-depth interview comments:

The media is striving to bring down the rate of illiteracy which is a serious factor for poverty and backwardness. The branch radio station prepares and transmits programs in ethnic languages that inform the community members about the importance of

sending their children to school and helping them to motivate. Also, the media teaches youths and children by emphasizing the advantages of attending school actively and regularly. This is because the issue of education is a serious concern for community development.

As mentioned by focus group discussants, when the local government bodies move to the communities to mobilize about the educational issues like school-dropout, student's ethics, student's participation in education, and related activities, they found that the communities were aware of their agenda. This is due to the information given by the radio station. This shows that the media is effectively mobilizing the community on its developmental agenda.

The above illustration of the household, key informant interview, and focus group discussion presents the evidence which enables the conclusion that media play a critical role in improving governance and community integration, increasing communication efficiency and stability, and creating positive social and environmental change. Hence, the media provide information to actors throughout society allowing them to participate in the decisions and debates that shape their lives. It also plays an important monitoring role in democratic participation that enables citizens to hold their government's officials to be accountable in leading to better policies and service implementation. This is also evidenced by the data presented above; the branch radio is playing its role in changing the community's behavior.

Women's Program

Among the world population, the majority of the poor are women and most of them are illiterate. This is also true in Ethiopia that all social activities were male-dominated; females were neglected economically, politically, and socially. However, due attention has been given to gender equality although the practice still faces challenges. According to Mocria *et al.* (2003), when women are supported and empowered, all of the society at large benefits because they are the burden carriers of the family in the community's day-to-day activities. Empowering women is very important to make them bring change to social stability. Radio plays a role in ensuring gender equality by producing awareness-raising programs and empowering them to be a role player in the development of a given community. In this regard, BBR is producing programs for women. Among the programs, "KUPHEBOT MACHENA'OT" translated as 'women's program' is aired every Thursday from 7:55 am-8:10 am and every Wednesday from 8:20 pm-8:35 pm. The objective of the program is to enable females to engage in social and economic activities that can help them to lead their lives and their families and to be active citizens.

Table 4: Household Response on Women Program

The Contribution of the Radio Station to Women Issues	Indicators	Frequency	Percent
Effective social activities of the GO's and NGO's due to the radio station	Women Empowerment	32	30.2
	Educational Improvement	17	16.1
	Health Improvement	22	20.7
	Cultural Development	35	33
		106	100
The branch radio station contribution to women empowerment	Income Generating	31	29.2
	Decision Making	29	27.4
	Participating in Public Issues	25	23.6
	Land ownership	21	19.8
		106	100

Source: Own Survey, 2019.

According to the data in Table 4 above, the question raised as “Because of BBR, which effective social activities of both the governmental and non-governmental organizations are observed in the community?” Out of the total respondents, about 32(30.2%) answered that the women empowerment related activities improved due to the branch radio contribution. In addition to this, for the questions raised as “In which issues the branch radio's women's program is contributing about the women empowerment?”, 31(29.2%) replied that the program contributes to generating the income of women. On the other hand, 29(27%) of the respondents reported that it contributes to empowering the women to be decision-makers, and 25(23.6%) indicated that it contributes to empowering the women to participate in public issues. Finally, out of the total household respondents, 21(19.8%) responded that it empowers them in offering an opportunity of women’s land ownership on their own.

The aggregate result of the data in Table 4 above shows that, among the social content programs of the branch radio station, the women empowerment program is contributing to women’s development. This is evidenced in the household respondent’s reaction indicated above, in which totally, all of 106(100%) respondents’ response assures the contribution of the radio’s program that focuses on women empowerment activities such as; generating their income, empowering them as a decision-maker on their issue, participating in public issues, and land ownership.

In the women program on the radio, the program producers invite successful women to share their experience of success to the audience. The audiences are given opportunities to ask different questions related to the issue and the secrets behind these successful women. From the shared experiences and offered pieces of advice, the audiences would get a chance to draw

lessons that may help to improve their own lives. The above explanation can be supported by the narration of the focus group discussion participant below:

As an audience of the Bonga branch radio, I have learned a lot from the program. I like listening to the women's empowerment program. This is because the program allows listening to other women's secrets of success. Based on the information from the radio, women in the community are involving in the activities that enable them to improve their domestic life. As an example, women in the community form a group with the neighbors and offered land from the kebele to cultivate vegetables. Earlier, they were not well informed in engaging and making income from such kind of activities. After they have listened to other's experiences from the Bonga branch radio station women program, the women were motivated and benefited from the information.

According to the participants, the outputs of the local radio are also bringing behavioral change in minimizing domestic violence and mistreatment against the women. They explained that the radio under the study is producing valuable awareness creation programs on gender equality, and the community is responding well to the issues. In general, as explained above, both the household respondents and focus group discussion participants agreed that BBR is discharging its responsibility in bringing positive changes in the women's development.

Cultural Program

Due to globalization, which refers to the socio-cultural process of influence, *i.e.*, bringing people in the contemporary world closer and closer, despite geo-linguistic barriers, the indigenous culture of the developing countries like Ethiopia is becoming affected by the powerful western cultures. To protect this cultural domination, the role of community radio is worthy to mention. The promotion of local culture and language is the major area where the media can bring change. Culture lies at the basis of a society's existence, and it is the center of their everyday activities. In protecting indigenous culture from western cultural influence, radio plays a great role in articulating their stories, music, festivity, etc.

All BBR transmitting languages have programs that promote the culture and the language of the community. The program is aimed at promoting the local culture, values, and language of the local community. The *Kafinoonoo* language program of the radio under the study has a program called '*NOOQOCO*', which means 'our culture'. This program is aired every Monday from 8:30 pm-8:45 pm and every Tuesday from 7:55 pm-8:25 pm.

Similarly, in *Na'o* and *Chara* languages, there is also a program called '*BAHILA*' which can be translated as 'culture'. The program is aired every Saturday from 10:43 am-10:53 am in *Na'o* language and every Wednesday from 9:15 am-9:30 am in *Chara* language. In the program, the

producer invites guests in the studio who are culturally well versed in the community. These guests explain various local communities’ cultures in a well-articulated and attractive manner for the audiences. In addition to this, the program introduces the audience to various cultural sites found in all *woredas* of Kafa and Sheka zones. Through listening to this program, the audience can easily know different tourist sites and cultural areas found in towns, rural areas, etc.

According to one key informant who belongs to the *Na'o* ethnic group, the radio station is striving to promote the valuable cultural elements of the community and to prevent harmful traditional practices. Including him, nobody expects that their language could be a media language. This is because they knew from their grandparent’s perception that ‘if somebody speaks through the radio, the language can break the radio.’ But in reality, the language does not break the radio; rather, it enables them to listen and share both their own and others’ culture, lifestyle, and current situation of their country and their environment without any interpretation by the other.

Table 5: Household Responses on Cultural Program

The Role of Radio Station in Cultural Issues	S.A.		Agree		Undecided		D.A.		S.D.A.		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The broadcasting of the branch radio in ethnic language helped for the cultural development of the community	43	40.5	50	47.2	8	7.5	5	4.8	-	-	106	100
The branch radio has impact on community’s cultural transformation	29	27.3	53	50	14	13.2	10	9.5	-	-	106	100

S.A.=Strongly Agree; D.A.= Disagree; S.D.A.= Strongly Disagree

Source: Own Survey, 2019.

As depicted in Table 5 above, there is an item which says “the broadcasting of the branch radio in the ethnic language is contributing to the cultural development of the study area’s community”. According to the responses to this item, about 43(40.5%) of the household respondents strongly agreed and 50(47.2%) agreed that the branch radio’s ‘culture program’ is contributing to the community’s cultural development. Hence, the household respondent’s response of about 93 (87.7%) shows that the cultural program of Bonga branch radio station in the ethnic languages is contributing to the community’s cultural development.

The culture program brought cultural transformation for the community. Different cultures which had been forgotten by the community were told by the elders on the radio, the new

generation is being acquainted with knowledge about their own culture and it is an opportunity. According to this, among BBR transmitting languages, one ethnic language journalist informed:

As a journalist at the branch radio station, when the radio program started with the ethnic language, there was no so much music played in the same ethnic language. But today, a lot of the community's ethnic language singers emerged and the communities are listening to the songs not only in audio but they are also watching their music and related culture through video clips.

In supporting the above expression, the focus group participants generalized that the radio station has played a great role in the cultural change in the community. The community's attitudes have been changed in combating harmful traditional practices like women's genital mutilation, abduction, traditional midwifery, etc. Besides, before the radio program transmission started in ethnic languages, the only option to get information was through the national radio station. The national radio program's transmission language is Amharic and those who did not listen to Amharic have no opportunity to get information. If one wants to know about what the radio is talking about, it was possible only through interpretation or translation by others and this is the recent phenomenon they knew in their life.

While giving the central importance to the information from media transmitted in a local/vernacular language, the report affirms that it plays a significant role in sustainable social development (Park, 2014). The report further highlighted how information empowers people to determine their development path. "At its heart, development – if it is to be sustainable – must be a process that allows people to be their agents of change: to act individually and collectively, using their ingenuity and accessing ideas, practices, and knowledge in the search for ways to fulfill their potential." The only way to make development sustainable is to increase the level of participation and to create a situation based on their culture, language, and shared experience. From the above data, it can be concluded that the cultural program of BBR is informing and creating awareness in the community, such as in combating harmful traditional practices which affect the social life. On the other hand, it is promoting the culture of the communities; hence, leading to cultural development.

The Challenges of Bonga Branch Radio Station

While doing any activity to achieve a given organization's objective, different challenges may occur in different directions either internally or externally. During such a situation, the actions taken by the organizations depend on their structure and the culture of their management. The

actions taken to overcome the challenges within the organization may even vary from one management to another. As discussed in detail, under each social content program of the radio station, the branch radio station is striving to serve the community. While doing this activity, the branch radio station is facing different challenges. Among those challenges, as it has been explained by the branch radio station manager; the branch radio station is not serving the whole community of two zones of Kafa and Sheka because the transmission coverage of the radio station needs the new and specialized satellite receiver in each area. It requires a greater amount of investment for infrastructure and purchasing the materials. The key informant also indicated the non-availability of the materials in the domestic market. The materials need to be imported and this needs financial capacity.

Another key informant revealed the challenges of maintaining neutrality in journalism in the branch radio station. Sometimes, this tackles the media journalists having sufficient and balanced information for both news and program. While maintaining neutrality, journalists sometimes get into the challenge to search the appropriate information, data, or piece of evidence to report the malfunctioning or weak performance of the sectors.

The radio station is confronted with another challenge of lack of sufficient training and capacity building program. The key informant confirmed that since the establishment of the media, capacity-building activities either long or short training are not available. Finally, the key informant pointed out that the news and program formats are not updated and revised. The current formats of the programs need to fit the current interest and needs of the audiences. Such problems of the revised version of the program are found both in the urban and rural.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of this study shows that the communities use the radio station as a primary source of information since its transmission is in their respective languages. The radio station in the communities is perceived as the voice of the communities and this is evidenced in all of the participants of the study as household respondents, key informants, and focus group discussion participants. According to the findings, different social programs of the radio station helped the communities to transform their attitude, knowledge and to apply the information they got from the news and program formats in their day-to-day life activities. The transmission of programs in ethnic languages has a positive impact on getting the communities' interest in BBR's programs and subsequently changing their behavior to learn, exchange, and enrich the experiences of each other.

As far as developmental communication is concerned, different theories have been developed and among those theories, the findings of this study are consistent with the diffusion of innovation theory. The theory was developed by Everett Rogers. According to this theory, diffusion is a special type of communication. It deals with the innovation process spread among the social system. It is concerned with new ideas in communication. It has defined modernization as transforming individuals from the traditional way of life to the modern. An innovation is communicated by certain media to a large member of social groups to persuade them to accept and practice innovations for the betterment of their future life (Salvatore, 2002, p.22). According to this model, development is a type of social change in which ideas are introduced into a social system and these introduced ideas improve culture, health, education, and politics in the community. In relation to this, it can be concluded that the operation of Bonga branch radio in ethnic language favors the community to find updated information through news and the program formats that have a significant impact on everybody's life and the effects have been evidenced by the participants.

Finally, it can be concluded that BBR is assisting the development of the community by transmitting health, educational, cultural, and women's programs in order to mobilize the whole community for the realization of the community's social development by changing their attitude, knowledge, and practice. In the final analysis, the results indicated that the role of media, specifically the Bonga branch radio station that is transmitting its news and programs in different ethnic languages in the study area, is positively correlated to social development. However, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- ☞ The independence of the media should be realized in the study area.
- ☞ To make the branch radio station more functional and successful, the local government should support the media and should work together in which both the media organization and the local government should collaborate on the activities which may result in the community's development.
- ☞ For effective and efficient service delivery of the media, journalists and technical workers' capacity should be built and updated. According to BBR staff members, they lack sufficient short/long training, if given it could help them to serve more efficiently to serve the community by using their potential.
- ☞ The program formats should be updated and revised to meet the rising demands of the audience from rural and urban areas.
- ☞ There is a need for coordination with the concerning institution such as Bonga

University which is found near the media organization to produce professionals in the areas of journalism and technical workers to enhance the capacity of BBR and for efficient service delivery to achieve the target of the organization.

- ☞ It is strongly recommended that to serve the whole community of Kafa and Sheka zones should equally be served in the transmission by improving the required infrastructure to expand the coverage through the coordination of concerning bodies.

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